White Mineworkers on Zambia's Copperbelt, 1926-74: In a Class of Their Own

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Abbreviations

AMWU	African Mine Workers Union
ANC	African National Congress
BSAC	British South Africa Company
MOSSA	Mine Officials and Salaried Staff Association
MWS	Mine Workers' Society
MASA	Mines African Staff Association
MIF	Miners' International Federation
MUZ	Mineworkers' Union of Zambia
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NRMWU	Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union
RLI	Rhodes Livingstone Institute
RAA	Rhodesian Anglo American
RRWU	Rhodesia Railway Workers' Union
RST	Rhodesian Selection Trust
SAMWU	South African Mine Workers' Union
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UFP	United Federal Party
UNIP	United National Independence Party
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
ZEMA	Zambia Expatriate Mineworkers' Association
ZMU	Zambia Mineworkers' Union

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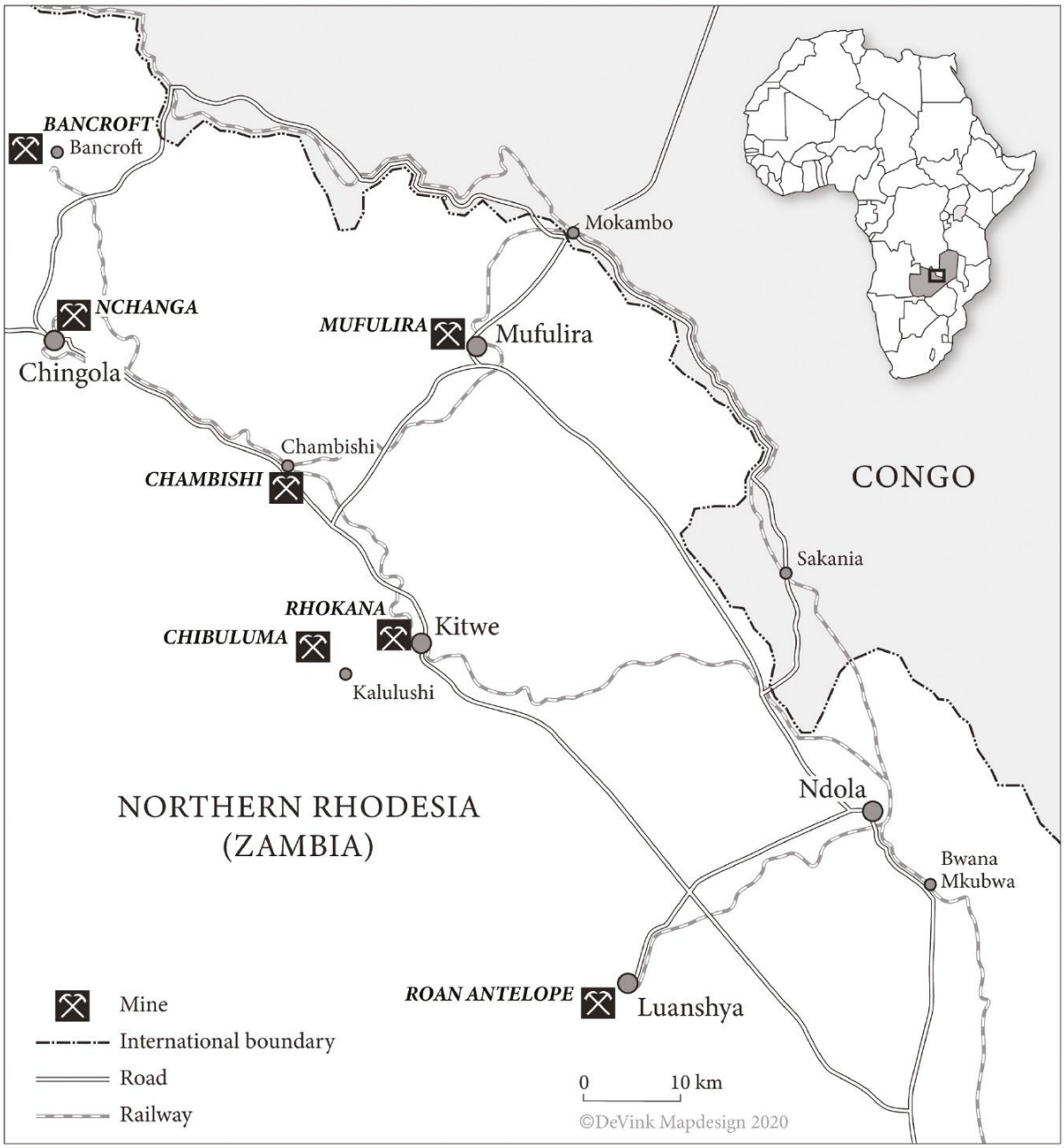
This book is dedicated to Jan-Georg Deutsch, who persuaded me that I could.

Duncan Money

Leiden, May 2021

Map



Map 1: Principal Mines and Towns on the Zambian Copperbelt, circa. 1961.

Introduction: The World of White Labour

When asked in 1959 about the Copperbelt mines, one veteran miner at Broken Hill – a lead-zinc mine just to the south – responded with palpable frustration: "with their labour 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."[1] This exasperated complaint that "they can't settle down" is an apt description of the Copperbelt white mineworkers. Whether intentionally or not, the phrase has a dual meaning, capturing both the militancy and mobility of these workers. White mineworkers would not 'settle down' to orderly routine work on the mines, nor would they 'settle down' to become permanent settlers in Northern Rhodesia (modern-day Zambia).

Life and work on the Zambian Copperbelt – a concentrated industrialised mining region along the border with DR Congo – has been a perennial subject for Africanist historians. What is different about this book is that it is the first to focus on the white mineworkers who monopolised skilled jobs on the mines from the 1920s to the 1960s and became one of the most affluent groups of workers on the planet. In what follows, I argue that this group was a highly mobile global workforce which constituted, and saw itself as, a racialised working class. For much of the twentieth century, this white working class moved between mining and industrial centres across and beyond the British Empire and their actions and forms of organisation were strongly influenced by their international connections and by their mobility. These transnational connections, and the white working-class militancy they produced, played a crucial role in shaping social categories of race and class on the Copperbelt and determining the evolution of a region which quickly became one of the world's largest sources of copper.

It was the militancy of these white mineworkers which prompted the above complaint as, at the time it was uttered, these workers had considered the following as justifiable grounds for immediate strike action: being sworn at, being accused of slacking, dislike of a new foreman, a plumber fitting a pipe which was properly the job of a fitter, the employment of three non-union contractors, because some wanted the afternoon off, and because of 'certain grievances' that were unnamed but very much unresolved. This was in addition to strikes over more conventional labour disputes like wages, bonuses, unsafe working conditions, and dismissals.[2] The previous year, 1958, over a third of the entire white workforce had left during a protracted strike.

What had been common knowledge about the militancy and mobility of this group in the 1950s came as a surprise to me when I started the research that led, eventually, to this book. I had intended to investigate the end of empire in Zambia, but found my attention was diverted on arrival

[1] J.F. Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *The Attitudes of White Mining Employees towards Life and Work on the Copperbelt. Part I: A Social Psychological Study* (Johannesburg: National Institute for Personnel Research, 1960), 14.

[2] Northern Rhodesia Government, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Stoppage in the Mining Industry in Northern Rhodesia in July, 1957* (*Honeyman Report*) (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1957), 12-16.

at archives in Lusaka and Ndola by hefty files with unexpected titles like 'Europeans - strikes, disputes, conciliation, and arbitration proceedings'.[3] Detailed files described events, people, and institutions in a language familiar to me from industrial and labour history in Europe but seemed curiously out of place in colonial Zambia. The Copperbelt's white mineworkers were talking and acting in a way that made sense on the South Wales coalfield or in Arizona's copper camps but seemed entirely inappropriate in a colonial context. In both scholarship and the popular imagination, the image of whites in colonial Africa is traditionally associated with the privileges of white status atop a racial order, without any necessity for appeals to issues of 'class'. The Copperbelt's white mineworkers seemed to be a people out of place, talking about 'shop stewards', 'work-to-rule', or the 'rate for the job'. Yet the thousands of white mineworkers vastly outnumbered the colonial officials, missionaries and farmers usually seen as the archetypal whites in the region, and who are more often the objects of study. The miners' lamp is perhaps more representative of whites in Central Africa than the pith helmet.[4]

The writing of modern African history is often about the broad continuities between events of the recent past and present-day realities. The history presented here is recent history, so much so that when I began my research in 2013 it was only the earliest period of industrial mining that was beyond living memory– yet there remain few traces of these white working-class lives in the present. Indeed, this book stresses how rapidly things can change and discontinuities, and how the people and events of even the very recent past were often quite different to our time. Frederick Cooper encourages historians to "ask about categories that are now not important," as a failure to do so means "we lose sight of the quest of people in the past to develop connections or ways of thinking that mattered to them but not to us."[5] How the subjects of this book lived, understood their place in the world, related to each other, and formed their identity are all quite different to today. The 'white working-class' on the mines – transnational, mobile and militant – bears little resemblance to how the term 'white working-class' is used in the 2010s and early 2020s.

The world of white labour on the Copperbelt has vanished almost entirely. Little remains today apart from the mines where they once worked and the townships where they lived. Certainly, no trace of their collective organisations has survived. Often, in labour and social history, the documenting of powerful organisations of the working-class, their rise, success, and then decline or disappearance has something of a lament, the suggestion that their passing has left our world poorer (or, at least, some people poorer). This kind of wistfulness is inappropriate here. The Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union (NRMWU) – which occupies much of this book – was a powerful organisation founded and built by working men who had spent their lives in the mining industry and who were veterans of fierce industrial disputes the world over. It was also a whites-only body that strictly maintained a colour bar on the mines to keep Africans out of skilled work. This chapter

[3] Vols. I-VII, 1958, Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Archive, Ndola [hereafter ZCCM] 11.1.2A.

[4] This book uses the term 'white' rather than 'European'. Although whites on the Copperbelt referred to themselves interchangeably as 'white' and 'European', some of these 'Europeans' had never set foot in Europe.

[5] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 18.

discusses the position of white workers on Zambia's copper mines, placing them in the context of broader scholarship on labour, race, and global history. But first, it provides an overview of how Zambia's Copperbelt came into existence and the place of this region in labour history.

Beginnings of industrial mining

There is a long history of copper mining and trading in the region that became the Copperbelt dating back to the fifth century CE.[6] Ingots and fabricated copper artefacts from the region were traded across a wide area , eventually reaching the Atlantic and Indian Ocean coasts.[7] Workings at what are now Kansanshi and Bwana Mkubwa Mines in Zambia were mined for centuries and annual production may have peaked at several hundred tons.[8] It was the remnants of these mines that first alerted white prospectors to the presence of copper in the region at the turn of the twentieth century. As one contemporary geologist noted on these prospectors, "practically all of their 'discoveries' of copper… were ancient workings that were brought to their attention by the local inhabitants who had known of their existence for a long time."[9] Colonial rule did not connect the region to the rest of the world for the first time but instead reconfigured its existing external connections.

The limitations of available technology meant that many existing mines had been abandoned by the late nineteenth century as copper oxide ore located near the surface was exhausted. Production at others was curtailed by the imposition of new colonial borders, which cut off routes to the east and dislocated existing long-distance trade routes.[10] The extent of the region's mineral wealth was therefore unknown by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) when it made what is best described as a speculative acquisition of the territory in 1889 under the vague charter it had received from the British Government. In 1890, agents of the BSAC signed dubious treaties with Lewanika, the ruler of Barotseland, a state in what is now western Zambia, and subsequently with other local rulers and used these to claim sovereignty and mineral rights over a vast region.[11]

Relatively little mining took place under BSAC rule, however, as mineral discoveries in Northern Rhodesia were overshadowed by those made in Katanga, the southern-most province of Belgian Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). Geological surveys of the province carried

[6] Mwelwa Musambachime, *Wealth from the Rocks: Mining and smelting of metals in pre-colonial Zambia* (Lexington: Xlibris, 2016), 103-32.

[7] Nicholas Nikis and Alexandre Livingstone-Smith 'Copper, Trade and Polities: Exchange Networks in Southern Central Africa in the 2nd Millennium CE', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, 5 (2017):4-5.

[8] Eugenia Herbert, *Red Gold of Africa: Copper in Precolonial History and Culture* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 73, 165.

[9] J.A. Bancroft, *Mining in Northern Rhodesia: A chronicle of mineral exploration and mining development* (London: British South Africa Co., 1961), 63.

[10] Musambachime, *Wealth from the Rocks*, 349-50.

[11] Henry Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism: A prelude to the politics of independence in northern Zambia, 1893-1939, etc.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), 29-31

out in the 1890s and early 1900s found extensive existing mine workings that revealed the presence of one of the world's largest deposits of copper oxide ore, located close enough to the surface to be extracted cheaply through open pit mining.[12] The company Union Minière was established in 1906 to develop these deposits. Production began in 1911 and increased rapidly. By 1924, Belgian Congo was the third largest copper producer in the world.[13]

In contrast, developments in Northern Rhodesia were inconsequential. Small mines were established and operated sporadically at Kansanshi, Bwana Mkubwa and Broken Hill, but the greater mineral riches were initially overlooked because prospectors mistakenly assumed that the geology was similar on both sides of the border. However, in Northern Rhodesia, low-grade copper oxide ores overlaid rich copper sulphide deposits at greater depth, and these sulphide ores could be processed much more cheaply. This was only discovered after the BSAC had handed over administration of the territory to the British Government in 1924. In the mid-1920s, a large-scale drilling programme was financed by mining magnate Edmund Davis, American mining financier Alfred Chester Beatty and the South African mining conglomerate Anglo American.[14] This uncovered the beginnings of staggeringly huge copper deposits totalling over 22 million tons of copper ore, far larger than the deposits in Katanga.[15] One contemporary termed it "the greatest individual copper mining centre of the world" and almost a century later the deposits are still being mined.[16] Eric Hobsbawm observed that "mines were the major pioneers in opening up the world to imperialism," but the converse was true here.[17] Imperialism opened the territory for mining.

The discovery of the size and grade of these deposits triggered a frantic rush to begin production. Copper had been essential to industrialised economies since the 1870s and the spread of electrification from the 1910s intensified demand for the metal. World per-capita copper consumption went up almost ten-fold between 1875 and the 1939.[18] Existing mines in North America and Latin America could not satisfy this demand and the preceding decades had seen an enormous

[12] Union Minière du Haut Katanga, *Union Minière du Haut Katanga 1906-1956* (Bruxelles, L. Cuypers: 1956), 36-61.

[13] Bureau of Mines, *Minerals Yearbook 1926* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926), 563-64.

[14] Francis Coleman, *The Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt 1899-1962: Technical Development up to the End of the Central African Federation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), 29-44

[15] Moreover, the average grade of this ore was much higher than other copper mining regions. Christopher Schmitz, 'The World Copper Industry: Geology, Mining Techniques and Corporate Growth, 1870-1939', *Journal of European Economic History* 29, 1 (2000): 101.

[16] Alan Bateman, 'The Ores of the Northern Rhodesian Copper Belt', *Economic Geology*, 25, 4 (1930): 414-15.

[17] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), 63.

[18] Christopher Schmitz, 'The Changing Structure of the World Copper Market, 1870-1939', *Journal of European Economic History* 26, 2 (1997): 299.

expansion of the copper industry in size and scope. Global copper production increased 24-fold between 1870 and 1938.[19]

From the late 1920s, four large underground mines that became the centre of the Zambian Copperbelt were developed: Nchanga, Nkana, Mufulira and Roan Antelope. The mines underwent rapid urbanisation and were soon the nuclei of substantial urban centres. Four towns were constructed around these mines: Chingola next to Nchanga, Luanshya around Roan Antelope, Kitwe around Nkana, while the mine and town at Mufulira shared the same name. Copper production grew even more rapidly than in Katanga, which was surpassed by Northern Rhodesia in 1932 as a copper producer. By 1936 Northern Rhodesia was responsible for 10% of world copper output.[20] The economic boom after the Second World War stimulated further development, with the opening of three smaller underground mines: Bancroft, Chibuluma and Chambishi, and the construction of Bancroft, Kalulushi and Chambishi towns. These mines were controlled by two multinational mining companies, Rhodesian Anglo American and the Rhodesian Selection, as will be discussed in Chapter 1.

The Copperbelt in Labour History

The Copperbelt is among the most significant sites for the study of labour history on the African continent. This is the legacy of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute (RLI), which produced a wealth of research on social relations, urbanisation and migration based on anthropological research in the new mining towns and has been enormously influential in African studies.[21] This scholarly production was closely tied up with labour. It was the momentous strike by African mineworkers in 1935 that led to the creation of the RLI as the colonial state, taken by surprise, sought greater knowledge about social change and the impact of industrialisation on African societies.[22]

RLI scholars, as Samuel Chipungu noted, "were preoccupied with understanding Africans as labour migrants to the towns" and studying Africans as urban residents, and not inherently rural and tribal, was central to the RLI's work.[23] In the famous dictum of RLI director Max Gluckman, "an African miner is a miner, an African townsman is a townsman."[24] RLI scholars were convinced that African societies were undergoing a process of rapid transition from rural to urban life, and argued

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

[20] Bureau of Mines, *Minerals Yearbook 1939* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939), 115.

[21] The influence of the RLI is so strong that "the Copperbelt was an idea as much as a location" for many scholars. Naomi Haynes, *Moving by the Spirit. Pentecostal Social Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), 19.

[22] Lynn Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology: Fieldwork, networks, and the making of cultural knowledge in Central Africa* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

[23] Samuel Chipungu, ed., *Guardians in their Time: Experiences of Zambians Under Colonial Rule, 1890-1964* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 1.

[24] Max Gluckman, 'Social anthropology in Central Africa', *Human Problems in British Central Africa*, 20 (1956): 17.

that the social changes underway were linear, comprehensive and transformative.[25] Much work on African societies and labour in the 1950s and 1960s was teleological, relying on assumptions that these societies would develop along lines already established in Europe and North America, that is they would become modern industrial economies with class-based social relations.[26] In Zambia, these assumptions were often made quite explicit. Gluckman termed what was happening on the Copperbelt the "African industrial revolution."[27] Earlier work by the economist Austen Robinson, who visited the Copperbelt in 1932, identified the changes then taking place as "an economic transition" comparable to "the industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe," but compressed within a single generation.[28]

Much of the work by RLI scholars examined urbanisation and the formation of new social relations rather than specifically class formation. Scholarly work that followed in the 1970s often focused more explicitly on class and class formation, what Jane Parpart termed "the gradual emergence among the African mineworkers of a common identity and unity of purpose on class lines."[29] The emergence of an African working class on the Copperbelt was regarded by many scholars as a pivotal development for the future, and their collective struggles quickly became well-known. No less a figure than CLR James ended his landmark book *The Black Jacobins* by quoting, in full, the demand by an African miner for a strike at Nkana Mine in 1935. "Such men," wrote James, "are symbols of the future."[30]

From the 1970s, there was an outpouring of academic work on the Copperbelt's African mineworkers, part of a wider wave of Marxist-inspired scholarship that, as Frederick Cooper noted, assumed Africa's "working class was growing and becoming better defined and more self-conscious."[31] Not that there was a uniform Marxist perspective, far from it. Works from a range of perspectives in these years placed African mineworkers at the centre of their analysis, including books by Elena Berger, Henry Meebelo, Michael Burawoy, Charles Perrings, Robert Bates, Philip

[25] Iva Peša, *Roads Through Mwinilunga: A History of Social Change in Northwest Zambia* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 6-7

[26] Miles Larmer, 'Permanent Precarity: Capital and Labour in the Central African Copperbelt', *Labor History* 58, 2 (2017): 171-73. For this critique more broadly, see James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[27] Max Gluckman, 'Anthropological Problems Arising from the African Industrial Revolution', in *Social Change in Modern Africa* ed. A. Southall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 67–82.

[28] E.A.G. Robinson, 'The Economic Problem', in *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*, ed. J. Merle Davis (London: Macmillan and Co., 1933), 203.

[29] Jane Parpart, *Labour and Capital on the African Copperbelt* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 162

[30] CLR James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989 [1938]), 336-37.

[31] Frederick Cooper, 'African Labour History', in *Global Labour History. A State of the Art*, ed. Jan Lucassen (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), 91-92.

Daniel, Guy Mhone and Jane Parpart, along with dozens of articles and doctoral theses.[32] By the time Miles Larmer wrote on the topic in 2007, he could observe "few aspects of African economy and society have been as fully studied as the copper mines of Zambia and their workers" and this meant any prospective reader was "entitled to ask what a new study… can tell us that we do not already know."[33]

Despite this wealth of scholarship, we know little about the lives of white mineworkers who playing a key role in copper production and in the labour movement but have received little attention from scholars.[34]Aside from a rich but short social history of white mineworkers' affluent lives in the 1950s by Ian Phimister and passing mention in some books – Henry Meebelo and Jane Parpart at least took white workers seriously, though the focus of their work was elsewhere – this history remains little known.[35] Even someone as well-informed as Bill Freund could write that "until 1946 white unions had not got really organised… in the copper mines," though the white mineworkers' union had imposed a closed shop in 1941.[36] Historians have acknowledged that the emphasis in modern labour history on the "white, male, skilled, waged" artisan or industrial worker "has hidden the history" of the real mass of the working class.[37] In this case, ironically, it is the history of unionised white male artisans that remains unknown.

This scholarly gap can be traced to the RLI, whose considerable output did not include any study of Northern Rhodesia's white population or other non-African minority.[38] Many RLI

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[32] Robert Bates, *Unions, Parties, and Political Development: A Study of Mineworkers in Zambia* (New Haven: Yale University, 1971); Michael Burawoy, *The Colour of Class on the Copper Mines: From African Advancement to Zambianization* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972); Elena Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule: The Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974); Charles Perrings, *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa: Industrial strategies and the evolution of an African proletariat in the Copperbelt 1911-41* (London: Heineman, 1979); Philip Daniel, *Africanisation, Nationalisation and Inequality: Mining labour and the Copperbelt in Zambian development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Henry Meebelo, *African proletarians and colonial capitalism: The origins, growth, and struggles of the Zambian labour movement to 1964* (Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation, 1986); Parpart, *Labour and Capital*.

[33] Miles Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia: Labour and Political Change in Post-Colonial Africa* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), 2.

[34] One survey of Zambia's historiography concluded that white mineworkers have been "largely ignored by professional academics," or "caricatured" when not ignored. Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacoma Macola, eds., *Living at the End of Empire: Politics and society in late colonial Zambia* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 14.

[35] Ian Phimister, 'Workers in Wonderland? White Miners and the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, 1946-1962', *South African Historical Journal*, 63, 2 (2011): 183-233.

[36] A closed shop is an agreement whereby an employer agrees to employ only union members. Bill Freund, 'Trade Unions', in *General Labour History of Africa: Workers Employers and Governments 20th-21st Centuries*, eds. Stefano Bellucci and Andreas Eckert (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2019), 535.

[37] Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (London: Verso, 2000), 332.

[38] Lyn Schumaker claims the RLI planned a programme of research on whites but did not carry this out. Lyn Schumaker, 'The Lion in the Path: Fieldwork and culture in the history of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute 1937-1964' (PhD thesis,

researchers sympathised with the aspirations of African nationalists and so sought to distance themselves from white society. This ideological predisposition continued after independence. It is also possible that RLI scholars simply considered whites to be unimportant compared to the great transition brought about by industrialisation which they believed they were witnessing. The relative lack of knowledge about Northern Rhodesia's white population is one of the RLI's legacies.[39]

The exception to this is the work of Hans Holleman, who was briefly affiliated to the RLI, and Simon Biesheuvel. The two were contracted by the Chamber of Mines in 1959 to study the white workforce and produced a detailed qualitative and quantitative report, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 and forms an important source for the 1950s. Their study, however, was confidential and subsequently published only in an abridged form almost 15 years later.[40]

Much of the work on labour on the Copperbelt was undertaken in the 1970s and early 1980s during the highpoint of labour history in African studies. As Bill Freund memorably put it in his 1984 survey of the subject: "No subject has in recent years so intruded into the scholarly literature on Africa as the African worker."[41] The term 'African worker' is important as in this period there was a contentious debate over the definition of the working class, and whether waged workers in Africa were better understood as a 'labour aristocracy' whose interests aligned with international capital. As Léopold Senghor remarked, "The proletarian is not necessarily the one who claims the title."[42] Part of this debate examined white workers in South Africa and some scholars argued this group was not part of the working class and could not be considered workers in any meaningful sense.[43] This argument, that whites employed on the mines were not really workers, was an unstated assumption in much of the Copperbelt literature. 'Worker' meant 'African'.[44]

University of Pennsylvania, 1994), 93-95. Hortense Powdermaker sought to study the relationship between white miners and 'boss boys' but the mine management refused. She also claimed "I was apparently the only anthropologist in Northern Rhodesia" who thought that whites should be studied alongside Africans. Horstense Powdermaker, *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966), 250, 274.

[39] Some former white residents have written their own publications, see especially the interviews about the "ordinary lives of the ordinary European population" in Pamela Shurmer-Smith, *Remnants of Empire: Memory and Northern Rhodesia's White Diaspora* (Lusaka: Gadsden Press, 2014), 5.

[40] J.F. Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *White Mine Workers in Northern Rhodesia 1959-60* (Leiden: Afrika-Studiecentrum, 1973).

[41] Bill Freund, 'Labour and Labour History in Africa: A Review of the Literature', *African Studies Review* 27, 2, (1984), 1.

[42] Peter Waterman, 'The 'Labour Aristocracy' in Africa: Introduction to a Debate', *Development and Change* 6, 3 (1975): 61.

[43] Harold Wolpe, 'The 'White Working-Class' in South Africa', *Economy and Society* 5, 2 (1976): 197-240.

[44] It is notable that the labour aristocracy debate on the Copperbelt was about whether African mineworkers constituted a labour aristocracy and white mineworkers, much more plausible candidates for this position, were not considered. Jane Parpart, 'The 'Labour Aristocracy' Debate in Africa: The Copperbelt Case, 1924-1967', *African Economic History*, 13 (1984): 171-91.

This book offers a different perspective. In presenting the first dedicated study of the white mineworkers of the Copperbelt, it contributes to a growing literature on white societies in Africa that highlights divisions, conflicts, and stratification in these societies during the twentieth century, especially along lines of social class.[45] Although historians have long acknowledged that white society in Southern Africa was not homogenous, empirical studies of this have remained largely restricted to the early twentieth century.[46] While building on these rich social histories, this book extends the geographical and chronological scope of scholarship on the role of class in Southern Africa's white societies.[47]

There has been something of a revival in scholarly interest in the Copperbelt, a revival that has included previously neglected topics – such as religion, sport, and environmental history – and stressed commonalities across the Congolese and Zambian Copperbelts as one integrated mining region.[48] This revival also includes work on the familiar topics of labour and the mines themselves, part of what is arguably a revival of African labour history.[49]

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[45] Duncan Money and Danelle van Zyl-Hermann, eds., *Rethinking White Societies in Southern Africa, 1930s-1990s* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020); Nicola Ginsburgh, *Class, Work and Whiteness: Race and settler colonialism in Southern Rhodesia, 1919–79* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020); Danelle van Zyl-Hermann, *Privileged Precariat: White Workers and South Africa's Long Transition to Majority Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Ivo Mhike, *Degeneracy and Empire: Childhood, Youth and Whiteness in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1900s-1950s* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2021); Neil Roos, 'South African History and Subaltern Historiography: Ideas for a Radical History of White Folk', *International Review of Social History*, 61, (2016): 117-50; Stefano Bellucci, 'Colonial ideology versus labour reality: a history of the recruitment of Italian workers to the colony of Eritrea, 1890s–1940s', *Labor History*, 55, 3 (2014): 294-308; Ushehwedu Kufakurinani, *Elasticity in Domesticity: White Women in Rhodesian Zimbabwe, 1890-1979* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); Will Jackson, *Madness and Marginality: The Lives of Kenya's White Insane* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

[46] For exceptions to this, see A.S. Mlambo, 'Some are More White than Others': Racial Chauvinism as a Factor in Rhodesian Immigration Policy, 1890 to 1963', *Zambezia* XXVII, ii (2000): 139-160; Deborah Posel, 'Whiteness and Power in the South African Civil Service: Paradoxes of the Apartheid State', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, 1 (1999): 99-119.

[47] Duncan Money and Danelle van Zyl-Hermann, 'Introduction', in *Rethinking White Societies in Southern Africa, 1930s-1990s*, eds. Duncan Money and Danelle van Zyl-Hermann (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 5-6.

[48] Miles Larmer, et al., eds., *Across the Copperbelt: Urban & Social Change in Central Africa's Borderland Communities* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2021); Enid Guene, *Borders and Nation-Building: The Katangese factor in Zambian political and economic history* (Leiden: African Studies Center, 2017); Patience Mususa, 'There used to be order: Life on the Copperbelt after the privatization of the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines' (PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2014); Hikabwa Chipande, 'Mining for Goals: Football and Social Change on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1940s–1960s', *Radical History Review*, 125 (2016): 55-73; Iva Peša, 'Crops and Copper: Agriculture and Urbanism on the Central African Copperbelt, 1950–2000', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 46, 3 (2020): 527-545.

[49] Ching Kwan Lee, *The Spectre of Global China: Politics, Labour, and Foreign Investment in Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017); Juif Dácil and Ewout Frankema, 'From Coercion to Compensation: Institutional Responses to Labour scarcity in the Central African Copperbelt', *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 14, 2 (2018): 313-343; Hyden Munene, 'A History of Rhokana/Rokana Corporation and its Nkana Mine Division, 1928-1991' (PhD thesis, University of the Free State, 2018); Robby Kapesea and Thomas McNamara, 'We are not just a union, we are a family' class, kinship and tribe in Zambia's mining unions', *Dialect Anthropology*, 44, (2020): 153–172; James Musonda, 'Undermining gender:

The White Working Class on the Mines

Labour was at the centre of the identities of the white men who came to the Copperbelt. These men may have been motivated to travel to the Copperbelt by a sense of adventure or restlessness or by a desire to leave something behind, but, ultimately, they came to work and there were few opportunities for work outside routine industrial jobs in the mining industry. To deliberately misquote Gluckman, the newly arrived white man on the mines was "first of all a miner (and possibly resembles miners everywhere)".[50] Most came from Britain or South Africa, but many had wide-ranging experience working in mines and related industries around the world. These white workers did not own or control capital and were dependent upon the wages they earned on the mines.[51] In any other context, they would have been considered workers.

This book investigates the world that these workers helped to create and, in this sense, draws from the classic arguments of E.P. Thompson that these workers had an active role in shaping their own identity, their workplace and wider society.[52] However, the Copperbelt's white workers did so in ways that we today, and as many did at the time, regard as unjustifiable and racist. Accounts of the agency and creative potential of the working class to shape society are often, not unreasonably, celebratory, positive and stress tendencies towards egalitarianism in this agency.[53] Not here. The Copperbelt's white mineworkers affirmed and articulated collective identity and interests against both their white employers and the Africans alongside whom they worked, and their status as an increasingly affluent group was underpinned by militant collective action and racial segregation.

Race was a central part of the experiences and identity of these workers. Here, this book draws on the work of David Roediger to stress that racial divisions in the workforce were not an external imposition. Roediger's pathbreaking work argued that in the United States "working-class formation and the systematic development of a sense of whiteness went hand in hand," and that "working-class 'whiteness'" was, in part, a creation "of the white working class itself."[54] Often, racism

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women mineworkers at the rock face in a Zambian underground mine', *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 43, 1 (2020): 32-42. On the revival of African labour history see Stefano Bellucci and Andreas Eckert, eds., *General Labour History of Africa: Workers Employers and Governments 20th-21st Centuries* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2019).

[50] Gluckman wrote "The African newly arrived from his rural home to work in a mine, is first of all a miner (and possibly resembles miners everywhere)." Gluckman, 'Anthropological Problems', 69.

[51] 80% of married white mineworkers surveyed in 1959 had no source of income other than wages. J.F. Holleman and Simon Biesheuvel, *The Attitudes of White Mining Employees towards Life and Work on the Copperbelt. Part II: An Interview Study* (Johannesburg: National Institute for Personnel Research, 1960), vii.

[52] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin Books, 1963).

[53] For a counter example, and a critique of Thompson, see Satnam Virdee's argument that in England "the working class were conscious agents" in the process of constructing a national identity against racialised others. Satnam Virdee, *Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 5.

[54] This too echoes Thompson's argument about the working class being present at its own making. David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 8.

and racial divisions are seen as the outcome of the self-interested machinations of capital and political elites and, for Southern Africa, this is perhaps expressed mostly succinctly by Bernard Magubane's claim that racial divisions "had to be cultivated by politically conscious classes to subvert class unity between black and white labour."[55] The mining companies were indeed responsible for instituting a racial division of labour in the workplace and acted to reinforce this division, as is stressed in Chapter 6, but white workers themselves forged a collective identity as a racialised class. Developments during the Second World War, as argued in Chapter 3, were crucial when the white mineworkers' union imposed a colour bar on the mines. As will be seen, racial categories were malleable and the category of 'white' could expand, contract and change.

The racial division of labour on the Copperbelt and the role of the white mineworkers in enforcing this division has a wider significance. The prevalence and role of race as a way of organising life and work in the extractive industries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been underestimated by scholars.[56] The racial division of labour in South Africa's mining industry and the violent struggles by white workers to enforce that division are well known.[57] Yet, a racial division of labour was common in extractive industries in other parts of the world, especially North America and Latin America. In his book on the Saudi oil industry, Robert Vitalis argues there is a "long, unbroken legacy of hierarchy across the world's mineral frontiers" and that the workforce in the oil industry was "divided, segregated, and paid different wages according to race."[58]

White mineworkers only ever constituted a minority of the workforce on the Copperbelt mines, with their numbers peaking at 7,780 in 1962 (17% of the total mining workforce).[59] Most of the workforce were African men, who drilled the orebody in the stopes, cleared blasted ore and waste rock, loaded ore into skips to be hauled to the surface and performed most manual work in the surface plants. A smaller number of African men held higher-status jobs, including clerks and 'boss boys'.[60] Segregation in the workplace was by job and all work deemed to be skilled was performed by white men. Africans and whites worked alongside each other but, officially, did not perform the same jobs, even if in practice their work tasks overlapped. All African mineworkers were supervised by whites, and the former were never above the latter in the hierarchy of the mine,

[55] Bernard Magubane, *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 16.

[56] For a fuller statement of this argument, see Duncan Money and Limin Teh, 'Race at Work: A Comparative History of Mining Labor and Empire on the Central African Copperbelt and the Fushun Coalfields, c. 1907-1945', *International Labor and Working-Class History* (*forthcoming*, 2021).

[57] Jeremy Krikler, *The Rand Revolt: The 1922 insurrection and racial killing in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2005); Van Zyl-Hermann, *Privileged Precariat*.

[58] Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 18, 22. Vitalis, however, stresses the agency of companies in constructing and maintaining these racial hierarchies.

[59] Appendix I.

[60] Boss boys supervised other African workers and played a crucial role as intermediaries between white and African workers. See Chapter 3 on this.

regardless of the job they performed. This latter point remained true even after Zambian independence.

This book is a labour history and focuses on the workplace as the key element of the everyday experience of white mineworkers.[61] The Copperbelt was a society where people were expected to work for wages or be dependent on those who did, like many other parts of the world. As Kathi Weeks points out, in such societies the amount of time that the average person is expected to devote to work – including "time spent training, searching, and preparing for work, not to mention recovering from it" – suggests "the experience warrants more consideration."[62]

The focus on the workplace also brings to the fore a material dimension to whiteness that is underappreciated. White workers benefitted from the racial division of labour and received much higher wages because they were identified, and identified themselves, as white. But, ultimately, to get these wages they had to work. Each day, they had to go underground or into the smelters and refineries, and work. Not all whites received high wages – white women certainly did not – and the mining companies were not running a charitable enterprise on a grand scale. Company executives and mine managers certainly did not wish to pay what they considered vastly inflated wages, nor were they compelled to by the state. South African mining magnate Ernest Oppenheimer described Nkana as a "mining utopia" in 1941 and complained bitterly that "one might have imagined that our workmen who had all these favours *forced* on them, would be grateful, would be loyal. Not a bit of it."[63]

Oppenheimer was complaining about one persistent feature of the Copperbelt mines: industrial unrest by white mineworkers. As he suggests, it might be expected that the high wages, subsidised housing, healthcare, and leisure provided for white mineworkers would satisfy their needs and render them a loyal and quiescent workforce. This was not the case. Instead, the mines were the site of frequent and often protracted industrial struggles and white mineworkers went on strike almost every year between 1940 and 1969.[64] In his book on diamond mining in colonial Angola, Todd Cleveland examines the puzzling lack of strikes by African mineworkers and poses the question: "Why, in light of the demanding labour regime in Lunda, did African mine workers not

[61] Carolyn Brown suggests that the workplace was more important in shaping the consciousness of miners than the factory was for other industrial workers. Carolyn Brown, *We were all Slaves: African Miners, Culture, and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 97. More broadly, the workplace has arguably been neglected in global and transnational history, Görkem Akgöz, Richard Croucher & Nicola Pizzolato, 'Back to the factory: the continuing salience of industrial workplace history', *Labor History*, 61, 1 (2020): 1-11.

[62] Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 2.

[63] Theodore Gregory, *Ernest Oppenheimer and Economic Development in Southern Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 474.

[64] Only 1941, 1953 and 1965 were entirely strike-free.

adopt a more militant posture?"[65] In this book, we might ask: why in the face of such apparent opulence did white mineworkers so often resort to labour militancy?

The answer given in this book was that the high standards of living enjoyed by white mineworkers and their frequent strike action were interdependent. White mineworkers obtained high wages and other benefits through racialised collective action. These workers did not regard these benefits as 'favours' from their employers, for which they should express gratitude, but as something they had rightfully won through industrial militancy and racial segregation. Mining companies did not voluntarily display largesse, but instead were forced into paying whites progressively higher wages. It was commonplace for white workers to receive much higher wages than African workers across Southern Africa. What was distinctive about the Copperbelt was that white mineworkers there received wages far in excess of the wages of their counterparts on mines in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. In 1958, Anglo American calculated that basic wages for white mineworkers on the Copperbelt were up to 90% higher than wages for white workers in South Africa's gold industry, while the cost of living was only around 10% higher.[66] White wages on the Copperbelt had been pushed up by sustained collective action.

Of course, this white working class was not homogenous. Most were English-speaking but a substantial minority were Afrikaners, and some came from Southern and Eastern Europe. Politically, some admired South Africa's policy of apartheid, others bristled at it. Some bemoaned continual strikes while others relished confrontations with the mining bosses. Yet what these men had in common was more significant than what divided them and their position as a racialised class on the mines was more powerful than divisions within the group. Moreover, almost none of them were from Northern Rhodesia.

Global Labour History and White Workers

This book takes labour history beyond its conventional, and now much criticised, focus on the boundaries of the nation-state as the natural unit of study.[67] Any study of the Copperbelt's white mineworkers is necessarily global in its dimensions – these workers, the companies they worked for, and the product they produced formed part of international networks of labour, capital, and commodities which transcended national borders. These workers very clearly did not originate

[65] Todd Cleveland, *Diamonds in the Rough: Corporate Paternalism and African Professionalism on the Mines of Colonial Angola, 1917-1975* (Athens, Oh.: Ohio University Press, 2015), 3.

[66] The European Wage Structure on the Copperbelt, 26 February 1958, ZCCM 17.4.4C.

[67] Marcel van der Linden, *Workers of the World: Essays Towards a Global Labour History* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Marcel van der Linden, 'The Promise and Challenges of Global Labor History', *International Labor and Working-Class History* 82 (2012): 57-76; Andreas Eckert and Marcel van der Linden, 'New Perspectives on Workers and the History of Work', in *Global History, Globally: Research and Practice around the World*, eds. Sven Beckert and Dominic Sachsenmaier (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 145-61. For Southern Africa specifically, see 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): 137-167.

from the place they worked. They personified and illuminated global networks and connections across the British Empire and beyond its boundaries.

Global labour history, as conceived by Marcel van der Linden and others, is not only about expanding the geographical scope of the subject beyond a focus on the nation-state. It also aims to expand the concept of "labour" by moving beyond the traditional focus on wage labour to look at unfree labour and the so-called informal sector.[68] This conceptual framing has paralleled the declining importance of wage labour and the drastically reduced influence of organised labour since the 1980s.[69] Some Africanist scholars, however, have questioned what place African workers could occupy in this approach to global history.[70] Indeed, many of the elements that make the Copperbelt's white mineworkers suitable subjects for global labour history – their mobility and exchange across continents, and the transnational inspirations for actions, demands, and forms of organisation – are far less applicable to African workers who were not wage labourers, and these were the large majority of workers on the Copperbelt throughout this period.

There is a tendency to see increasing and deepening global connections – especially in movements of the working class – as generally being positive. One of the central narratives of this book is the intensifying and subsequent weakening of the global connections of the white workforce over the twentieth century and identifying the consequences of these processes. These connections were largely to the detriment of African peoples in what became Zambia. As will be shown, transnational white migration and the connections this facilitated brought ideas of racial segregation as well as a group of white mineworkers determined to run the copper industry for their own benefit and, once they had received these benefits, leave.

Miners are not the typical subjects of this kind of history. Transnational labour history is often about port cities and maritime labour, sailors whose jobs inherently involved movement or dockers whose work was integral to the global circulation of commodities.[71] Miners, in contrast, have more often been typified as physically and socially disconnected: Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel's classic study of industrial conflict termed them an "isolated mass", while Martin Bulmer's

[68] See the contributions to Ulbe Bosma and Karin Hofmeester, eds., *The Lifework of a Labor Historian: Essays in Honor of Marcel van der Linden* (Brill: Leiden, 2018).

[69] Karin Hofmeester, Jan Lucassen, and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, 'No Global Labor History without Africa', *History in Africa*, 41 (2014): 256-59.

[70] Franco Barchiesi, 'How Far from Africa's Shore? A Response to Marcel van der Linden's Map for Global Labor History', *International Labor and Working-Class History* 82 (2012): 77-84. Ralph Callebert and Raji Singh Soni, 'Claims of Labor in Globalization: Africa, Citizenship, and the Integral State', *Socialism and Democracy* 32, 2 (2018): 88-89.

[71] Bellucci and Eckert, *General Labour History*, 8. See also, Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*; Lynn Schler, *Nation on Board: Becoming Nigerian at Sea* (Athens, Oh.: Ohio University Press, 2016).

model typified mining communities as characterised by "physical isolation" that "reduces contact with the outside world to a minimum."[72]

This is not how people in the mining industry at the time saw things. Anglo American's assessment of their new copper mines in 1929 breezily forecast that the problem of attracting "trained white labour will no doubt solve itself" as it had done "in every mining field in the world's history. Men will come from South Africa, from Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States and the Continent of Europe."[73] And so they did. When American mining magnate Harold Hochschild visited the Copperbelt in 1949 he encountered "English, Scotch, Irish, Canadians, Central Europeans, Australians, Rhodesians, British South Africans, Afrikaners, and even a small remnant of Americans, all working cheek by jowl."[74] The Copperbelt was not unusual in this respect. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, miners had migrated between Britain and newly established mining regions in the British Empire and the United States, and many played an important role in establishing trade unions and in establishing the idea of a white imperial working class.[75]

These patterns of migration and mobility were crucial in the development of the class and racial identity of these white workers. These workers constituted a mobile and transient population whose constant comings and goings linked the Copperbelt to other mining and industrial centres around the world, and their race and gender meant that they faced few formal impediments to mobility. Much of this book is about migration, which has been closely tied to the study of labour in Africa from the outset.[76] Yet, many studies of African labour and migration in the heyday of the subject were about the making of national working-classes. This book argues that labour migration was not simply about a flow of workers from one country to another, whereupon they merged with the 'national' working class but "a process, without a necessary 'national' end point."[77]

Migration is an important way in which ideas, practices, institutions, and cultures are transmitted around the world. White mineworkers were agents of such transmission and actively

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[72] C. Kerr and A. Siegel, 'The Interindustry Propensity to Strike—an International Comparison', in *Industrial Conflict*, eds. A. Kornhauser, R. Dubin and A.M. Ross (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1954), 186-212. Martin Bulmer, 'Sociological Models of the Mining Community', *The Sociological Review* 23 (1975): 85.

[73] Rhodesian Anglo American, *Mining developments in Northern Rhodesia: A brief narrative of the history, physical, political and economic features of the country with special references to the mineral industry* (Johannesburg: n.p., 1929), 63.

[74] 'Visit to the Rhodesias', 22 October 1949, Papers of Ronald Prain, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming [hereafter RP], Box 1, unnumbered folder.

[75] Marjorie Harper, 'Obstacles and opportunities: Labour emigration to the "British World" in the nineteenth century', *Continuity and Change* 34, 1 (2019): 43-62.

[76] Lynn Schler, Louise Bethlehem and Galia Sabar, 'Rethinking labour in Africa, past and present', *African Identities* 7, 3 (2009): 287-88. Zachary Kagan Guthrie, *Bound for Work: Labor, mobility, and colonial rule in central Mozambique, 1940-1965* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018).

[77] Bonner, Hyslop, and van der Walt, 'Rethinking Worlds of Labour', 145.

involved in shaping the new workplaces and towns on the Copperbelt. These mines were what Kornel Chang has termed a "node" on "the imperial circuits of white working people and their ideas."[78] Their constant comings and goings had significant consequences. It meant that many white mineworkers were well-aware of what pay and working conditions were like at other mines and knew how to enforce what they believed to be the appropriate standards. This is because, along with their industrial skills, white mineworkers brought with them the knowledge and traditions of the labour movement. They knew how to organise trade unions, how to organise strikes, and how to speak in a language that trade unionists elsewhere in the world would understand.

Wage levels for white workers were shaped by labour markets that crossed national borders. In the 1930s and 1940s, wages offered by the mining companies were set with reference to wages in mining regions in Australia, Britain, South Africa, and the United States. Demands for higher pay and better conditions – and there were many of these – by white mineworkers were influenced by the same. A similar argument has been made for African mineworkers. Miles Larmer argued that the Copperbelt's African mineworkers assessed what was a fair wage for their work "in relation to the wages paid for similar work in other countries," while Carolyn Brown argued that for Nigerian colliery workers, comparisons with European and American miners "informed demands and shaped worker militance."[79] One difference is that the Copperbelt's white mineworkers could, and often did, become workers in those other places, and their demands were often rooted in personal experience in other mining regions.

The international origins and experiences of white mineworkers means that this book necessarily takes detours to other mining and industrial centres in the course of the narrative. Prasannan Parthasarathi stressed the utility of comparison for global labour history and while this book does not involve sustained comparison, drawing evidence from other mining regions allows us to explore some of the similarities between them.[80] The dearth of comparative work on different mining regions has inhibited recognition of the many commonalities in the labour structure of different mines. I am only aware of a small number of comparative studies on copper mining, including Janet Finn's book on Butte and Chuquicamata and the regrettably unpublished doctoral dissertation of Chipasha Luchembe on copper miners in Peru and Zambia.[81]

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[78] Kornel Chang, 'Race and Empire: Transnational Labor Activism and the Politics of Anti-Asian Agitation in the Anglo-American Pacific World, 1880 –1910', *Journal of American History* 96, 3 (2009): 694.

[79] Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, 196; Brown, *We were all Slaves*, 184.

[80] Prasannan Parthasarathi, 'Global Labor History: A Dialogue with Marcel Van Der Linden', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 82 (2012): 108–113.

[81] Janet Finn, *Tracing the Veins: Of Copper, Culture, and Community from Butte to Chuquicamata* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Chipasha Luchembe, 'Finance Capital and Mine Labour: A Comparative Study of Copper Miners in Zambia and Peru, 1870-1980' (PhD Thesis, University of California, 1982). See also, Israel García Solares, 'Striking Hard Rock Veins. Multinational Corporations and Miners' Unions in Mexico and the United States, 1906-1952', *Labor History* 61, 3-4 (2020): 213-227.

This book emphasises what whites, by virtue of embeddedness in global networks of labour, brought to the workplace: ideas of militant working-class solidarity and racial segregation. This combination is a jarring one, but it was not unusual. Jonathan Hyslop's concept of "white labourism" is influential in this regard. Hyslop posited that international migration patterns between Britain and its settler colonies produced an imperial working class underpinned by an ideology of white labourism, whereby opposition to economic exploitation became closely entangled with white domination and segregation. The white working-class in South Africa was therefore not a peculiar phenomenon but reflected and took inspiration from a wider white labour movement in the British Empire.[82] There is also a well-established literature on the role of the white labour movement in fomenting and spreading exclusionary measures against Asians in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, and how a racialised class consciousness was defined against Asian workers.[83]

It will not come as any great revelation to anyone with even a passing familiarity with the topic that whites in colonial Africa were racist, and certainly the Copperbelt's white mineworkers were that. Ann Stoler noted that racism was the "classic foil" used to overcome divisions between Europeans in colonial societies, but she also argued that viewing racism "as a virtually built in and natural product" of colonialism "accords poorly with the fact that the *quality* and *intensity* of racism var[ied] enormously in different colonial contexts and at different historical moments."[84] In the case of Zambia, as Sishuwa Sishuwa points out, there has been "a lack of specificity and appreciation of what was different about how race worked," and a prevailing assumption that race in Zambia worked in the same way as in South Africa.[85]

I argue that the mobility of white mineworkers shaped the intensity of attitudes towards race and colonial rule in Zambia. Crucially, it was not only the case that these white workers came from other places to the Copperbelt, it was also that they mostly soon left for other places as well. This has important consequences for Zambia as it helps explain two peculiar features of the Copperbelt in these years: the lack of struggles in defence of the colour bar, and the lack of struggles in in defence of colonial rule during decolonisation. White mineworkers embarked on several major strikes during the 1950s but not, counter-intuitively, in defence of the colour bar. The comparison with South Africa is an illustrative one, as attempts by the mining companies to alter the colour bar

[82] 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): 398-421. See also, 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): 229-36.

[83] Chang, 'Circulating Race and Empire'; Mae Ngai, 'Trouble on the Rand: The Chinese Question in South Africa and the Apogee of White Settlerism', *International Labor and Working-Class History* 91 (2017): 59-78.

[84] Laura Ann Stoler, 'Rethinking Colonial Categories. European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, 1 (1989): 137. Emphasis in original.

[85] Sishuwa Sishuwa, '"A White Man Will Never Be a Zambian": Racialised Nationalism, the Rule of Law, and Competing Visions of Independent Zambia in the Case of Justice James Skinner, 1964–1969', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 45, 3 (2019): 506.

in 1922 provoked a strike by white miners that escalated into an armed insurrection that threatened to topple the South African state.[86]

Almost all white mineworkers came to the Copperbelt for relatively brief periods. These were workers whose fortunes were tied to an extractive industry and, regardless of political developments, they did not intend to stay.[87] They came to make money, not to settle. Moreover, white mineworkers' privileged position rested on access to the riches of the copper industry, and not on the colonial political order. The fact that white mineworkers generally did not regard themselves as prospective locals who had come to settle and could easily come and go strongly influenced their thinking. Many, as will be seen, freely admitted they were only on the Copperbelt to make money. White workers had plenty of cash, but little property, as the mines provided housing and furniture. Since in a few years, they could be working on mines in Canada or South Africa, they were not prepared to lose earnings by embarking on a struggle to defend the colour bar or colonial rule. In this sense, the specificity of the Copperbelt was linked to its global connections.

Indeed, what these transnational influences and migrants created on the Copperbelt was more than the sum of its parts or an exact reproduction of mining communities elsewhere. White society on the Copperbelt came to be distinguished by its extraordinary affluence. White working-class life and trade unionism on the Copperbelt in the 1950s were familiar enough to contemporary observers to be considered akin to working-class life in Britain, but in other ways affluent Copperbelt life was a world away from Britain's coalfields. "Take away the sky and this could be Barnsley or Wigan or South Wales," remarked one resident, himself from a family of Lancashire miners, "except that few British colliers have afternoon tea in the garden, waited on by servants in crisp white uniforms."[88] This wealth was secured and maintained by racialised and militant collective action and the regular bouts of industrial unrest by white mineworkers which continued until the late 1960s. One official from Britain's Trade Union Congress was amazed at the militancy he encountered on the Copperbelt in the late 1950s and could only compare it to the 1926 General Strike in Britain.[89] This was not the case in other parts of Southern Africa in the 1950s, where white workers were by this time a generation removed from the tumultuous struggles of the 1910s or the 1922 Rand Revolt.

The struggles of white workers were not righteous or heroic, but they were significant and any understanding of how and why the Copperbelt developed in the way that it did cannot overlook them. Africans were not the only workers on the mines, although 'worker' and 'African' have implicitly been considered synonyms in much of the literature. The white men who came to the Copperbelt were part of a global workforce and their connections and experiences informed a

[86] See Krikler, *Rand Revolt* for a masterful account of these events.

[87] Scholars have noted that, more generally, Zambia's white population was a transient one throughout the colonial period. Hugh Macmillan and Frank Shapiro, *Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 160.

[88] Colin Morris, *The Hour After Midnight. A Missionary's Experiences of Racial and Political Struggle in Northern Rhodesia* (London: Longmans, 1961), 9.

[89] See Chapter 5.

militant strategy that made them astonishingly affluent. This extraordinary world of white strikes and working-class affluence, and the men who made it, form the subject matter of this book.

Sources

The above sets the book in its intellectual and historiographical context. I now turn to discuss sources and the practical conditions and developments that allowed me to write this book. The sources for this book were geographically dispersed, as is perhaps inevitable for research on a group that was itself widely dispersed. This book draws upon material from archives in Zambia, South Africa, Britain, Australia, the Netherlands, and the United States. This kind of research was dependent not only on funding but also on my nationality and passport, which gave me ready access to all those places. I never, for instance, had to worry about over-staying a visa when mulling over whether to stay an extra few days somewhere after a conference to chase up archival leads. Gathering the sources that underpin this book would have been considerably more difficult without holding a European passport, and this should give us pause for thought about what kind of scholars are able to produce transnational or global labour history.

Many of the transient and habitually mobile subjects of this book often disappear abruptly from nationally bound archives, leaving no indication about where in the world they might have reappeared. Series of correspondence suddenly stop or meeting minutes simply note that a union branch has a new secretary, and it then takes a lot of work to track down where that person went. This is a common problem. In her history of Zambia's coloured community, Juliette Milner-Thornton found "fragments" of her great-grandfather's life scattered across Australian, American, British, and Zambian archives.[90]

Yet this kind of work has also become much easier in the last two decades and would have been near-impossible before the huge expansion of online catalogues, digitised newspapers and archive documents and genealogical websites. Digitised ship's passenger lists, for instance, were an invaluable way of identifying where a person was in time and space and then using this information to identify archives where more information could be found. Linda Colley observed in 2007 that the prevalence of online material has made it "far easier than it used to be to track down a life of this sort, which repeatedly crossed over different geographical and political boundaries."[91] It has become still easier since then and, as noted by Lara Putnam, "the transnational turn is accelerating simultaneously with the digital turn."[92]

The expansion of digital archival information is, however, uneven. Research for much of this book entailed work in two archives that, although they function well, had no online content or catalogues: the National Archives of Zambia in Lusaka and the archives of Zambia Consolidated

[90] Juliette Milner-Thornton, *The Long Shadow of the British Empire: The ongoing legacies of race and class in Zambia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 25.

[91] Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A woman in world history* (London: HarperPress, 2007), xxviii.

[92] Lara Putnam, 'The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast', *The American Historical Review* 121, 2 (2016): 377.

Copper Mines in Ndola. Both contain rich archival material on white mineworkers, who the colonial state and the mining companies mistrusted and sometimes feared and so closely monitored. The ZCCM archive was particularly valuable as it offers a window into what Larry Butler termed the "the obsessively secretive world of South African mining" as the documents it contains were never intended to be made public.[93] The private archival holdings of the mining industry were turned into public records by Zambia's Ministry of Home Affairs after the industry was nationalised, thereby at a stroke creating a source for economic and social history perhaps unparalleled on the continent in terms of size and depth.[94] Challenges remain as the collection is only partially catalogued but its survival under inauspicious circumstances is remarkable.

The wide-ranging search for documents was also necessitated by the disappearance of the NRMWU's own archive. The archive still existed in the late 1960s and was used by Elena Berger in her doctoral thesis but had disappeared a few years later.[95] The Zambian Government took possession of the union's internal documents after the union was banned in 1969 and it appears that these were destroyed.[96] The NRMWU actively produced journals, newsletters and even a newspaper, but what survives is nothing more than clippings or the occasional issue bundled together with other documents. Tracing the NRMWU's history in other archival collections can at best partially remedy this loss.

Archival sources have been supplemented with interviews with former white residents of the Copperbelt. A small number remained in, or had returned to, Zambia but most were scattered across Britain, Ireland, South Africa, Canada, Australia, and Zimbabwe. I gathered interviewees by relying on existing social connections between informants – I asked each interviewee if they knew anyone else who might like to be interviewed – and this created an implicit bias by privileging those with positive memories of their time on the Copperbelt and who therefore kept in touch with friends from that time. Conversely, those who have struggled since leaving are less likely to maintain contact with old friends and are harder to track down.[97]

Positive recollections of Copperbelt life in the 1950s and 1960s were also reinforced by a nostalgia bolstered by Zambia's precipitous economic decline from the 1970s. Several interviewees who visited the Copperbelt in the 1990s and early 2000s recounted to me their shock at what they

[93] Larry Butler, *Copper Empire: Mining and the Colonial State in Northern Rhodesia, c. 1930-64* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 205.

[94] On the origins and development of this archival collection, see Miyanda Simabwachi, 'A History of Archives in Zambia' (PhD thesis, University of the Free State, 2019), 236-44.

[95] Elena Berger, 'Labour Policies on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, 1924-1964' (DPhil thesis, Oxford University, 1969).

[96] L. Silishebo to Trade Union Officer, Kitwe, 14 November 1969, National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka [hereafter NAZ], MLSS1/21/78.

[97] Pamela Shurmer-Smith found it difficult to trace white former residents of Northern Rhodesia who had "sunk right to the bottom," so did not keep up contact with others. In New Zealand, she met a former Copperbelt resident who was living in a garden hut. Shurmer-Smith, *Remnants of Empire,* 193.

found. Such nostalgia is commonplace on the Copperbelt itself. Patience Mususa found that many of her informants in Luanshya regarded the recent past as a kind of golden age when the mining industry provided jobs and welfare.[98] In a parallel case, Kate Law found that for the white women she interviewed – former residents of Zimbabwe – "the past was magnified through the lens of the present," that is their recollections were strongly influenced by the severe economic crisis that engulfed Zimbabwe from the early 2000s.[99]

Few memoirs appear as sources in this book. This is because most white mineworkers were not exactly men of letters. Among the tens of thousands who worked on the Copperbelt, I only discovered one who wrote something substantial about his experiences.[100] This is in stark contrast to whites elsewhere in the region.[101] However, we have several rich accounts from white women including two women who worked there in the 1930s – Winifred Tapson, a South African typist, and Lucy Cullen, an acerbic-tongued New Yorker – along with perceptive insights into the foibles of white society in the mid-1950s from Doris Lessing and the memoirs of Sara Dunn, who came to Nchanga from Scotland in the early 1970s.[102]

Book Structure

The structure of the main chapters of this book is broadly chronological because distinct themes emerged in different periods. First though, Chapter 1 provides a short background to the copper industry, how copper was produced, the companies and their workforce. While the introduction provides the intellectual background and main arguments of this book, Chapter 1 is more a practical introduction to the topic and provides the reader with the kind of background information necessary to navigate the rest of the book.

Chapter 2, the first narrative chapter, begins with the establishment of industrial mining in 1926 and covers the period until the outbreak of the Second World War, during which time the four largest copper mines were established. It examines the recruitment of a white workforce, the origins of this workforce, and life in the new mining camps. This chapter argues that the background and global work experience of these white workers is crucial for understanding the emergence of trade unionism among the white workforce. Many white workers had considerable experience in the

[98] Patience Mususa, '"Getting by": Life on the Copperbelt after the privatization of the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines', *Social Dynamics* 36, 2 (2010): 391.

[99] Kate Law, *Gendering the Settler State: White Women, Race, Liberalism and Empire in Colonial Rhodesia, 1950-1980* (London: Routledge, 2016), 145.

[100] Barry Coulton, *A Cumbrian Lad: An Autobiography* (Leicester: Troubadour, 2007).

[101] Rory Pilossof, 'The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans', *South African Historical Journal* 61, 3 (2009): 621-638.

[102] Winifred Tapson, *Old Timer* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1957); Lucy Cullen, *Beyond the Smoke that Thunders* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940); Doris Lessing, *Going Home* (London: Panther Books, 1968); Sara Dunn, *Malachite and Mangoes: Five years in the Zambian Copperbelt* (Leicester: Matador, 2016).

labour movement in Australia, Britain, South Africa, and the United States, and drew upon ideas of industrial militancy and racial segregation current in these places.

Chapter 3 covers the period of the Second World War. Circumstances on the Copperbelt altered greatly with the outbreak of war as copper was crucial to the war effort. 1940 saw the beginning of a wave of industrial unrest and strikes by white mineworkers regularly disrupted production for the next seven years. White workers won major improvements in their pay and conditions and secured a colour bar that formed a material basis for an expanded white working-class identity. Importantly, their demands were shaped by comparisons with prevailing conditions in other mining regions and were supported by trade unions elsewhere in the world, particularly in Britain. This chapter ends in 1947 when a generous new pay deal and the stirrings of a copper boom brought this wave of unrest to an end.

Chapter 4 deals with the post-war copper boom and the extraordinarily affluent society that this created for whites on the Copperbelt. This society was marked by conspicuous consumption and this chapter focuses on the rich social life that developed in this period. It argues that that the Copperbelt's growing number of white mineworkers were highly materialistic and largely did not consider themselves permanent settlers but as temporary residents there to make money. This chapter also covers the formation of a powerful trade union for African mineworkers, and the consequences of this, as well as the beginnings of protracted negotiations over the colour bar.

Chapter 5 covers the sharp fall in copper prices in 1956 that briefly curtailed affluent Copperbelt life. Both companies made strenuous efforts to cut production costs and restructure their workforce, provoking another tumultuous period of industrial unrest by both African and white mineworkers, and the first collaboration between the African and white mineworkers' unions. This chapter rebuts the prevailing historiographical assumption that these strikes were primarily about the colour bar and examines the relationship between these disputes and gender roles. This chapter also identifies and explores the curious lack of opposition to rising African nationalism by white mineworkers and argues that this was rooted in their mobility.

Chapter 6 examines what happened to white mineworkers during and after Zambia's independence in 1964. White mineworkers were unwilling to actively oppose decolonization because they did not regard themselves as settlers with a long-term future in the territory. Most were in the territory for work and habitually left for jobs in mines and related industries in other parts of the world. White mineworkers survived Zambia's transition to independence in substantial numbers and continued to exist as a racialised and internationally mobile class. This chapter highlights the role of the mining companies in consciously maintaining the racial division of labour in independent Zambia. The disappearance of white mineworkers from the Copperbelt was not a preordained outcome after Zambian independence but the result of the near collapse of the copper industry in 1974.

Finally, there is a short conclusion summarising the main arguments of the book and linking the subjects of this book to the contemporary situation of expatriate workers in the extractives industry.

Note on Terminology

The decision by trade unions on the mines to adopt confusingly similar names means some clarification is required. The official name of the white mineworkers' union – the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers Union – was so similar to its African counterpart – the Northern Rhodesia African Mineworkers Trade Union – that the two organisations occasionally received each other's post.[103] To avoid replicating this confusion, the white mineworkers' union is referred to as the NRMWU in this book, while its African counterpart is referred to as the African Mine Workers Union (AMWU), the commonly used acronym in the existing literature. The two staff associations also had near-identical acronyms – the Mine Officials and Salaried Staff Association (MOSSA) for whites and the Mines African Staff Association (MASA) for Africans. After Zambian independence, the two white trade unions merged to become the Zambia Expatriate Mineworkers' Association and the African trade unions became the Mineworkers Union of Zambia.

[103] Application for registration of trade union, NRMWU, 1950, NAZ MLSS1/26/68.

Chapter 1

Making Copper, Making the Copperbelt

The modern history of the Copperbelt cannot be separated from the history of the industry that gave its name to the region, and the cycles of boom and bust that characterise the copper industry. The mines of the Zambian Copperbelt were established in the 1920s amidst a great global expansion of the copper industry. Production, hitherto concentrated in the United States, rapidly shifted to Latin America, Central Africa, and Canada.[1] This expansion intersected with the northward movement of the miners' frontier from South Africa, fuelled by the fervent belief that a great source of mineral wealth (a 'second Rand') lay somewhere north of the Limpopo River. Copper discoveries seemed to herald a new mining boom like the gold and diamond booms of the nineteenth century. Yet before the first copper had been mined, prices crashed with the Great Depression and the entire industry was plunged into a severe recession. The mines survived, though barely.

There was another great copper boom after the Second World War, albeit one punctuated by the occasional steep fall in prices, and a further boom after Zambian independence in 1964. Copper was crucial in wartime for production of armaments and was stockpiled in the aftermath as a strategic mineral, but it was also a vital component for new consumer goods and cars in the burgeoning post-war economy. Copper was required by industrialised economies in ever-greater quantities and production from the Copperbelt mines rose steadily. This was brought to an end by a protracted slump in the industry in the mid-1970s, as the oil shock and world recession dragged down commodity prices. This slump marked a rupture in the region's history and brings the narrative of this book to a close.[2]

Copper is a volatile industry and boom and bust are consequently persistent features of life on the Copperbelt. As one long-serving manager complained, during his twenty years on the Copperbelt "we have sold copper at less than £30 and at more than £400 per ton and, within the last year, the price has changed from over £400 to less than £170."[3] Fittingly, a kind of volatility characterised the lives of the subject of this book. Yet, the industry itself has endured. Large urban centres developed on the Copperbelt and the headframes of the shafts and chimneys from the

[1] In the 1910s, the United States produced 56% of world copper output. By the 1930s, this had fallen to 29%, while copper from colonial Zambia had risen from a negligible figure in the 1910s to almost 10% of world copper production in the 1930s. Schmitz, 'World Copper Market', 303.

[2] Miles Larmer has argued persuasively 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." Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, 42.

[3] O.B. Bennett, 'Improvements in Plant Practice and Labour Utilisation at Rhokana Corporation Limited: introduction to paper by O.B. Bennett', *Journal of the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy* 59, 2 (1958): 111.

refineries and smelters still dot the skyline of these cities. The wealth of the earth, and the business of extracting it, is not done yet.

The Central African Copperbelt has now been one of the centres of world copper production for over a century. This vast mining region stretches out as one geographically continuous mineralised belt across the border between modern-day Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia. Imperialist competition between Britain and Belgium, or more accurately commercial interests operating under their auspices, resulted in the region being divided into two. There is a convincing argument that subsequent studies of the Central African Copperbelt have artificially divided what is one integrated mining region into a Congolese/Katangese Copperbelt and a Zambian Copperbelt, "following the divisions and legacies of Belgian and British colonial rule, and subsequent Francophone and Anglophone scholarship."[4] For the topic of this book, there is a good case for treating the history of the white workforce on Zambia's copper mines separately from their counterparts in Congo. For one thing, there were relatively few white mineworkers employed on the copper mines in Congo, and the historical experience of whites on either side of the border diverged.[5] In this book, therefore, 'Copperbelt' is used as a shorthand for the Zambian Copperbelt. There is also one other pertinent difference between the two side of the Copperbelt that is worth highlighting: geology.

Making Copper

[PLACE FIGURE 1 HERE]

Transforming copper ore into a usable commodity for industrial purposes is a complex procedure and one that, during the twentieth century, required a wide variety of different forms of labour in the various stages of extraction. As will be discussed below, on the Copperbelt mines, work was organised along racial lines at all stages of production and there was a clear racial division of labour.

On the Zambian Copperbelt, the bulk of the orebodies are located deep underneath the surface. The orebodies were between 3% and 6% copper, much less than the orebodies discovered in Katanga, which were 7-30% copper and located at shallower depths.[6] Copper in Katanga could be extracted in huge open pits where the earth and rock covering the orebody was stripped away. However, a key advantage was that the ores on the Zambian Copperbelt are sulphide ores, and in

[4] Miles Larmer, Enid Guene, Benoît Henriet, Iva Peša and Rachel Taylor, 'Introduction', in *Across the Copperbelt: Urban & Social Change in Central Africa's Borderland Communities*, eds. Miles Larmer et al. (James Currey: Woodbridge, 2021), 2. See also Guene, *Copper, Borders and Nation-building*.

[5] I elaborate on this argument in Duncan Money, 'Divergence and Convergence on the Copperbelt: White mineworkers in comparative perspective, 1911-63', in *Across the Copperbelt: Urban & Social Change in Central Africa's Borderland Communities*, eds. Miles Larmer et al. (James Currey: Woodbridge, 2021), 77-100.

[6] Schmitz, 'World Copper Industry', 84-85.

the interwar period sulphide ores could be processed much more cheaply than the oxide ores found in Katanga.[7]

The depth of the orebodies on the Zambian side meant that all extraction required deep-level underground mining until 1955, when the first open pit was dug at Nchanga Mine. Quickly, these became large and complex operations and by the 1950s the mines had reached almost a kilometre under the earth's surface. Copper ore was removed in a series of workings – called stopes on the Copperbelt –placed along the orebody at regular intervals. In the stopes, long holes were drilled into the orebody and blasted with explosives, producing relatively small pieces of rock that were allowed to fall along inclined tunnels into trucks on a haulage level dug underneath the orebody. Where the orebody was thicker, it was undercut and allowed to fall by gravity through vertical openings into tunnels dug underneath it without being drilled or blasted, a technique known as caving.[8] Broken ore was then loaded onto trucks – a process known as 'lashing' at mines in Southern Africa – and transported by electric locomotives to the shafts and hoisted up to the surface.

The underground mine was only one part of operations. Producing copper in a form usable by industrial consumers requires the ore taken from the earth to be processed in several stages. Processing took place at the mine site as smelting and refining reduces the weight of copper by two-thirds and the Copperbelt mines, geographically distant from their export markets and located far inland, had relatively high transport costs.[9] Alongside the underground mines, concentrators, mills, and smelters were constructed in the early 1930s, followed by refineries in the middle of the decade.

Several stages of treatment were necessary to separate copper from the rock in which it was embedded. First, copper ore was transferred to the concentrator and the ore was ground into a fine powder, then mixed with water and xanthate to recover copper through the floatation process. The result, known as copper concentrate, was conveyed to the smelter and the remainder, a slurry called tailings, was pumped into dams around the mine. In the smelter, the concentrate was first melted in a furnace, creating another discarded by-product called slag, and then oxidized with air blasts in the convertor to remove sulphur, which was discharged from the smelter as sulphur dioxide. Blister copper, the remaining material, was around 99.4% pure copper and exported in this form or sent to the refinery to be refined electrolytically, producing 99.8% pure copper.[10] Blister and refined copper

[7] Oxide ores required an additional stage of leaching processing before they could be smelted. Robert Baldwin, *Economic Development and Export Growth: A study of Northern Rhodesia, 1920-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 31.

[8] Caving was used at Nchanga and Mufulira. O.B. Bennett, 'Large-Scale Mining Methods on the Copperbelt', *Optima* 3, 2 (1953): 19-24.

[9] Marian Radetzki and Linda Wårell, *A Handbook of Primary Commodities in the Global Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 68.

[10] This section is drawn from Coleman, *Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt*, xvii-xx. For greater detail see Thomas R. Navin, *Copper Mining & Management* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1978), 25-69.

were exported by rail to ports at Beira in Mozambique or Lobito Bay in Angola, and from there shipped to Europe and North America.

Mining and processing were not the sum total of activity on the mines. Geographical isolation from other industrial centres and secondary industries obliged the mining companies to build surface plants for construction and repair work. These were called 'shops' and included a boiler shop to fabricate steel and repair heavy equipment, a machine shop to repair smaller machinery and tools, a garage which maintained and repaired vehicles, a foundry to supply metal castings, and a carpenters' shop, where all timber used on the mine was cut. There were also assay and research laboratories, surveying departments, and offices for personnel, finance, and general administrative departments. Power stations fired by wood and coal, and later hydroelectric plants, kept all this running.

The copper industry expanded enormously between the 1920s and 1970s (see Table 1.1). By 1970, approximately 11% of world copper output was produced by Zambia's mines, and Zambia was the second-largest copper producer in the world.[11] Yet the basic structure of production remained the same in this period. There were incremental improvements in mining, smelting and refining techniques, but no dramatic changes like the way in which the introduction of open pit mining had transformed the copper industry from the 1900s.[12]

Table 1.1: Copper production from the Copperbelt mines, 1926-1975[13]

Year	Copper production (long tons)	Year	Copper production (long tons)
1926	0	1951	309,000
1927	3,289	1952	313,000
1928	5,930	1953	363,000
1929	5,465	1954	378,000
1930	6,269	1955	343,000
1931	8,764	1956	383,000
1932	68,000	1957	417,000

[11] Bureau of Mines, *Minerals Yearbook 1972 Volume III* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1974), 45.

[12] Timothy LeCain, *Mass Destruction: The men and giant mines that wired America and scarred the planet* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009).

[13] Coleman, *Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt*, 71; Berger, *Labour, Race and Colonial Rule*, 238-39; Simon Cunningham, 'Nationalization and the Zambian Copper Mining Industry' (Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh University, 1985), 71.

1933	104,000	1958	375,000
1934	138,000	1959	417,000
1935	144,000	1960	559,000
1936	142,000	1961	560,000
1937	148,000	1962	539,000
1938	213,000	1963	568,000
1939	212,000	1964	633,000
1940	263,000	1965	696,000
1941	228,000	1966	623,000
1942	247,000	1967	663,000
1943	251,000	1968	685,000
1944	221,000	1969	720,000
1945	194,000	1970	684,000
1946	183,000	1971	651,000
1947	192,000	1972	717,000
1948	213,000	1973	707,000
1949	259,000	1974	698,000
1950	277,000	1975	677,000

The workplace and the workers

A mine is a peculiar workplace. Lewis Mumford termed the underground mine "the first completely inorganic environment to be created and lived in by man," a place where the cycles of night and day and the seasons were abolished and where work proceeded only with artificial light and ventilation.[14] The mines operated constantly, so every hour of every day people had to be at work. This was not only about production. Tunnels and roof supports had to be checked and repaired to avoid collapse, pumps had to be operated continually to prevent the inexorable creep of water into the workings, and the vast machinery allowing entry and exit through the shafts had to be kept in good working order. The mine could never rest. Even during strikes there was work that had to be done.

[14] Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilisation* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1934), 69-70.

The pattern of work on the mines dictated the rhythm of life on the Copperbelt. Blasts from hooters, sirens or ringing bells audible over the townships announced the change of each shift and throughout this period the basic work pattern was a system of three eight-hour shifts over the day. Underground operations ran continuously 24 hours a day from Monday to Saturday on a pattern of three eight-hour shifts beginning at 7am, 3pm and 11pm. Surface plants partly followed the same shift pattern, plus an overlapping day shift running from 7am to 4:30pm on Monday to Friday. Maintenance work took place on Sundays.

These were hierarchical workplaces with a lengthy chain of command. Management structures followed American practice: the mine was headed by a general manager and each part of the operations (such as the smelter, mill, or underground mine) was headed by a superintendent or resident engineer, each of whom had a deputy, who reported to the general manager.[15] Beneath this level were various managers and assistant managers. In the mine itself, the underground manager headed operations, assisted by mine captains who had responsibility for a section of the underground workings, and shift bosses who oversaw a level within a section. On the surface, sections of the plant and different job categories were headed by a foreman. Underneath this level of the hierarchy were white daily-paid workers. African workers occupied the lowest rungs of the occupational hierarchy and were under the direct authority of white workers.

African men constituted the large majority of the mining workforce throughout this period.[16] Bemba-speakers from what are now Northern and Luapula provinces were the largest component of this workforce, but the mines also recruited African labour from across Northern Rhodesia and from Nyasaland (Malawi), Tanganyika (Tanzania), Mozambique, and even further afield.[17] One long-serving compound manager claimed that Africans seeking work had arrived at Roan Antelope "from Southern Rhodesia, Zululand, Transvaal, South-West Africa, Angola, Sierra Leone, Port Said, Portuguese East Africa, Belgian Congo, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, and other places."[18] African mineworkers were initially employed on a ticket system where they received a ticket per shift worked and were paid after receiving 30 tickets. From 1941, the African workforce became more stratified, first with three grades of employees and later eight. In the mid-1950s, a further division was created with the introduction of staff status for senior African workers, who received a monthly salary.[19]

White workers constituted a substantial minority of the workforce until the mid-1970s. Although the basic division in the workforce was a racial one, there was also a division within the

[15] Navin, *Copper Mining & Management*, 41-43.

[16] Figures on the size and composition of the mining workforce are provided in an Appendix I.

[17] The BSAC had imposed a hut tax payable in cash over the east of the colony in 1901 and over the west in 1905 to compel African men to become labour migrants. Mwelwa Musambachime, 'Escape from Tyranny: Flights Across the Rhodesia–Congo Boundary, 1900–1930', *Transafrican Journal of History* 18 (1989): 151.

[18] C.F. Spearpoint, 'The African Native and the Rhodesian Copper Mines', *Journal of the Royal African Society* 36, 144 (1937): 50.

[19] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 24.

white workforce between a daily-paid section and a monthly-paid staff section.[20] The latter encompassed clerical and administrative personnel, mining professionals such as geologists, engineers and metallurgists, and supervisors of white labour: shift bosses, mine captains and foremen. Daily-paid mineworkers included artisans with the kind of skills needed in most industrial enterprises – boilermakers, carpenters, electricians, and fitters – and workers with specialist mining skills whose work was necessary for the basic functioning of the mine – miners, timbermen, and winding engine drivers – along with semi-skilled operators. From the 1920s until the early 1960s, most white workers were employed as daily-paid workers and this meant they could be dismissed with 24-hours' notice.[21] Mining work was often precarious, both in terms of employment and in terms of the job being physically dangerous.

These mines soon became huge and concentrated industrial enterprises and required huge quantities of labour. Rhokana, then the largest mine, employed over 12,000 people in the early 1950s. Even the smaller mines employed a few thousand workers. Deep-level mining and processing of copper ores required a wide variety of labour from the outset, particularly skilled labour monopolised by white workers. A list of white employees at Mufulira Mine in 1937 detailed 73 different jobs for white daily-paid workers and 64 jobs for white staff. Few white workers, perhaps counter-intuitively, were employed as miners and this was consistent across the Copperbelt mines from the beginning.[22] This is one important difference with the gold mines on the South African Rand, where miners were the largest occupational category in the white workforce by far.[23]

'Miners' and 'mineworkers' are often used interchangeably but miners, as Elaine Katz argued, were a distinct occupational category. Miners were underground workers directly engaged in extracting copper ore or in development work – sinking shafts and driving tunnels from the shafts to the orebody.[24] This work was the most demanding manual labour on the mines and depended almost entirely on African workers who drilled the orebody and removed broken ore. Sinking a new shaft, for instance, involved a group of twenty African workers drilling 140 six-foot deep holes, supervised by a white shaft sinker, who would then charge and blast the holes. Once blasted, a group of fifty Africans shovelled the broken rock into buckets that were hoisted to the surface under the

[20] The category of 'daily paid' was commonplace in metal mining in this period, but the term is something of a misnomer. White daily-paid workers were paid once a month, but their wages were calculated according to how many daily shifts they had completed that month. Monthly-paid staff received a salary.

[21] The daily-paid category was eliminated in 1964, see Chapter 6.

[22] Only 22 workers among a workforce of 470 were employed as miners. Mufulira Mines, Strength as at 1 April 1937. ZCCM 10.7.9A.

[23] In 1940, the gold industry employed 7,052 white miners among a total of 42,852 white workers. Morley Nkosi, *Mining Deep: The Origins of the Labour Structure in South Africa* (Claremont: David Philip, 2011), 309-10. Fewer surface workers were required as the treatment of ore into gold usually required only one metallurgical plant, whereas the production of copper required a three-stage treatment in separate plants: concentrating, smelting, and refining.

[24] Elaine Katz, *The White Death: Silicosis on the Witwatersrand Gold Mines, 1886-1910* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), xi-xii.

supervision of a white lasher.[25] Most white underground workers were employed to perform specialised jobs: building supports for dangerous ground, fitting pipes to supply water and air, installing electrical cables, operating pumps to remove water, driving winding engines to haul up men or material, or repairing equipment. White workers employed in these roles supervised two or more African workers who performed much of the manual work, but their jobs were not primarily supervisory.

African and white mineworkers worked alongside each other underground and this presented basic problems with communication and language. Most Africans recruited to the mines spoke Bemba, Nyanja, or sometimes Swahili, and some spoke English as a result of missionary education or experience working in colonial enterprises further south. White mineworkers spoke English, primarily as a first language though some spoke Afrikaans, and very few knew or learnt any languages spoken by African mineworkers. Underground workplaces are inherently dangerous and instructions whose meaning is unambiguous often have to be conveyed quickly. The issuing of instructions and commands between two groups who largely spoke different languages therefore presented a problem, though one common in colonial enterprises. The solution was borrowed from the Rand with the adoption of a version of Fanagalo, a pidgin mining language used on mines in South Africa.[26] Initially, workers picked this language up on the job, but from the 1940s it was taught to new white recruits. It was "essentially the language of command and direction" with its usage restricted to situations where whites interacted with Africans.[27] A vocabulary list published by the Chamber of Mines consists largely of phrases like "drill where I have marked" or "you must not do that."[28] This language reflects the racial hierarchy in the workplace: Africans were supposed to obey instructions issued by whites.[29]

The Companies

Developing these huge operations and employing and housing many thousands of workers required deep pockets. A patchwork of claims and small companies was rapidly consolidated during the mid-1920s and two international mining companies came to control all mines on the Copperbelt: Anglo American, the South African mining conglomerate, and the Rhodesian Selection Trust (RST). Capital for these new mines was primarily raised in the United States and South Africa, along with some capital from Britain.[30]

[25] 'Shaft Sinking', *Rhokana Review*, January 1952.

[26] This was also known as Cikabanga on the Copperbelt. Rajend Mesthrie, 'Fanakalo as a Mining Language in South Africa: A New Overview', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 258 (2019): 13-33.

[27] A.L. Epstein, 'Linguistic Innovation and Culture on the Copperbelt, Northern Rhodesia', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 15, 3 (1959): 237.

[28] Glossary of Chikabanga, ZCCM 12.7.9B.

[29] The development and use of this language on the Copperbelt is an under-researched area.

[30] Capital was raised from the BSAC, Rio Tinto, Phelps Dodge, Newmont Corporation, Kennecott Copper, and N.M. Rothschild.

Alfred Chester Beatty formed RST as a holding company in 1928 for his Copperbelt properties and in 1930 he sold a controlling stake to the American Metal Company.[31] RST operated Mufulira, Roan Antelope, Chibuluma and Chambishi Mines. In 1928, Anglo American formed a subsidiary company, Rhodesian Anglo American (RAA), to operate Bwana Mkubwa, Nchanga, and Bancroft Mines. A further subsidiary, the Rhokana Corporation, was formed through RAA to operate Nkana, and as the enterprise expanded the company increasingly referred to its operations as 'Rhokana' rather than 'Nkana'.[32] This corporate structure remained basically intact until the industry was nationalised in 1970, though after independence RST became the Roan Selection Trust and RAA became Zambian Anglo American.

After the meagre years of the 1930s and 1940s, the Copperbelt mines of both companies became hugely profitable enterprises. The mines began paying dividends in the mid-1930s, though these were modest at first and soon reduced by the imposition of additional taxes during the Second World War.[33] The situation was transformed from 1949, as discussed in Chapter 4, when the price of copper soared, and the companies and their shareholders made huge amounts of money. RST, for instance, reported in 1960 that it had paid £75m to shareholders from 1931 to 1959, the large bulk of this after 1949.[34] Profitability was assisted by the move of both companies from Britain, where they had been originally domiciled, to Northern Rhodesia in the early 1950s to escape post-war tax increases. The companies did well too after Zambian independence, at least briefly. As discussed in Chapter 6, their mines were soon nationalised, though with a relatively generous deal for the companies.

The two companies were not equal, however. Anglo American owned and operated the largest and most valuable Copperbelt mines and held a one-third stake in Mufulira Mine. Moreover, Anglo American was much larger than RST's parent company, the American Metal Company. The American Metal Company came to own mining properties in the United States, minority stakes in copper mines in Namibia and South Africa and held smattering of mining interests elsewhere in the world, but from the late 1940s its main financial interests were the Copperbelt mines. For Anglo American, in contrast, copper mining was only its third largest source of income, behind gold and diamonds. The company had huge interests in gold mining in South Africa, controlling perhaps a quarter of world gold production, controlled the marketing of practically all diamonds through De Beers and by the 1960s had operations on six continents.[35]

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[31] The American Metal Company became AMAX in 1957.

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

[33] Total dividends paid out by Roan Antelope only exceeded the original capital sum invested in the mine in 1948. Simon Cunningham, *The Copper Industry in Zambia: Foreign Mining Companies in a Developing Country* (New York: Praeger, 1981), 148.

[34] Roberts, 'Financial History', 359.

[35] Sklar, *Corporate Power*, 42-52.

Nevertheless, this book generally refers to 'the mining companies' rather than distinguishing between the two. Despite their differing sizes, differences in corporate policy between the two were minor and both collaborated extensively in a range of areas – including transportation, power, and taxation – but worked especially closely when it came to labour and industrial relations. RAA and RST, in the imagining of the novelist Doris Lessing, were like "giants facing each other with an angry scowl, left hands secretly linked, while they shadowed-boxed with their right."[36]

For the whites who worked for them, there was little appreciable difference between the two. After 1941, both companies paid the same wages and bonuses for the same jobs, housed workers in the same sort of accommodation, treated them in similar hospitals, and subsidised the same array of sports and social clubs to occupy them off the job. White workers on all the mines were members of the same two unions and both companies conducted joint negotiations with these unions.

As this suggests, these companies not only mined and processed copper. The companies housed almost their entire workforce and from the outset constructed housing, amenities, and infrastructure on a large scale. The Copperbelt towns were company towns where the mining companies built, owned, and maintained houses, welfare and recreational facilities, hospitals, and provided water, sanitation, and power. Alongside these company towns, the colonial administration constructed separate government townships, financed by traders who were granted a monopoly of business in the new towns.[37] In the period covered by this book, these became sizeable urban centres and by 1969 the Copperbelt had an estimated population of over 800,000.[38]

The Copperbelt towns were characterised by an industrial paternalism that was particularly pronounced for the white workforce. The towns themselves were racially segregated. The white and African workforces were housed in separate townships and in very different standards of housing, as is discussed in Chapter 4. For the white workforce, the companies constructed rows of bungalows and flats, usually within walking distance of the mine, and these were designed for nuclear families as most white men working on the mines were married. Leisure activities, initially largely confined to a mine club with a bar and sports pitches, were subsidised by the companies on an increasingly lavish scale from the late 1940s when Olympic-sized swimming pools, yachting clubs and polo pitches became commonplace.

The white trade unions

Trade unions founded by white workers on the mines occupy a central part of the narrative of this book. Once established, these unions were remarkably successful in sustaining themselves despite the transience of the workforce they represented. The size of the white workforce – which never exceeded 8,000 – meant that both organisations were nevertheless small trade unions by the

[36] Lessing, *Going Home*, 266-67.

[37] Hugh Macmillan, *An African Trading Empire: The Story of Susman Brothers & Wulfsohn, 1901-2005* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2005), 301.

[38] Government of Zambia, *Census of Population and Housing, 1969* (Lusaka: Central Statistical Office, 1969), A5.

standards of the mining industry. The NRMWU reached a peak membership of around 4,800 in 1961 while MOSSA's highest membership was about 3,100 in 1964. However, high turnover levels among the white workforce mean that far larger numbers were members of these unions at some point during their working lives.[39]

The NRMWU was founded in 1936 as a whites-only organisation and, apart from during a short period in the early 1960s discussed in Chapter 6, remained racially exclusive until it was banned by the Zambian Government in 1969. Racial segregation partly reflected the intentions of its founders and partly the demands of the mining companies, which had grave fears about the prospect of the NRMWU bolstering their power on the mines by representing African workers. The union represented daily-paid white workers and from 1941 imposed a closed shop on the mines, so anyone employed in a daily-paid job had to be an NRMWU member. Mine officials and staff were ineligible for NRMWU membership, which was another condition of the companies, and were represented by MOSSA, whose membership was voluntary.

Both the NRMWU and MOSSA had almost no full-time officials and were de-centralised organisations. This was a deliberate decision in the NRMWU and a lingering legacy of syndicalist influence over the men who founded the union in the 1930s. For most of this period, only the office of general secretary in both unions was a full-time paid position. The president, vice-presidents, general council members, branch chairmen and shop stewards all continued to work on the mines. One consequence of this was that there was little social distance between the union's officials and the ordinary members.

NRMWU branches had considerable autonomy over their actions. Each branch was run by an elected committee and these committees controlled the admission and expulsion of members (and therefore, under the closed shop, mine employment), retained 70% of union subscriptions, and did not need the authority or agreement of the union's leadership to take strikes. The union's president and general secretary were appointed by delegates from each branch and could be removed by these same delegates, and frequently were. The NRMWU had 13 general secretaries in 33 years, including a decade with Frank Maybank at the helm, and 17 presidents (see Table 1.2). The union's internal life was fractious.

Table 1.2: Officials of the NRMWU, MWS and ZEMA

	General Secretary
1936	Richard Olds
1937	Ben Rount
1938-39	Victor Welsford
1941-42	Frank Maybank
1942	Sarah Zaremba
1942-44	Martinus Visagie

[39] See Appendix I for annual turnover figures.

1945-53	Frank Maybank
1954	Guy Spires
1955-57	Ben Petersen
1958-59	Jack Purvis
1959-60	Emrys Williams
1961-65	Andrew Leslie
1967	Ray Rawstorne
1968-69	Arthur Watson

	President
1936-38	Victor Diamond
1939	Jim Purvis
1940	Tom Ross
1941-42	Pat Murray
1943-48	Brian Goodwin
1949-50	Dave Welensky
1951	Guy Spires
1952	J.T. Moll
1953	Bernard Burke
1953	Fred Tullidge
1954	Alec Stevens
1955	Arthur Clarke
1955-57	Jack Purvis
1958	Emrys Williams
1959-61	Fred Holtmann
1961-65	Emrys Williams
1966-69	Joe Oliver

Chapter 2

The Wild West in Central Africa, 1926-1939

Tommy Graves really had been in a gunfight in the American West. He was a miner and veteran of the 'labour wars' that convulsed the American copper industry in the 1910s, a revolutionary syndicalist who carried in his pocket a declaration that began "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people."[1] Graves was not American though, he had begun his working life underground in Britain and had gone to the United States to work as a miner, where the expanding copper industry meant his skills in metal mining were in demand. Demand for these same mining skills brought him to the Copperbelt in 1930.

Men like Tommy Graves brought a rough frontier life to the dusty mining camps so that when Margaret Kirkcaldy arrived five years later to run a boarding house she knew exactly what they reminded her of: "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."[2] She herself had spent several years in Canada and the United States before moving to Mufulira after her husband got a job on the mine. Like Kirkcaldy, many of the thousands of other whites who flocked to the Copperbelt in the 1930s found the place immediately recognisable. This was no coincidence. Deliberate corporate policies and the efforts by newly arrived whites to create a society akin to those they were familiar with made the mining camps recognisable. From the outset, Roan Antelope Mine could advertise to prospective white employees that "conditions on the Roan property in Northern Rhodesia are those normal to many mining camps."[3]

Mining companies had become accustomed to constructing entire towns alongside new mines as in the preceding decades large copper deposits had frequently been discovered in areas remote from state authority, infrastructure, and existing population centres. This last point meant that mining companies were also accustomed to attracting, or coercing, labour on a large scale. There is an extensive literature on the efforts by mining companies in Southern Africa to corral labour and the narrative of African men being forced from the land to become low-waged migrant workers in newly established mines is a familiar one. For several decades, research on the

[1] This is the preamble to the constitution of the Industrial Workers of the World, a revolutionary union established in 1905 in the United States.

[2] 'Guesthouse Triumvirate', *Horizon*, March 1959.

[3] Roan Antelope Copper Mines, Pamphlet of information for employees proceeding to N. Rhodesia, ZCCM 16.2.4B. Marcelo J. Borges and Susana B. Torres, eds., *Company Towns: Labor, space, and power relations across time and continents* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Copperbelt focused on the emergence of an urbanised African working class, and the presumed consequences of this.[4]

The focus in this chapter is different: it is about the decision by the mining companies to recruit a skilled white workforce, the consequences that flowed from this, and life for these workers on and off the job. As will be seen, white mineworkers recruited to the Copperbelt mines were a transient population and part of a working class that moved between mining and industrial centres across the British Empire and beyond. Many were experienced industrial workers used to traveling hundreds or thousands of miles to find work and, though their working lives stretched across the globe, they often travelled between places that were, in many ways, similar. For them, the mining camps were what James Belich termed "prefabricated communities" where "the place and people are different, but they duplicate your previous experience." In such places, new arrivals could readily slot into familiar roles.[5]

White mineworkers were active participants in making the new mining camps into familiar and similar places by reproducing institutions and hierarchies of race and gender with which they were familiar. Central to this was the formation of racially exclusive trade unions and many of the white mineworkers who arrived in these years were steeped in the traditions and practices of the labour movement. As Wilfred MacKenzie, mine superintendent at Roan Antelope who came from Canada to take up the job, put it, many of the mine's white employees "had been brought up using a trade union constitution as their family Bible and that therefore some form of Union activity was a necessary part of their lives."[6] The formation of the whites-only NRMWU in 1936 was a pivotal event for the white workforce, signalling the onset of belligerent collective action towards white mine managers and the Africans they worked alongside.

Recruiting the white workforce

Both RAA and RST sought to begin production as quickly as possible in the 1920s as copper prices were high and demand seemed robust, but this did not present an undue difficulty. In the preceding decades, copper companies had established operations in all manner of challenging environments: mines were constructed in the Chilean desert, high-up in the Peruvian Andes, in the Australian outback, at the foot of Alaskan glaciers and at inlets accessible only by sea in British Columbia. Constructing new mines on the Copperbelt was comparatively straightforward, especially because a railway had already been built linking Katanga's copper mines with seaports further south and thousands of tons of steel for construction and machinery could be imported to the mines along this route.

[4] Larmer, 'Permanent Precarity', 170-1.

[5] James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland: Allen Lane, 1996), 428.

[6] Notes on discussions with the Roan Mine Workers' Federation, 10 April 1940, ZCCM 15.1.6E.

Even so, progress was rapid. Shafts were first sunk at Roan Antelope and Nkana in 1928, then at Nchanga in 1929 and Mufulira in 1930.[7] In mid-1927, Roan Antelope was a collection of thatched huts scattered around drilling sites. By March 1931, the 189-foot-high headgear of the newly constructed Beatty Shaft surpassed the tallest structures on the South African Rand. The first copper ore was hoisted up the shaft two months later, development work for the mine taking only four years. In contrast, the near-contemporary construction of Potrerillos Mine in Chile took nine years.[8]

All of this was dependent upon the rapid recruitment of a workforce. At the outset, the mining companies made two decisions on labour policy which had enduring consequences: the first was mechanising their operations and the second was recruiting white workers as skilled labour, thereby instituting a racial division of labour. Mechanisation was informed by fears of a shortage of African labour, the perennial anxiety of colonial enterprises.[9] As RST chairman Alfred Chester Beatty explained, the main aim of mechanisation was to "reduce to a minimum the native labour required."[10] The Copperbelt mines recruited African labour from Northern Rhodesia and neighbouring colonies and anticipated a tightening labour market, especially as they paid lower wages than Southern Rhodesian mines who recruited from the same area.[11] Moreover, Union Minière still recruited almost 20% of its African workforce from Northern Rhodesia in 1927 and had mechanised their operations in response to perceived shortages of African labour.[12]

Mechanisation required skilled labour and both companies equated skilled with white.[13] This requires some explanation, as it was not a uniform policy in colonial-era mining. The previous decade, for instance, the newly opened Enugu Colliery in Nigeria had recruited clerks and artisans from Sierra Leone and the Caribbean.[14] Across the border in Belgian Congo, both Union Minière and Forminière, a diamond mining company, established training programmes in the mid-1920s for African artisans, train drivers, and nurses.[15] RAA and RST were well-aware of this development.

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[7] Roan Consolidated Mines, *Zambia's Mining Industry: The First 50 Years* (Ndola: Roan Consolidated Mines, 1978), 45-58.

[8] Angela Vergara, *Copper Workers, International Business, and Domestic Politics in Cold War Chile* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 20.

[9] Labour shortage was the dominant assumption about African labour in this period. Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (New York: Macmillan, 1928).

[10] 'Roan Antelope Copper Mines', *Financial Times*, 26 November 1929.

[11] Parpart, *Labour and Capital,* 34.

[12] René Brion and Jean-Louis Moreau, *De la mine à Mars: le genèse d'Umicore* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2006), 134. Union Minière du Haut Katanga, *Le Katanga. Pays du Cuivre* (Liège: Maison Desoer, 1930), 10.

[13] Anglo American anticipated the result of mechanisation would be "increasing the number of Europeans." Rhodesian Anglo American, *Mining developments in Northern Rhodesia*, 62.

[14] Brown, *We were all Slaves*, 99.

[15] Richard Derksen, 'Forminière in the Kasai, 1906-1939', *African Economic History* 12 (1983): 58.

Several managers had previously worked for Union Minière and Alfred Chester Beatty had previously occupied a prominent position in Forminière.

The decision to recruit white skilled labour resulted from two factors. The first was the companies' desire to begin production rapidly, which required a workforce familiar with deep-level mining and metallurgical processing. The white workforce, from the perspective of the companies, was a ready-made workforce, not only in the sense that it was composed of people who had experience with mining and specialised industrial work, but also in the sense that these were people adjusted to the regularity and discipline required for industrial work.[16] The second factor was the racist ideas prevalent among the mining engineers that ran the industry that Africans could only perform routine work and needed to be supervised by whites. American mining engineers ran the global copper industry in this industry and played a crucial role in spreading practices of racialised labour management to different worksites around the world. Almost all key management positions on the Copperbelt mines were occupied by American mining engineers in the early 1930s.[17] It is well-known that mines in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa employed a racially divided workforce, where skilled and supervisory work was performed by whites, but it was also commonplace for skilled work to be monopolised by white workers at copper mines in the United States in this period.[18] Copper mines in Latin America, which were usually owned by American companies, often engaged skilled white workers during construction and to start production, then replaced them with locally recruited workers.[19]

Recruiting a skilled white workforce meant international recruitment, by necessity. Northern Rhodesia's white population was tiny – around 5,600 in 1926 – and few of them had the requisite industrial skills or experience. Roan Antelope quickly concluded that "the white labour is uniformly poor" across the territory, as the locally recruited white men were "usually wasters."[20] Many of the white men who had come to Northern Rhodesia had intended to become farmers, traders or prospectors and adjusted poorly to industrial discipline. Winifred Tapson and her

[16] For the classic account of the forced adjustment of new workers to time discipline in industrialising Britain, see Sidney Pollard, 'Factory Discipline in the Industrial Revolution', *The Economic History Review* 16, 2 (1963): 254-71. On the resistance of Africans to time-discipline, see Kelesto Atkins, *The Moon is Dead! Give Us Our Money! The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843–1900* (Portsmouth, NH: Heineman, 1993).

[17] David Roediger and Elizabeth Esch, *The Production of Difference: Race and the Management of Labor in US History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 115-21.

[18] American mining engineers also played an important role forming the colour bar on mines in South Africa. Elaine Katz, 'Revisiting the Origins of the Industrial Colour Bar in the Witwatersrand Gold Mining Industry, 1891-1899', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, 1 (1999): 73-97.

[19] Vergara, *Copper Workers*, 26, 29-32.

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

husband came to work at Nchanga Mine in 1928 after their tobacco farm failed and she complained about the intensity and routine of work, and about the hierarchical structure of the mine.[21]

How then did the companies go about recruiting a white workforce? In part, they could draw upon an international labour market for skilled white labour. Some companies provided contract workers for specialised tasks – like the US-based Longyear Drilling Company which sent out crews of drillers to undertake underground development work[22] – and recruitment agencies could source labour with specific skills. RAA and RST engaged the services of recruitment agencies in Johannesburg, London, and New York to recruit men who could operate specialised mining machinery or had skills required only for a short period, such as rivetters for constructing surface plants. The companies could also draw upon the personal connections of mining engineers for recruitment. Anglo American's consulting geologist Austen Bancroft, for instance, recruited drillers, mechanics, and smelter workers he had worked with in British Columbia for Nkana and Nchanga.[23] Most workers recruited in this way were accustomed to regular long-distance movement as part of their work. One member of the American crew contracted to begin production at the Nkana smelter later reflected this group "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."[24]

The clearest indication that the companies were competing in an international market for skilled white labour is that wages and working conditions were set with explicit reference to other mining centres. As RST acknowledged, wages for white workers "must be guided very largely by the rate paid elsewhere."[25] When riveters were required for construction work at Roan Antelope and Nkana in 1930 – their skills needed to bolt together huge steel girders to build headframes and the skeleton of surface plants – they were sought "from Scotch shipyards only" and offered terms of employment "similar to Cumberland miners."[26]

The other approach to the recruitment of white labour was, as Anglo American put it, letting the problem "solve itself."[27] Most white workers were not recruited directly but travelled to the Copperbelt on their own initiative attracted by the availability of work and high wages. Some wrote to recruitment agencies themselves asking for work opportunities, especially as the Great

[21] Tapson, *Old Timer*, 156.

[22] At the same time, drillers from the same company were doing underground development work at Mt Isa Mine, a large copper and lead mine in northern Australia. Don Berkman, *Making the Mount Isa Mine, 1923-33* (Carlton: AusIMM, 1996), 85.

[23] Bancroft, *Mining in Northern Rhodesia*, 156.

[24] 'Around Nkana', *Rhokana Review*, May 1956.

[25] G.R. Nicolaus to R.M. Geppert, 25 August 1927, ST G/7.

[26] Cumberland was a coal and metal mining region in northern England. General Manager, Roan Antelope to Selection Trust, London, 3 July 1930, ZCCM 16.2.4B.

[27] Rhodesian Anglo American, *Mining developments in Northern Rhodesia*, 63.

Depression lead to mines closing in other parts of the world.[28] Others came to the Copperbelt as family members or old workmates already there wrote to them about work opportunities. Jack Hodgson left his job at a mine in South Africa for the Copperbelt after his stepfather, a miner, wrote to him from Nkana.[29] Winding engine drivers recruited from mines in South Africa, but originally from Wales, wrote to other winding engine drivers they knew back in South Wales telling them their skills were in demand.[30] These kinds of personal contacts and networks facilitated the flow of labour.

The agency of white workers themselves played an important role in their recruitment, but this is only a partial explanation. The race, gender and industrial skills of these workers meant they faced few formal restrictions on their mobility, even as options for international migration became more circumscribed during the 1930s. Accounts of journeys to the Copperbelt emphasise the final section of the journey as the main difficulty, as before railway branch lines reached each of the mines the only option was driving or hitching a lift in a lorry from Ndola along heavily-rutted dirt roads.[31] Prior to that point, the journey was generally smooth. Ndola was a four-day train journey from Johannesburg or five-days from Cape Town, where white workers coming from outside the continent usually arrived via steamships that plied the routes from Britain to Australia. White workers mostly came from within the British Empire – apart from those recruited from Union Minière's operations or from the United States – so issues with passports or visas were non-existent. Winifred Tapson, coming from South Africa, had no passport and was nevertheless permitted to enter the colony.[32]

Most of these workers were used to traveling long distances between worksites. The kind of migration they engaged in was not migration from country of origin and then back again, but better conceptualised as circulation between different mining and industrial centres within, and occasionally beyond, imperial boundaries. Some of the newly arrived white mineworkers had even worked in Northern Rhodesia before, mostly at Broken Hill Mine, a lead-zinc mine that operated in fits and starts from 1906. George Allen, for instance, came from Australia to work underground there in the 1920s, then had gone to work as a miner in Arizona before returning to Northern Rhodesia to join Nkana Mine as a shift boss in 1930.[33] Archie Morton, a Scottish-born engineer, arrived at Nkana around the same time, though he was recruited from a copper mine in Canada, and had briefly worked in Northern Rhodesia in the early 1910s after completing an apprenticeship in New

[28] See this letter from a miner from Bisbee, Arizona asking for any kind of underground work at Roan Antelope and offering to move immediately: Oscar Peterson to W.M.H. Biaz, Employment Agent, 23 February 1931, ST ACB/171.

[29] Fourth interview with Jack Hodgson, 15 October 1968, Historical Papers Archive, University of the Witwatersrand [hereafter HPA], A2729, E3.

[30] 'The "Dais" have it at the Mindola hoist room', *Rhokana Review*, March 1955.

[31] Lucy Cullen, 'Those Were the Days', *Horizon*, April 1961.

[32] Tapson, *Old Timer*, 9.

[33] 'Obituary: George Keith Allen', *Transactions of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy* 71 (1961-62), 554.

Zealand.[34] These labour migrants moved largely through an imperial network, but there were no restrictions barring migrants from continental Europe and, as will be discussed below, modest numbers of workers from Eastern and Southern Europe also migrated to the Copperbelt.

Labour recruitment had to be constant due to a high level of turnover among both the African and white workforce. Contemporaries joked that the mines operated on a three-shift system: one shift working underground, the next shift arriving into Ndola on the train, and the previous shift leaving Ndola, and there was a grain of truth in this. Between August 1930 and January 1931, around 7% of the white workforce at Nkana Mine left the mine each month, an average of just over two people a day.[35] Lucy Cullen, Roan Antelope's mine secretary, who had come from New York to take up the job, described these white men as "human flotsam" who washed up at the mine from all over the world and "usually left for reasons other than the completion of work."[36]

Cullen was right that white mineworkers were prone to abrupt departures, but there were also structural reasons for their transience. Many white workers were employed for specific time-limited tasks, usually related to construction, and were easy to get rid of. Most were employed on 24 hours' notice; 785 of the 956 white workers employed at Nkana Mine in October 1931 were on such contracts.[37] The constant threat of the sack – described by Tapson as hanging "like the sword of Damocles over their heads"[38] – made working on the Copperbelt mines a precarious venture. Moreover, mineworkers, African or white, received no sick pay at this time. Being unable to work, for whatever reason, meant no pay. Jack Hodgson lost his job when he contracted cerebral malaria in 1930 and he had to return to South Africa to recuperate, as no medical facilities existed then for sick or injured mineworkers.[39]

The kinds of people who moved frequently between mining regions and worked only briefly on the Copperbelt are often difficult to trace. They left fewer archival records and company publications focused on individuals who worked for longer periods, using them as evidence that the mines were good employers. Most of the individual examples given above are of workers who stayed at least a few years, and therefore do not quite capture how transient the white workforce was. Often, the histories of transient workers can be reconstructed only when their departure was in some way remarkable – on this, see the Glaswegian riveters below – or due to chance. 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 leave, first back to Johannesburg and then to Australia in 1932. It is

[34] 'An old timer retires', *Rhokana Review*, September 1952.

[35] Negotiations with the Government in connection with the Bwana/Nchanga retrenchments, 25 February 1931, ZCCM 17.6.8A

[36] Cullen, *Beyond the Smoke*, 335.

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

[38] Tapson, *Old Timer*, 158.

[39] Fourth interview with Jack Hodgson, 15 October 1968, HPA A2729 E3.

likely there would have been no record of Lane's time on the Copperbelt if he had not moved to Southern Rhodesia in 1958 to take up a job with a company which serviced elevators on the Copperbelt and subsequently been interviewed by a mine publication.[40]

Violence and danger on the job

Underground mining is inherently dangerous. Creating underground workplaces and the extraction of copper involved blasting rock with explosives in confined spaces at increasing depths underneath the surface of the earth. Maintaining this workplace involved continuous activity. Water needed to be pumped constantly to prevent the workings flooding, tunnels needed to be checked that their structure and supports could hold the weight of ground above, and air had to be circulated constantly through the workings.

However, one thing that might reasonably be expected in any account of mines and mining communities is largely absent from this book: underground disasters and the collective mourning that accompanies the sudden loss of so many men known to each other and to the survivors. The mines operated for forty years before the first major disaster.[41] Why these vast and deep mines were not the tombs of many more remains unexplained. Sheer luck may be a factor and there was almost a serious disaster at Nchanga when the mine was under construction. There were 135 men underground at Nchanga on 17 September 1931 when blasting unexpectedly cracked open a water-filled fissure, which engulfed the underground workings. The surge of water drowned the pumps and knocked out the power, as miners could not close the watertight door that sealed off the pumps against the force of the current. It took only 35 minutes for the mine to flood completely. It is difficult to imagine what this must have been like for the miners scrambling to get to the emergency ladders in the pitch dark as water rapidly filled the tunnels. Incredibly, only one man was killed, struck by a cage as he attempted to climb the shaft, and everyone else got out alive. Decades later, however, one white miner was still bitter about these events, claiming the general manager had publicly declared that the risk of flooding was so minimal that even one watertight door underground – rather than the three recommended by the mine's geologist – was a luxury.[42]

The most serious risks for underground workers were less dramatic, the everyday hazards that produced a steady stream of serious injuries. As the remark by Nchanga's manager about flood defences suggests, safety standards on the mines were low. Even basic provision safety equipment was often lacking. White underground workers, for instance, even had to buy their own helmets from the company.[43] African first aid assistants were not appointed until 1932 and were distrusted by many African mineworkers as they were also tasked with reporting on 'troublemakers'.[44] Injuries like burns and broken limbs were commonplace, especially for African workers. Intense noise from

[40] 'A Roan pioneer renews friendships', *Horizon*, January 1962.

[41] This was the 1970 Mufulira Mine Disaster, see Chapter 6.

[42] Coleman, *Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt 1899-1962*, 101-5, 109.

[43] Pamphlet of information for employees proceeding to N. Rhodesia, Roan Antelope Copper Mines, ZCCM 16.2.4B

[44] Luchembe, 'Finance Capital and Mining Labour', 274.

drilling and blasting underground or heavy equipment like crushers on the surface caused many workers to lose their hearing.

Other risks were invisible, namely industrial diseases. The impact of industrial diseases is hard to ascertain as much of the workforce spent relatively brief periods working on the Copperbelt mines and mine management actively covered up evidence of disease. Silicosis – a lung disease caused by inhaling silica dust particles and prevalent among underground drillers – was certainly present. The disease was dreaded by white miners as it had quite literally decimated the ranks of white miners on the Rand a generation earlier and would continue to afflict Africans who had worked underground in South Africa for the rest of the century.[45] Some white miners died of silicosis in the 1930s, including a founding member of the NRMWU Ben Rount, but these men had likely first contracted the disease working underground on the Rand. Silicosis was much less prevalent than on the Rand, though silicosis risks in the 1930s are unknown as the mines actively hid evidence that the underground workforce was exposed to silicosis.[46] Roan Antelope's manager Frank Ayer forged tests to show the mine was silicosis-free and insisted that the company never say "anything which in any way admits that any of our workmen are subjected to silicosis."[47] He did so deliberately to cut costs, as he had managed mines in Arizona where silicosis was present and therefore knew how expensive it was to reduce dust in the workplace.

All underground workers faced risks underground, yet for most white workers these were familiar places and familiar risks at least. The structure of the underground workplace and surface plants were adopted from other workplaces, as was the regulation of working time and shift patterns. Even the people were the same, or so it was thought. As one winding engine driver who arrived from South Wales put it, "mining men are the same anywhere."[48] In contrast, many Africans arriving in newly established colonial towns encountered places that were fundamentally different to places they were familiar with.[49] Roan Antelope's compound manager recalled that the first African recruits regarded underground mining with "extreme fear" and "it was an almost nightly occurrence to find the night shift gang standing dumbly defiant before a distracted European miner who was doing his best to get them to do down." It was common for many to desert the next day.[50]

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[45] The annual death rate for white rock drillers on the Rand reached a height of 109 per thousand. Katz, *White Death*, 211.

[46] Comprehensive testing for silicosis began in 1950 and found an incidence rate of 4 per 1,000 miners. R. Paul, 'Silicosis in Northern Rhodesia Copper Miners', *Archives of Environmental Health*, 2, 2 (1961): 97.

[47] Frank Ayer to Secretary, Roan Antelope London, 27 December 1933, ZCCM 10.8.2B

[48] 'They retire this month', *Rhokana Review*, June 1955.

[49] Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus. A Ghost Story and a Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 33-35.

[50] Spearpoint, 'The African Native', 4. This was a common response. Many men recruited to Enugu Colliery feared the dangerous underground work and deserted, Brown, *We Were All Slaves*, 111. Similarly, many Akan people viewed underground mines on the Wassa goldfields as a realm of "spiritual darkness." Cassandra Mark-Thiesen, *Mediators, Contract Men, and Colonial Capital: Mechanized gold mining in the Gold Coast Colony, 1879-1909* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2018), 54.

African and white mineworkers' experience of work was different. African mineworkers were subjected to harsh and humiliating procedures which whites were not. In the 1930s, for instance, some Africans were stripped naked and weighed on payday.[51] One of the main differences, however, was the threat of violence in the workplace, which meant that African workers faced greater hazards and risk of injury. White miners and company officials regularly used violence as a way of disciplining African workers. Underground assaults by white workers were among the most common and bitter complaints of African miners in this period, as there was rarely action taken against the perpetrator and the companies tacitly condoned the behaviour. Demands circulated by striking African miners at Nkana and Mufulira in 1935 complained "we are continually reviled and beaten underground."[52] The Commission investigating this strike found that the compound manager at Mufulira Ben Schaefer regularly beat the ears of African workers and that this:

> was by no means a casual cuff on the side of the head... The offending native was made to stand and hold his head sideways in a stiff position, and then blows with the open hand on the side of the head were administered.[53]

Some Africans had consequently been treated in the mine hospital for hearing loss. The Commission recommended that Schaefer be sacked, but RST refused. The company's position was clear: "From the Company's point of view, we believe Mr Schaefer has always been intensely interested in the welfare of the natives," and to make the point clear the company praised his "excellent record in handling natives."[54] Violence by white workers towards African workers would remain part of the everyday hazards of the Copperbelt mines.

Life in the Mining Camps

Allan McGregor was among the first of the white workforce to arrive at Bwana Mkubwa Mine in March 1927, having signed on in Johannesburg as a stone mason. It was a great place to live, he recalled, as "there was no such thing as Income Tax or licenses for motor vehicles, bicycles and firearms."[55] The presence of the cash-strapped and under-staffed colonial state was limited. Instead, the mining companies built their own housing and infrastructure and tried to resolve the myriad problems that arose in the camps. At Nchanga, for instance, the mine ran its own post office,

[51] Albert Matongo, 'Popular Culture in a Colonial Society: Another look at the Mbeni and Kalela Dances on the Copperbelt, 1930-64', in *Guardians in their Time: Experiences of Zambians Under Colonial Rule, 1890-1964* ed. Samuel Chipungu (Macmillan: London, 1992), 183.

[52] *Ibid.*, 201. These demands were written in Bemba and translated into English by the colonial authorities.

[53] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the Disturbances in the Copperbelt, Northern Rhodesia, 1935* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1935), 16.

[54] Frank Ayer to Chief Secretary, 21 December 1935, TNA CO 795/82/7.

[55] '30 years' service', *Rhokana Review*, March 1956.

wireless station and enforced the law, as the forces of the state were represented by a one-man police post located "at a squeamish distance from the camp."[56]

Work seeped into private life. The mining companies housed most of their African and white workforce, which meant that access to housing was tied to employment and the quality of housing depended on the place of the employee in the company hierarchy. Policy at Roan Antelope Mine was explicit: "Houses are allocated according to grade and salary of employee."[57] The first company-built houses for white mineworkers were single-room round huts made of mud brick known as rondavels or prefabricated corrugated iron huts known as kator huts. Roan Antelope constructed hundreds of kator huts to house their white workforce, each 16-feet in diameter, in blocks of sixty with communal toilets and washing facilities for each block. Each hut cost £60 to construct, while three-bedroomed houses of brick provided for white staff cost £900 each to construct.[58] These houses were not constructed with the local climate in mind, which can be exacting for those not used to it. A long hot dry season with temperatures rising steadily towards a peak around October is followed by a rainy season from November to early April with around 110 days of often intense rainfall. Contemporaries complained that the kator huts turned into ovens in the dry season, while rain hammering on the iron roofs made them impossible to sleep in during the rainy season.[59]

These newly constructed urban centres on the Copperbelt were company towns and were consciously modelled on company towns in copper mining regions in North America and Latin America. Both RAA and RST hired construction engineers from the US to design their new towns. Crucially, these towns were racially segregated. Separate African and white townships were constructed at each of the Copperbelt mines, usually on opposite sides of the mine. This too followed the pattern of mining towns in North America and Latin America.[60] The companies firmly rebuffed efforts by the colonial administration to exert control over the new mining towns. RAA, for instance, "maintained that streets in the mine townships were private and reserved the right to close them to the public at any time."[61]

However, demand for labour in this period exceeded the construction of employee housing and many white mineworkers lived in boarding houses. These were often established by white women, who had come to the Copperbelt to run such establishments, and life in them was rough.

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[56] Tapson, *Old Timer*, 156.

[57] Roan Antelope Copper Mines, Pamphlet of information for employees proceeding to N. Rhodesia, ZCCM 16.2.4B.

[58] 'Employee Housing – I', *Engineering and Mining Journal*, April 1932.

[59] Cullen, *Beyond the Smoke*, 81.

[60] J. Douglas Porteous, 'Social Class in Atacama Company Towns', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 64, 3 (1974): 408-17; Finn, *Tracing the Veins*, 89-93; Christopher Huggard and Terrence Humble, *Santa Rita del Cobre: A Copper Mining Community in New Mexico* (Boulder, Co.: University of Colorado Press, 2011), 110.

[61] Emmanuel Mutale, 'The Urban Development of Nkana-Kitwe, Zambia: Structural Conflict in the Management of Land and Services' (PhD thesis, University of East London, 1994), 118, 125.

Jean Jones, a Scottish woman who had come to Roan Antelope from a gold mine in Southern Rhodesia, remembered her residents as tough customers, who habitually carried guns and frequently had to be extricated from fights. She recalled:

> 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![62]

What really encouraged the workforce to leave in the first few years was disease, however. Blackwater fever, dysentery and malaria exacted a terrible toll on the workforce. Malaria is endemic on the Copperbelt and construction work exacerbated the disease by creating a landscape dotted with shallow holes that filled with water and formed perfect breeding sites for mosquitos. Hygiene and diet in the mining camps was poor. Drinking water was pumped from nearby rivers and sewage was collected in pails by African workers. There was no refrigeration, so meat had to be eaten the day the animal was killed, milk was unobtainable and the only eggs or vegetables available were sent by rail from Johannesburg.[63] Medical services in the town were rudimentary. Before a hospital was constructed at Roan Antelope in mid-1930, the camp doctor performed surgery on a kitchen table in a corrugated iron hut.[64]

Stories about harsh conditions spread widely across 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, as they would never make it back alive![65] The death toll from disease began to discourage both white and African workers and prompted Roan Antelope to engage the newly established Ross Institute for Tropical Diseases to investigate the mortality crisis and implement solutions which were subsequently adopted at the other mines. Under the direction of Dr Malcolm Watson, swamps and ponds around the mines were drained, thick vegetation stripped back, and rivers straightened and deepened.[66] Improvements were immediate. Combined African and white death rates at Roan Antelope dropped from 34.6 per thousand in 1930 to 9.9 in 1932, prompting Dr Watson to conclude that the area was "fit for white men to make their homes and breed a healthy race."[67]

Housing and hygiene were improved to attract labour and in response to protests from white workers themselves. John Roberts, who spent his teenage years in Nkana, recalled that some

[62] 'Guesthouse Triumvirate', *Horizon*, March 1959.

[63] J.C. Hawkins, 'Water Supply, Sewerage, Malaria Control and Town Planning on the Copper Belt of Northern Rhodesia', *Civil Engineering/Siviele Ingenieurswese* 30, 1 (1932): 148.

[64] David Irwin, 'Early Days on the Copperbelt', *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, VI (1965): 113.

[65] Malcolm Watson, *African Highway. The Battle for Health in Central Africa* (London: John Murray, 1953), 4.

[66] 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): 824-27.

[67] Watson, *African Highway*, 61, 77.

white mineworkers angry about cockroaches in the mine canteen burnt down the building, while others shot holes in the main water tanks to protest against inadequate water supplies.[68] Consequently, the situation improved. Mud brick and iron huts were steadily replaced over the 1930s by long rows of brick houses for white employees, complete with furniture provided by the mine, small gardens, electric lighting, hot and cold running water, and servants' quarters. The mines constructed water purification plants, laid water pipes and a sewage system. By the late 1930s, a visitor to Mufulira from Broken Hill, Australia could report that it was "a community of healthy European families" housed in "artistically furnished" and "roomy" houses with gardens.[69]

[PLACE FIGURE 2 HERE]

[PLACE FIGURE 3 HERE]

These remarks about families indicate that the Copperbelt did not conform to the conventional image of frontier mining camps as places largely populated by men by the late 1930s. Many white men who came to the Copperbelt in the early 1930s were married, but their wives and children remained in Britain, South Africa or elsewhere and the 1931 census enumerated considerably more married white men (3,540) than married women (2,653) in Northern Rhodesia.[70] Family life was "tentative and ephemeral" in these years recalled Tapson.[71] This changed gradually during the 1930s. Tommy Graves' wife and daughter remained in England for the seven years he was on the Copperbelt, but when Jack Hodgson got married in 1934 his wife came from Johannesburg to join him and they had three children in Mufulira. Across Northern Rhodesia, the ratio of white women to white men rose from 58:100 in 1931 to 67:100 in 1938.[72]

Growing numbers of white women and the establishment of households may explain the curious lack of prostitution on the Copperbelt. Julia Ann Laite argued that prostitution was "one of [the] defining features" of mining regions.[73] This was the case in many places, but colonial and company archives on the Copperbelt rarely allude to the presence of sex workers. Lucy Cullen did relate the story of one white South African sex worker who installed herself in Roan Antelope and evaded the company's efforts to remove her from the camp.[74] Contemporary accounts contain many unsubtle references to infidelity as a commonplace occurrence though. In 1939, for instance, one NRMWU branch advised female readers to write to the branch office for a list of single men and the

[68] John Roberts, 'Copper and a Roan Antelope', *Magnum Magazine* (November 2001): 45.

[69] 'Some glimpses of Africa during Christmas season', *Barrier Miner*, 9 December 1939.

[70] Robert Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire Volume II* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), 478, 480.

[71] Tapson, *Old Timer*, 157.

[72] Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey Volume II*, 480

[73] Julia Ann Laite, 'Historical Perspectives on Industrial Development, Mining, and Prostitution', *The Historical Journal*, 52, 3 (2009): 742-43.

[74] Cullen, *Beyond the Smoke*, 91.

author added "my wife is in Johannesburg." Local single women, they claimed, were debating a longstanding "bone of contention on the Copperbelt," namely "Who makes the best Husbands? Single or Married Men?"[75]

Still, white society was a self-consciously masculine one, as despite the presence of many white women, they were excluded from the core activities of the mining camps: work and leisure.[76] Leisure opportunities for white women were limited. Bars and alcohol consumption were at the centre of social life and were for white men only. Nkana Mine Club, for instance, did not admit women and was "chiefly frequented by those male employees who desire to make use of bar facilities."[77] The exclusion of women from mine work was equally strict. Everyone involved in copper production was male, a gender division that cut across the racial divide. White women performed conventionally 'feminine' jobs, such as running boarding houses and canteens. Only a handful were directly employed by the mines. In 1937, Mufulira Mine employed only seven white women out of a total white workforce of 470.[78] Roles for white women were largely restricted to typists or nurses. I.I. Parrott, who came from New Zealand, was the first librarian at the mine club in Nkana and later worked as a typist.[79] Parrott was married, and there was no prohibition on married women working. Winifred Tapson was married when she came to work at Nchanga and Lucy Cullen continued to work at Roan Antelope after she married a South African miner.

Social life was structured by gender, race, and class hierarchies on the mine. Indeed, the maintenance of a strict hierarchy on and off the job was a conscious company policy from the outset. On a visit to Roan Antelope in 1926, senior RST personnel concluded that the new underground manager W.T. Harry was making good progress but "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" and that he should eat at the staff's mess.[80]

Clubs and bars in the new mining towns only occasionally admitted white women but were firmly closed to Africans. The constitution of Mufulira Mine Club explicitly stated membership was for "all white employees of the company."[81] Yet social life was not so dissimilar for African and white mineworkers. Football and alcohol consumption were among the most popular forms of recreation

[75] NRMWU Bulletin No. 2, February 1939, NAZ SEC1/1389.

[76] The same was true at other mining centres, see Thomas Klubock, *Contested Communities: Class, gender and politics in Chile's El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 186-212.

[77] Memorandum on Mine Recreation Clubs, 21 June 1932, ZCCM 2.5.3I

[78] Mufulira Mines, Strength as at 1 April 1937, ZCCM 10.7.9A.

[79] 'Around Nkana', *Rhokana Review*, December 1951.

[80] J.A. Dunne to Secretary, Selection Trust London, 4 November 1926, ST G/7.

[81] Matongo, 'Popular Culture', 185.

for both white and African men.[82] Bars at the mine clubs and beer halls in the compounds generally did a brisk trade. The mine club bar at Nchanga made an astonishing £4,309 in profit within four months of opening in September 1929.[83] A bar at Nkana – nicknamed the Glue Pot – was so popular that it employed a heavy-set man as a 'chucker out' to get drinkers off the premises at closing time.[84]

Racial hierarchies mapped onto social life in other important ways. As Karen Hansen has noted, African servants were everywhere in the towns in Northern Rhodesia, and almost all white mineworkers had servants.[85] Even someone like Jack Hodgson, who had to borrow money from a boarding house to pay his way to Nkana, could afford to pay for a servant to make his bed and fetch food and cigarettes from a nearby boarding house. This cost him and the Australian miner he shared a hut with around 15 shillings a month, or around half Hodgson's daily wage as a miner.[86] This is not a privilege enjoyed by inhabitants in many other mining camps, but in some ways white workers' experiences on the Copperbelt were less unusual than whites working at other mines in colonial Africa. At Enugu Colliery in Nigeria during this period, white overseers and mechanics were carried each morning in hammocks from their houses to the mine.[87]

Social and leisure activities for whites rapidly expanded as white mineworkers sought to turn the new mining towns into familiar places in which they could feel at home. It also reflected the physically demanding nature of mining work and the need for distractions in the relatively brief time that mineworkers had outside work. Before the first ore had been mined, a sports association had been formed to arrange matches between football and rugby teams. By the early 1930s, any newly arrived white migrant could join a football, rugby, cricket, or tennis team, play a round of golf or game of bowls, watch recent British or American films at the cinema (usually, as in South Africa, called 'bioscopes') or watch British comedies and murder mysteries staged by local dramatic societies. By the end of the decade, a white mineworker's day off could involve attending a cabaret with jazz musicians from Johannesburg, watching a bout with a touring boxer from Britain or Canada, listening to singers perform familiar songs like 'Danny Boy' or taking a dip in a pool which "conformed to the championship requirements of the English Amateur Swimming Association."[88]

The Great Depression

[82] Hikabwa Chipande, Chipolopolo: A Political and Social History of Football (soccer) in Zambia, 1940s-1994' (PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 2015), 45-47, 60-63.

[83] Memorandum on Mine Recreation Clubs, 21 June 1932, ZCCM 2.5.3I.

[84] '30 years' service', *Rhokana Review*, March 1956.

[85] Karen Hansen, *Distant Companions: Servant and Employer in Zambia, 1900–1985* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 5.

[86] Fourth interview with Jack Hodgson, 15 October 1968, HPA, A2729 E3.

[87] Brown, *We were all Slaves*, 100-1.

[88] 'Important Part of Copper Industry', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 22 December 1939.

The mining boom did not last long. The onset of the Great Depression showed how the region had rapidly become integrated into the world economy as copper prices plummeted and the Copperbelt ground to a halt. In February 1931, the struggling Bwana Mkubwa Mine closed, followed swiftly by Chambishi, Nchanga and Mufulira Mines over the next few months. Only Nkana and Roan Antelope remained open, and the latter only survived because the American Metal Company, which had acquired a majority stake in the mine in 1930, agreed to pay in advance for copper concentrates shipped to their smelters.[89] Consequently, the mining workforce was reduced drastically. White mining employment fell from 3,456 in January 1931 to a low of 995 in October 1932, while African mining employment fell from 13,948 to 5,831 over roughly the same period.[90]

The scale of the redundancies and the callous way they were laid off left bitter memories. Alan MacGregor recalled that white employees at Bwana Mkubwa received notice of impending unemployment at 11am and by 3pm all operations had ceased and everyone was laid off.[91] At Mufulira, much of the white workforce was laid off on Christmas Eve. There was no provision for unemployment benefit in Northern Rhodesia. The colonial administration assumed that Africans could simply move to rural areas and maintain a subsistence existence, while whites would leave the territory. Ronald Robinson memorably termed white settlers the "ideal prefabricated collaborators" of imperial rule, but Northern Rhodesia's colonial administration wanted to get rid of them.[92]

Most sacked white mineworkers did leave. They had no connection to the colony and, in the absence of mining work, there was nothing to induce them to stay. Around 3,500 white men, women, and children, left Northern Rhodesia during 1931, either at their own or the mining companies' expense.[93] The same occurred in Katanga, where around 2,000 redundant white workers were sent back to Europe.[94] Ndola, Tapson recorded in her diary, "is full of worn-looking miners and fractious wives and children, waiting for the next train to the South."[95] Several hundred other whites were repatriated or deported by the colonial administration – mostly to South Africa, though a handful were sent to Britain and Canada – and there was considerable debate about how to remove those who did not have the means, or who did not want to go.

[89] Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, 20.

[90] These figures include 269 white mineworkers at Broken Hill Mine in 1931, Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey Volume II*, 422. Perrings, *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa*, 252.

[91] '30 years' service', *Rhokana Review*, March 1956.

[92] Ronald Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration', in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, eds. Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (London: Longman, 1972), 124.

[93] F. Gordon Smith, Attorney General to Colonial Secretary, 19 March 1932, TNA CO 795/52/11.

[94] Bogumil Jewsiewicki, 'Great Depression and the Making of the Colonial Economic System in the Belgian Congo', *African Economic History* 4 (1977): 158.

[95] Tapson, *Old Timer*, 167.

By December 1932, 1,064 whites were registered as unemployed in Northern Rhodesia, around 10% of the total white population.[96] The colonial administration reported that most of this group had been laid off from the mines and consisted of people who had been "drifting about for years previously in the Union [of South Africa], Southern Rhodesia, and the Belgian Congo."[97] Unemployed whites were a problem for two reasons: the food rations they received were a drain on the territory's limited finances and, more seriously, they raised the spectre of 'poor whiteism'. Poor whites threatened racial order in Southern Africa as a group whose economic decline and proximity to Africans blurred racial divisions.[98] Consequently, the Governor replaced the existing Vagrancy Ordinance with a Repatriation Ordinance which granted him the power to deport any person on "economic grounds or on account of standards of habits of life or in the interests of public morals."[99] This, one of the first concerted interventions by the colonial state on the Copperbelt, was explicitly aimed at maintaining racial boundaries. The Colonial Office approved the move, as otherwise unemployed whites would likely go "to live on the natives, perhaps with the natives, and eventually to 'go native'." This could not be countenanced.[100]

The colonial authorities provided brief biographical sketches of 18 men repatriated to Britain during June 1932. Most were miners or artisans and about half of them had moved to South Africa or Southern Rhodesia in the 1900s and then to the Copperbelt in the 1920s, with the other half mostly moving to the Copperbelt from Britain in the late 1920s. All were living on rations but did not want to return to Britain. Almost all were from parts of Britain that had been hard hit by the Great Depression, so doubtless they knew that there was little prospect of work if they went back. Those who had left in the 1900s had little remaining family in Britain and feared they would be destitute on arrival.[101] One woman – who had left Scotland 20 years previously – whose family survived on government rations after her husband was laid off wrote to ask what would happen when they arrived back in Britain: "do we go into a workhouse or what becomes of us."[102] In April 1932, two ex-miners deported from Northern Rhodesia showed up at the Colonial Office in London and reported that they "had been out of England for around 30 years so had no homes in England."[103]

Unemployed whites were policed and surveilled by the colonial state, and generally treated with contempt by colonial officials who were convinced that any hardships they suffered were self-

[96] L.H. Gann, *A History of Northern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1953* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1964), 255.

[97] F. Gordon Smith, Attorney General to Colonial Secretary, 19 March 1932, TNA CO 795/52/11.

[98] Money and van Zyl-Hermann, *Rethinking White Societies*, 9-13. Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, 'South Africa's Poor Whites and Whiteness Studies: Afrikaner Ethnicity, Scientific Racism, and White Misery', *New Political Science* 29, 4 (2007): 489-94.

[99] Repatriation Ordinance 1932, TNA CO 795/52/11.

[100] Minute from A. Cooke, 23 April1 932, TNA CO 795/52/11.

[101] T. Hamilton, Chief Immigration Officer to Chief Secretary, 18 June 1932, TNA CO 795/52/9.

[102] Mrs Robert Hall, Ndola to Immigration Officer, Southampton, 27 April 1932, TNA CO 795/52/9.

[103] Minute from A. Cooke, 26 April 1932, TNA CO 795/52/9.

inflicted. 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."[104] Food rations given to the white unemployed were not charitable donations. Recipients had to promise to refund the cost of any relief received, a measure specifically enacted to "deter people from accepting rations except when absolutely necessary."[105]

Unemployed whites on the Copperbelt were, not unreasonably, furious at this treatment. John Sharp, chair of the Ndola Unemployed Committee, warned the Colonial Office that "unless more sympathetic treatment is dealt us" the result would be "looting and rioting, and of receding from the British Empire." The committee's solution was preferential treatment for unemployed whites based on both race and nationality. Employment opportunities for both Africans and 'alien' whites should be restricted, and mining and construction work should be provided for British citizens.[106] Northern Rhodesia's Governor advised the Colonial Office to ignore the group, claiming that one of the men running the group were an alcoholic fraudster only recently released from prison and the other man was a sex offender.[107] Alcoholism was commonly blamed for white poverty.

Despite occasionally callous treatment from the colonial state and mining companies, white mineworkers were not powerless. Unlike Africans, white residents in Northern Rhodesia had some political rights from the time the British Government assumed control over the colony in 1924. White voters could elect representatives to a Legislative Council and often got a sympathetic hearing from British MPs if they wrote to them. Two caveats apply here. The first is that white voters could not elect a government, as the colony's Executive Council was appointed by the Governor, who was appointed by the Colonial Office. The second is that many whites did not exercise these political rights or take any real interest in local politics. As one white mineworker complained, most of his workmates "still consider themselves Birds of Passage, they have no interest in the affairs of the country further than trying to evade the Income Tax."[108]

This began to change in 1935 as anger about the treatment of unemployed whites by the colonial administration fed into political organisation. That year, Catherine Olds was elected to represent Nkana in the Legislative Council. Olds, who was originally from Scotland, presented herself as the representative of white mineworkers, one of whom, Richard Olds, was her husband. She characterised her election as "the expression of widespread discontent" and "the protest of the

[104] Director of Medical Services to Chief Secretary, 12 December 1934, NAZ RC/1431.

[105] Chief Secretary to Commissioner of Unemployment, 27 September 1933, NAZ SEC3/56.

[106] John Sharp to Colonial Secretary, 2 June 1932, TNA CO 795/52/11.

[107] Governor of Northern Rhodesia to Colonial Secretary, 1 June 1932, TNA CO 795/52/11.

[108] Letter from R. Olds, *Copperbelt Times*, 12 October 1934, ZCCM 10.7.9A.

underdog against the monopolies" in her maiden speech.[109] Olds' political agenda was racialised social democracy where the state would provide free compulsory education, unemployment assistance and old age pensions, but only for whites. Olds became a vocal advocate for her constituents and was easily the most prominent white woman in public life. Very few white women were involved in formal politics in these years, but on the Copperbelt Olds' gender was an asset. She could plausibly claim association with mineworkers and their interests but as she could not work on the mines herself the mining companies had no sanction over her behaviour.

By this time, the copper industry was recovering, assisted by rising prices and lower transport costs. In 1931 and 1936, Rhodesia Railways lowered freight rates for copper exports to fend off competition from the newly completed Benguela Railway, which connected Katanga to the Atlantic Coast in Angola. This meant that the average cost of production and freight to Europe declined from around £29 per ton in 1931-32 to £20 per ton by 1938.[110] Recovery was slowed, however, by the decision of RAA and RST to join two successive global cartels that sought to support copper prices by restricting output.[111] Both agreements assigned maximum copper production quotas to individual mines, which were considerably below capacity for the Copperbelt mines, and these remained in place until 1939.[112]

Gradually, the tempo of work increased, though not at the hectic pace of the initial boom. Mufulira reopened in 1933, Nkana began a major expansion the same year with the sinking of Mindola shaft, and work resumed at Nchanga in 1936, but there was no revival for Bwana Mkubwa. The mine and surrounding town were demolished, and the bricks were reused to construct an expanding Nkana. The mines became increasingly profitable, and Roan Antelope and Nkana paid their first dividends to shareholders in 1935, followed by Mufulira in 1937.[113] The mines, and the white workers they employed, had survived the Great Depression.

The Self-Identity of White Workers

One notable difference with earlier white migration to mining regions was the near-total absence of Cornish influence on the Copperbelt. A generation or more earlier, Cornish miners – nicknamed 'Cousin Jacks' – could be found at mines across the world as the acknowledged experts in hardrock mining. Thousands had been on the Rand and left their mark; Johannesburg still has a district of

[109] Northern Rhodesia, *Legislative Council Debates 24. Eighth Session of the Fourth Council. 1st May – 10th May 1935*, (Livingstone: The Council, 1935), 236.

[110] Ackson Kanduza, 'An Imperial Dilemma: Copper Refining in Northern Rhodesia, 1929-1935', *Transafrican Journal of History* 14 (1985): 52-53.

[111] These cartels were Copper Exporters Inc, which collapsed in 1932, and the Copper Curtailment and Production Control Agreement.

[112] Nkana and Roan Antelope could produce up to 6,270 short tons a month and Mufulira could produce 3,370. Memorandum of Provisions Covering Curtailment and Production Control, 28 March 1935, ZCCM 16.2.3C.

[113] Roberts, 'Financial History', 353.

New Redruth and the city's largest hospital is named Baragwanath.[114] This era was at end by the time the Copperbelt mines came into production. In the 1930s, a 'Cornish miner' was occasionally used a synonym for a miner of particular skill and long experience, but seldom after that. Indeed, it is notable that one Cornish miner who did play a relatively prominent role on the Copperbelt drew no particular attention to his origins. Hugh Handford began his working life underground in Cornwall and spent many years at Roan Antelope. However, in a statement sent to the Colonial Office about the identity and status of himself, and others like him, in Northern Rhodesia, Handford emphasised that "we are under no misapprehension as to the permanence of our own 'British status'."[115]

On the Copperbelt, 'white' was synonymous with 'British' in these years and white mineworkers exhibited a "broader Anglo collective identity, racist but also transnational, inclusive as well as exclusive."[116] Hostility towards Afrikaners and migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe was proclaimed publicly and frequently. The Copperbelt's white mineworkers were overwhelmingly English-speaking, and they sought to keep it that way. These same attitudes were evident in Southern Rhodesia, where chauvinism was directed towards non-British whites and the white labour movement was vocally hostile towards the employment of non-British whites.[117]

The prevailing white working-class identity on the Copperbelt was forged against both Africans and continental Europeans, who were regarded as 'aliens'. These 'alien' whites were described and condemned in much the same terms as Africans. Letters to *The Bulawayo Chronicle* from white mineworkers stereotyped non-British white workers as cheap, unskilled labour taking jobs that should rightfully be occupied by British whites. One contributor imagined the scene a traveller would encounter upon entering a hotel bar near Ndola occupied by "a motley collection of Greeks, Germans, Italians… 'Are they in Soho?' they ask. 'Caramba! Me no speeka da Eengleesh very well. Yes?' They have evidently arrived at Port Said? 'Nein, nein, Herr' is the reply." Another man explained "a Britisher has 'no hope' in the face of cheap Union and Slav handymen," who had little mining skill. "Old miners from Cornwall and the Rand will tell you of a mine which is already a death trap." One reader advocated a simple solution: "clear out the scum of Europe and South Africa and bring in the Britisher."[118] Later in the decade, one white miner claimed in a letter to British Labour MPs that jobs were going to "Germans, Yugoslavians and Italians… and British born are left out."[119] The NRMWU produced a cartoon depicting an 'alien miner' as dangerously incompetent and

[114] Redruth is a town in Cornwall and Baragwanath is a Cornish surname.

[115] Hugh Handford to Colonial Secretary, 26 July 1939, NAZ SEC1/1797.

[116] James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 320-21.

[117] A.S. Mlambo, *White Immigration into Rhodesia: From Occupation to Federation* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 2002), 49, 53-64. Ginsburgh, *Class, Work, and Whiteness*, 47, 116-17.

[118] Letters from 'Herr Karl Mussolini', 'Sheorais' and 'Kapata', *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, 7 November 1931.

[119] J. Vingar to Arthur Creech Jones, 29 January 1937, Arthur Creech Jones Papers, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford [hereafter ACJ], Box 22, File 22.

physically smaller than the British miner, while the African miner was merely a passive onlooker (see Figure 4).

[PLACE FIGURE 4 HERE]

Yet the numbers of non-British whites on the mines were minuscule and the mining companies, who had no problems recruiting white labour during the Great Depression, did not specifically aim to recruit non-British whites. In October 1931, both Nkana and Roan Antelope Mines reported that their combined white workforce of 1,731 comprised 1,575 Britons (meaning anyone born within the British Empire), 67 Americans, 39 Yugoslavians, 22 Germans, 10 Italians and a smattering of other European nationalities. The 'British' category included a substantial proportion of South Africans. Roan Antelope provided a more detailed breakdown of the 'British' category: 313 of their white workers were born in Britain, 359 in South Africa, and 33 elsewhere in the British Empire.[120] Most whites recruited from South Africa were English-speaking and there were relatively few Afrikaner mineworkers on the Copperbelt mines. Although no statistics were kept on Afrikaner employment, there are some useful proxies. For instance, in the early 1930s there was no Dutch Reformed Church minister on the Copperbelt, though one occasionally travelled from Broken Hill, but there were Baptist and Congregationalist ministers, Anglican vicars and Catholic priests serving the white population. [121]

The white workforce in this period pushed for skilled work to be restricted to white Britons only. Catherine Olds demanded that mining jobs be reserved for unemployed men from Britain and pushed for measures to halt what she termed "the influx of alien labour."[122] This fed into political organisation and demand for amalgamation between Northern and Southern Rhodesia, which had self-government. Committees demanding amalgamation were formed in all the Copperbelt towns. Supporters hoped amalgamation would secure white dominance over the territory's African population and keep non-British whites marginalised. "Foreigners," argued the Luanshya Amalgamation Committee, were "a serious menace to the British workmen in this territory."[123] The Nkana Amalgamation Committee argued that controlling the "influx of aliens to detriment of British labour" was the second most important reason for amalgamation, the most important reason being, somewhat contradictorily, attracting more white settlers.[124] There was also a strong strain of anti-Semitism in this and much hostility was expressed toward the small number of Jews who arrived in Northern Rhodesia fleeing Nazi Germany. Some white residents called for a boycott of Jewish-

[120] Nationality return, 31 October 1931, TNA CO 795/52/11.

[121] J. Merle Davis, 'Problems for Missions', in *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*, ed. J. Merle Davis (London: Macmillan and Co., 1933), 296-97.

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

[123] Berger, 'Labour Policies', 82.

[124] Summary of evidence to be submitted by Mrs Catherine Olds, NAZ SEC/662.

owned shops and demanded that the employment of Jewish refugees on the mines be prohibited, though hardly any Jews worked on the mines.[125]

How else did white mineworkers see themselves? The most obvious is distinguishing themselves from Africans. One white miner informed the Governor in 1937 that Africans "were his inferiors and always will be," while another argued that "in the White belt of Northern Rhodesia" whites needed to maintain "authority and control over the natives in his employment or supervision."[126] These men were part of a delegation threatening to form a vigilance committee – an "American frontier phenomena," as Charles van Onselen points out[127] – after Douglas Bissett, an apprentice plumber, was caned by a police officer for assaulting Kapungwe Donat, a workman.

Episodes like this fostered the conviction among white mineworkers that the Colonial Office and the colonial administration favoured Africans, another reason they pressed for amalgamation with Southern Rhodesia. In the meantime, they were willing to take matters into their own hands. A 1938 case where an African man, Mawaiya Williams, was charged with assaulting a five-year old white girl prompted a protest meeting at Mufulira where one mineworker declared that if the government could not protect white children "then they would have no option other than to form a Vigilance Committee or a Ku Klux Klan."[128] That same year, Lulu Purvis, an Australian resident of Luanshya, was assaulted in the street by a man named only as Mupanta in the court papers, who was caught as he attempted to flee by several white men and beaten unconscious before being handed over to police.[129]

By the late 1930s, colonial officials were convinced that, despite the heavy emphasis placed upon British identity by Copperbelt whites, they were fundamentally disloyal and only a provocation away from armed revolt. Ndola's Resident Magistrate voiced fears in 1938 that an uprising was imminent and that "people attempting to do their duty would be put against a wall and shot," while the local police superintendent requested machine guns for each of the Copperbelt police stations to suppress anticipated disorder by local whites.[130] Granville Orde-Browne, a veteran colonial official, warned that widespread disorder could easily be triggered, and since most white men had experience of active military service, little respect for the law and access to dynamite, "any attempt to overawe such a collection must therefore be impressive, and a weak force is likely merely

[125] Letter from 'Just an Average Britisher', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 5 May 1939. Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, 102.

[126] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Report of an Enquiry into the causes of a disturbance at Nkana on 4th and 5th November, 1937* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1937), 28, 30.

[127] Charles van Onselen, *The Cowboy Capitalist: John Hays Hammond, the American West & the Jameson Raid* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2017), 1.

[128] Sergeant Croxford to Provincial Commissioner, Ndola, 12 July 1938, NAZ SEC1/1641.

[129] Criminal Case No. 162/1938 L Rex v. Mupanta, NAZ SEC1/1641.

[130] H.F.C. Robinson to Chief Secretary, 15 March 1938, NAZ SEC1/1641

to provoke aggression."[131] Colonial officials in Northern Rhodesia were drawn from Britain's upper-middle-class – educated in prominent public schools and then Oxford or Cambridge – and had an almost instinctive dislike of working-class whites, which was reciprocated. Both groups had come to Northern Rhodesia for very different reasons, and they had little in common.

White mineworkers themselves seemed to revel in this rebellious and unruly self-image. The few surviving publications produced by union members make no effort to present an image of respectability, industriousness, or sobriety. One 1939 issue of the NRMWU's bulletin makes unsubtle references to the prevalence of marital infidelity, boasts about mineworkers' capacity for alcohol consumption, and contained a guide on how to stowaway on tramp steamers. "The lads certainly overdid it" with "excessive spirits" is the report of one social function, but it reads more as congratulations than admonishment. The front cover of the bulletin was an advert for Lion Beer.[132] A similar tone pervades reminiscences of that era by white mineworkers. When Hugh Handford reflected that "I can't think of a single crime in the penal code that was not committed in the first ten years on the Copperbelt," it is hard to say whether this was being recalled with reproach or a hint of satisfaction.[133]

This was the kind of white working-class identity that prevailed on the Copperbelt: a chauvinistic Britishness that incorporated national or regional identities within Britain and the empire and was openly hostile towards Africans, other whites, and colonial officials, the last of whom reciprocated the dislike. As will be seen below, to this was added hostility to their employers.

Unionising the white workforce

Efforts to form the first trade union for white mineworkers began in the mid-1930s. Although many of the white workers who arrived from the late 1920s had considerable experience in the labour movement, there was initially no attempt to form trade unions. Instead, white workers unhappy with their conditions voted with their feet. Jane Parpart offered the same explanation for the initial lack of collective action by African mineworkers, they could easily desert.[134] This is what occurred with the first recorded instance of collective action by the white workforce, a strike by Glaswegian riveters which neatly encapsulated the international mobility, militancy, and racialised class consciousness that characterised the Copperbelt's white working class.

Riveters had been recruited from Glasgow in 1930 for construction work at Roan Antelope and Nkana, but neither group lasted long. One month after arriving, riveters at Roan Antelope demanded a pay increase and their anger over economic exploitation was intermingled with racial demands. The riveters objected to being treated differently to the rest of the white workforce "composed mostly of Americans and Australians who… were drawing a much higher rate of wages"

[131] Interim report by Major G. St J. Orde-Browne on Industrial Relations in the Mining Area of Northern Rhodesia, 22 March 1938, NAZ SEC1/1641.

[132] NRMWU Bulletin No. 2, February 1939, NAZ SEC1/1389.

[133] 'Personally Speaking: Hugh Handford', *Rhokana Copper Miner*, 20 September 1963.

[134] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 65.

and were outraged by indignities such as being served the same food "as that dished out to the coloured labour."[135] The immediate instinct of the construction engineer and the mine manager, both Americans, was to reject their demands, even though they had been intending to increase their pay, to avoid setting a precedent with regards to collective action.[136] The rivetters consequently walked off the job and returned to Glasgow.

This month-long stint was considerably longer than the riveters at Nkana managed. They went on strike one day after arriving, having concluding that they had been recruited to undercut the wages of other white workers. One of the instigators was Charles Forrestor, a man with considerable experience in this area. He had been deported from Canada in 1926 for his role in protests there and had visited the Soviet Union in 1929 as a delegate of his shipyard.[137] The following year, Forrestor was on the Copperbelt, heading a delegation to the mine manager which demanded that riveting work should be reserved for members of their union, so no African worker should be employed to do this. The riveters claimed that the mine manager Arno Winther, another American engineer, "stated that in all open 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."[138] The riveters refused to do this. Instead, they too returned to Glasgow, minus two men who had been imprisoned for assault and riot.

What Winther had allegedly told the riveters was in fact company policy at RAA and RST. In 1932, Ronald Peterson, another American engineer who became manager at Mufulira, explained that "the 'teaching' policy of the company" was to train African workers and lower costs by replacing expensive white workers.[139] There was no great secrecy about this process. In 1932, a group of fitters at Roan Antelope had complained to the construction engineer that Africans were working on lathes, regarded as skilled work, and were informed that "where Natives were capable of being trained so that they could satisfactorily handle semi-skilled jobs the Company could see no reason why they should not be put on such jobs."[140]

Similar processes occurred at other copper mines. At Potrerillos, white bricklayers, electricians, and carpenters were replaced with Chileans once routine operations began, and by the 1930s most whites were in professional rather than skilled jobs.[141] Many contemporary observers expected the same to occur on the Copperbelt. When Cambridge economist Austin Robinson visited the mines in 1932, he concluded that Northern Rhodesia "is well on its way to the condition

[135] 'Glasgow trade union sensation', *Glasgow Sunday Mail*, 21 December 1930.

[136] Letter No. 448, 8 November 1930, ZCCM 16.2.4B.

[137] 'Court story of row at meeting', *Evening Citizen* (Glasgow), 26 January 1932.

[138] Report of men from N'kana mine, ZCCM 16.2.4B.

[139] R.M Peterson, 'Roan Antelope Mining Practice', *Engineering and Mining Journal* (November 1932): 559.

[140] D.D. Irwin to A.D. Storke, 1 April 1932, ZCCM 10.2.10C

[141] Vergara, *Copper Workers*, 32.

of India, where on the whole the white man is only present as an officer, and can gradually be cleared out or found different jobs."[142] What slowed this process, Peterson later reflected, was that the companies could not recruit enough miners with experience training others and "many, if not most, of the Europeans engaged were used to doing the rough work themselves and were not used to training raw labour."[143]

Mechanising operations had meant that, proportionately, significantly more white workers were employed on the Copperbelt mines than at any other mines in the region in the early 1930s. In June 1931, there were 1,042 whites employed at Roan Antelope, almost 18% of the total workforce.[144] In contrast, white workers constituted only 10.7% of Union Minière's workforce, around 4% of the workforce on gold and coal mines in Southern Rhodesia, 5% of the workforce on coal mines in South Africa, and 9.7% of the workforce in South Africa's gold industry.[145] Redundancies during the Great Depression and training for African workers in the aftermath altered the situation. African workers replaced whites in some job categories, such as lorry drivers, and the proportion of white mineworkers declined from 13.2% of the total workforce in 1932 to 11.1% in 1934.[146] Most alarmingly, for white miners, the mining companies had successfully lobbied to prevent the colonial administration banning Africans from holding blasting certificates, as was the case in South Africa, and dozens of African miners already held this qualification.[147]

Mine managements began substituting African labour for white labour in the mid-1930s.[148] Changing dynamics in the regional labour market meant that worries over African labour shortages dissipated. Union Minière sharply reduced recruitment from Northern Rhodesia in the early 1930s, as did employers in Southern Rhodesia. The estimated number of Africans from Northern Rhodesia working outside the territory fell from 42,450 in 1929 to 21,263 in 1933.[149] Active recruitment of African labour ceased during the Great Depression and did not resume when the copper industry

[142] Alec Caincross, *Austin Robinson: The Life of an Economic Advisor* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 57.

[143] Note, 29 July 1944, NAZ SEC1/1351.

[144] Progress report for three months ended 30 June 1931, ST G/51.

[145] Figures for Southern Rhodesia are from 1927. Figures for Union Minière and South Africa are from 1931. Perrings, *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa*, 252; Ian Phimister, 'The Shamva Mine Strike of 1927: An Emerging African Proletariat', *Rhodesian History* 2 (1971): 70-71; P. (Kate) Alexander, 'Challenging cheap-labour theory: Natal and Transvaal coal miners, *ca* 1890–1950', *Labor History* 49, 1 (2008): 51; Chamber of Mines of South Africa, *Eighty-First Annual Report 1970* (Johannesburg: The Chamber of Mines of South Africa, 1971), 72.

[146] Appendix I.

[147] Frank Ayer to Secretary, RST London, 17 October 1934, ZCCM 10.2.10C.

[148] Guy Mhone, *The Political Economy of a Dual Labour Market in Africa: The copper industry and dependency in Zambia, 1929-1969* (Rutherford: Associated University Press, 1982), 115.

[149] M.H.Y. Kaniki, 'The Impact of the Great Depression on Northern Rhodesia', *Transafrican Journal of History* 24 (1995): 136.

revived as the mines could satisfy their requirements from 'voluntary' labour, that is Africans who made their own way to the mine.

White workers were well-aware of what was happening, and this was directly connected to the first open agitation to form a union in late 1934. The first efforts to organise a trade union for white mineworkers began in September 1934 when Richard Olds, who had previously worked as a miner in England, the United States and South Africa, resigned from Nkana to organise an Industrial Workers' Federation. One of its key concerns was preventing "unskilled persons encroaching on the Trade" and Olds made it explicitly clear exactly what was meant by this:

> 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.[150]

'Thinking white' meant recognising and articulating the interests of these workers as white workers, with interests different and opposed to African workers and to white employers, who, people like Olds believed, sought to replace them with African workers. What were identified as the interests of white workers was closely influenced by developments on mines in Katanga and South Africa. In 1936, Olds wrote to the whites-only South African Mine Workers' Union (SAMWU) warning that African miners were acquiring blasting certificates and "that the mines are doing everything possible" to train African workers so the mine companies could "oust the white worker on the mines just the same as in the Congo Belge… unless something is done and done quickly the white worker is doomed."[151]

Labour developments in Katanga were well-known across the region's white labour movement. Almost every issue of the Rhodesia Railway Workers' Union (RRWU) publication *Rhodesia Railway Review* in the mid-1920s contained a warning about African labour replacing white, illustrated with examples from Katanga.[152] The prospect of Africans acquiring blasting certificates was particularly worrying to the SAMWU. Only whites could hold blasting certificates in South Africa, and possession of one was both the definition of a miner and the entrance qualification required by the SAMWU.[153] Olds clearly knew his audience in making his appeal for support.

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[150] 'To form workers' federation', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 15 September 1934. Letter from R. Olds, *Copperbelt Times*, 12 October 1934, ZCCM 10.7.9A.

[151] Letter from Richard Olds, *The Mineworker*, May 1936.

[152] The RRWU was a trade union for white railway workers formed in Southern Rhodesia and had branches in Northern Rhodesia. Jon Lunn, *Capital and Labour on the Rhodesian Railway System, 1890-1939*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 97.

[153] Elaine Katz, 'White Workers' Grievances and the Industrial Colour Bar, 1902-1913', *South African Journal of Economics* 42, 2 (1974): 91.

The white mineworkers' union was formed in a transnational context, and the first was links with South Africa. Much of the white workforce had experience working in South Africa, including Olds, and this experience prompted an unsuccessful attempt to link up with South Africa's white labour movement. Olds himself assiduously ingratiated himself with the SAMWU's leadership and was listed as the head of the union's (non-existent) Rhodesian section from April 1936.[154] The appeal to South Africa was also necessary because efforts to organise a union on the Copperbelt had achieved little success. Both RAA and RST had diligently undermined efforts to organise the white workforce. Both companies shared information, consulted each other on strategy, refused to meet self-declared union representatives and recruited spies to monitor and disrupt union meetings.[155]

White mineworkers attempted to establish a SAMWU branch on the Copperbelt and in mid-1936 invited the union's newly appointed general secretary Charlie Harris to tour the Copperbelt. The SAMWU had secured a colour bar on South Africa's gold mines and in the 1910s and early 1920s had engaged in violent struggles with the mining companies and the state over the issue. By the 1930s, the union was beset with fierce internal conflict as Afrikaner nationalists sought to take over the union and Harris sought to bolster his position by establishing SAMWU branches in Northern and Southern Rhodesia.[156] Some white workers on the Copperbelt welcomed this support. When hecklers interrupted Harris' speech at Nkana, asking who invited him, half the 250-strong audience stood up replying "we did." Spurred on by this enthusiasm, Harris ended his speech by declaring the SAMWU Nkana branch open.[157]

Harris was adamant about the main purpose of the union: "make Northern Rhodesia a white man's country" by preventing Africans from performing skilled work and by ending the rule of "the Downing Street negrophiles."[158] This campaign got off to a shaky start. Meetings in Luanshya and Mufulira were poorly attended as one occurred at the same time as a football match and the other was "held the day after pay day," and much of the potential audience was too hungover to attend.[159] It is hard to see much sustained commitment from the Copperbelt's white workforce to making the colony into the envisaged 'white man's country', a place few of them intended to stay.

The SAMWU branch quickly folded. Eagle-eyed members of Roan Antelope's Board of Directors spotted that the SAMWU constitution prohibited membership outside South Africa, so recognition of the union was refused.[160] Then, it transpired that membership dues were being secretly sent to Johannesburg and this produced angry recriminations. Consequently, the union was

[154] *The Mineworker*, April 1936.

[155] Frank Ayer to Harold Munroe, 21 September 1934, ZCCM 10.7.9A

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

[157] 'Mineworkers' Union at Nkana', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 4 July 1936.

[158] 'Editorial', *The Mineworker*, July 1936.

[159] 'Labour meeting last Saturday', *The Mineworker*, July 1936.

[160] Frank Ayer to Charles Harris, 7 October 1936, NAZ SEC1/1376.

reconstituted on an independent basis as the NRMWU in October 1936. Olds was barred from the organisation and shouted down when he attempted to speak at a meeting.[161] The SAMWU itself seems to have lost interest in the Copperbelt after this episode and there is virtually no mention of the Copperbelt in the union's publications for the remainder of the decade, though the NRMWU did send a letter of condolence after Harris was assassinated in 1939.[162]

Industrial relations were shaped by the transnational experience of both white managers and white workers. Mine managers at Mufulira and Roan Antelope, who had been recruited from the United States, resisted collective bargaining and this stance was informed by their experience in the American West, where copper companies had fought hard to keep trade unions out of mines and smelters during the 1920s.[163] Managers refused to meet union representatives, and some had good reasons for doing so. C.K. Pitt, manager at Nkana, was a survivor of the Brakpan Massacre, when armed white strikers attacked Brakpan Mine during the 1922 Rand Revolt and overwhelmed the men defending the mine and killed several who surrendered. Pitt himself was beaten unconscious by strikers.[164] Pitt was surely aware that the union's Nkana branch chair had fought in the Rand Revolt, and that the son of Harry Spendiff, the revolutionary miner's leader who shot himself when the insurrection was crushed rather than be captured, worked nearby at Mufulira. It is therefore unsurprising that he was disinclined to meet union representatives.

The mine management established employee committees for white workers to forestall the formation of union branches. These were established at the suggestion of Frank Ayer, who noted that "at the last two properties under my charge [in Mexico and Arizona] I inaugurated programs of the kind and they were exceedingly successful."[165] NRMWU officials were well-aware of this American connection and about how employee committees functioned in the American mining industry. Such committees were "company unions" and "the history of such concerns in the USA is sufficient to show why they should be rejected unconditionally." These bodies were dangerous as they were "capable of destroying completely the spirit and principles of the NRMWU" by inculcating a "pseudo-capitalistic complex" in the minds of workers who sat on them.[166]

Links with Britain was the other transnational context for the formation of the white mineworkers' union. There was an instinctual and reciprocal recognition that the NRMWU was in some way part of Britain's extended labour movement and so deserved support. Several founding NRMWU members had been active participants in Britain's labour movement. Some of the Welsh winding engine drivers mentioned above, for instance, had been involved in Britain's 1926 General

[161] Ben Rount to Chief Secretary, 25 October 1936, NAZ SEC1/1376.

[162] 'Charles Harris Shot', *The Mineworker*, June 1939.

[163] Charles Hyde, *Copper for America: The United States Copper Industry from Colonial Times to the 1990s* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 149-59.

[164] William Urquhart, *The Outbreak on the Witwatersrand March 1922* (Johannesburg: Hortors Ltd, 1922), 78-9.

[165] Frank Ayer to RST London, 1 December 1934, ZCCM 10.7.9A.

[166] NRMWU Bulletin No. 2, February 1939, NAZ SEC1/1381.

Strike including one, Dai Jones, who was a trained singer and had sung in concerts to raise strike funds.[167] Another, Gerry Ford, became chair of the union's Nkana branch and union vice-president.

Telegrams were sent to then British 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.[168] This was an astute move. The Colonial Office duly pressured the mining companies to recognise the union once 55% of daily-paid workers joined, a salutary lesson about the value of appeals to allies in Britain. Accordingly, in April 1937, when membership reached the required figure, the companies reluctantly agreed to recognise the NRMWU.[169] The companies were sufficiently rattled by the development to introduce pensions and a bonus scheme for white employees that year.

Subsequent assistance was sought from the British labour movement for organising the structures of the union, as white mineworkers sought to emulate established practice in Britain. 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."[170] That it might seem odd for a small group of white men claiming to be the progressive 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 Britain's Trade Union Congress, establishing connections which would become significant in the years to come.[171]

The first major collective action, however, was by African mineworkers. In May 1935, African mineworkers struck at Mufulira, Nkana, and Roan Antelope over tax increases and general discontent at their living and working conditions, taking the companies and the colonial state entirely by surprise. Police reinforcements were rushed to the Copperbelt and the strike ended after police shot dead six strikers in Luanshya.[172] Despite the hostility towards Africans, there appears to have been no opposition among white mineworkers to the strike and one colonial official complained that "a good many of the Europeans on the mines were probably in sympathy with the

[167] 'They Retire This Month', *Rhokana Review*, June 1955.

[168] Telegram from Governor, Lusaka to Secretary of State, London, 29 March 1937, NAZ SEC1/1376.

[169] The NRMWU then had a total membership of 834. Ben Rount to General Manager, Roan Antelope, 2 April 1937, ZCCM 10.7.9A.

[170] T.W.S. Shaw to Clement Attlee, 8 March 1938, ACJ Box 22, File 22.

[171] J.S. Middleton to T.W.S. Shaw, 24 March 1938, ACJ Box 22, File 22.

[172] For a detailed account of the strike, see Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, 68-83 and Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 54-74.

strike."[173] It is both notable and surprising that this strike by African mineworkers was not mentioned by white mineworkers in the efforts to form the NRMWU.

White mineworkers could not initially replicate collective action on the same scale, or even secure a hearing with mine managers, who continued to refuse to meet with white union representatives. Frustration at the failure to make any tangible improvements over pay or working conditions prompted a thorough reorganisation of the organisation in December 1938. Nineteen men met in Ndola to form the first NRMWU General Council. This meeting provides an insight into the international character of the white workforce as the nineteen men in attendance had, collectively, worked on mines and been on strike on four continents. This kind of transnational experience was not uncommon among white trade unionists in the region. Almost all the men who had formed the Rhodesia Railway Workers Union in 1917 had been involved in the momentous 1911 national railway strike in Britain.[174] On the Rand, the founding leader of the white miners' union was a Cornish miner Tom Matthews who had been a socialist representative in the Montana state legislature, and Australian trade unionists played a central role in forming other racially exclusive trade unions on the gold mines.[175] This same kind of transnational work experience would prove important for shaping the politics, strategy and demands of the NRMWU.

The Case of Tommy Graves

The new NRMWU leadership was tested almost immediately when one of the new General Council members was sacked from Roan Antelope. The efforts to get Tommy Graves reinstated tell us much about the world of white labour on the Copperbelt and the transnational influences in the white workforce. Graves was born in Cumberland, England and followed his father, who was also a miner and had worked on the Rand, into underground work before emigrating to the United States. He became a miner at Copper Queen Mine in Bisbee, Arizona. Bisbee was a self-proclaimed 'white man's camp' where skilled mine work was restricted to whites and a dual-wage system was in place where white workers were paid far more than Mexicans.[176] The town, however, was also a crucible of revolutionary industrial unionism.

Graves became an organiser for the revolutionary Industrial Workers of the World and was among those forcibly removed from the town in the infamous Bisbee Deportation in 1917, when armed vigilantes rounded up and expelled over 1,100 striking miners.[177] Undeterred, Graves returned to Bisbee and was arrested as an agitator, which he readily admitted he was. He skipped bail, but

[173] Richard Gray, *The Two Nations: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesia and Nyasaland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 104.

[174] Ginsburgh, *Race, Work and Whiteness*, 37.

[175] Hyslop, 'Imperial Working Class', 412.

[176] Katherine Benton-Cohen, *Borderline Americans: Racial division and labour war in the Arizona borderlands* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 80-119.

[177] James Byrkit, *Forging the Copper Collar: Arizona's Labour-Management War of 1901–1921* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982), 187-216.

his luck ran out when he was arrested months later at another copper mine for instigating a strike. He was imprisoned and then deported along with hundreds of other foreign-born radicals during the 'Red Scare'.[178] At his deportation hearing, Tommy Graves told the presiding judge that they could deport him "but they could not force him to keep still."[179] Ten years later, he was on the Copperbelt.

The revolutionary and racial politics Graves encountered in those years were an important influence on him. He was a founding member of the NRMWU and had a hands-on approach to industrial relations. So, when rumours circulated at Roan Antelope in January 1939 that a new underground electrician had been employed on a lower wage, Graves sought to resolve the matter himself. He enlisted two shop stewards to visit the electrician at his boarding house late one night and proceeded to wake him up to question him about whether he was a qualified artisan, on the grounds that jobs like electrician should be restricted to those who had completed an apprenticeship. The electrician, a young South African, duly produced papers showing he was fully qualified, and Graves promised to get him a pay rise. Graves then found the mine superintendent, a Canadian, Alex McNeil, and threatened to organise a strike unless the acting mine manager Wilfred MacKenzie, who was also Canadian, agreed to meet with him. Graves got his meeting the next day, whereupon MacKenzie fired him on the spot.[180]

"We were thunderstruck," claimed Jim Purvis, who was also at the meeting. 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, he carried a gun, had been imprisoned in the United States, boasted about involvement in a dozen strikes during his life and, only two weeks previously, had beaten up an African miner in front of the underground foreman.[181] Graves was dangerous because of his involvement in the Industrial Workers of the World, "the most radical organisation of its kind" warned MacKenzie, who had encountered the union on mines in British Columbia.[182]

Although born on the other side of the world, the man who defended Graves had a similar biography. Jim Purvis had begun his working life in the small copper mining town of Nymagee, New South Wales and had worked as an electrician, labourer, leather worker, miner and stockman all over Australia, then in northern England, back in Australia again, on the South African Rand, and then on the Copperbelt.[183] His mother was known as 'Comrade Mary', a radical newspaper editor who claimed to be the first woman elected as an official of the Australian Workers' Union.[184] Purvis

[178] R.A. Scott to Supervising Inspector, Immigration Service, 19 April 1919, National Archives and Record Administration, Washington DC, 559947, 54616/087.

[179] 'Deport Globe Undesirables', *Bisbee Daily Review*, 19 June 1919.

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

[181] Award in the matter of a dispute between the Roan Antelope Copper Mines Ltd and the NRMWU, TNA CO 795/107/12.

[182] Roan Antelope Copper Mines and Mine Workers Union meeting re T.R. Graves, 11 May 1939, NAZ SEC1/1381.

[183] Record since landing: J.F. Purvis, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, MT1139/1, PURVIS James Fenton.

[184] 'In a Woman's Mind', *Worker* (Brisbane), 12 August 1905.

followed her into the labour movement, serving as an official in the same union and departing Australia after being jailed during a strike.[185] He too was at the December 1938 meeting that formed the NRMWU General Council.

Purvis and other NRMWU officials conceded that most of MacKenzie's allegations were true but did not accept that this meant Graves had done anything wrong. Union officials admitted that Graves carried a gun but explained this was not unusual as guns were readily available. Purvis claimed that Graves did not own a gun but "had borrowed one for a short period" because a drunk had shot at him one night. Graves was "disconcerted" by this and "imagined someone was after him," so having a gun was no reason to sack him. Purvis also admitted that Graves had previously been removed as a union official after triggering a brawl at a meeting by denouncing another member as a "white-livered rat," who promptly responded by throwing Graves off the stage. Both Graves and the other man were drunk at the time, explained Purvis in mitigation.[186]

This episode is a window into the transnational world of white labour: an Australian union official demanding that an English miner be reinstated in his job on a mine in Central Africa after being sacked by a Canadian mine manager in part because of his previous activities in the United States. Even though Graves himself soon left for England, the NRMWU was unwilling to let the matter drop. This was because this small union saw itself as part of a wider and transnational white labour movement. As newly installed general secretary Victor Welsford, an Australian, explained, "the dispute is of importance in the interests of all British labour, to whom my Union have an obvious and reciprocal responsibility."[187] Welsford himself could plausibly claim some familiarity with a transnational white labour movement; he had worked in Australia, Britain, the United States, South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia.

The problem was that RST simply refused to negotiate. When white mineworkers appealed to the Northern Rhodesia Government to intervene, RST bluntly stated it was "no concern of the Union" and that the company's right to dismiss any employee for whatever reason was "a right which it would not and could not in any circumstances relinquish."[188] A planned strike to force RST to modify this attitude floundered when it emerged that Welsford had intended to expel Graves from the union before he was sacked. Welsford wanted the union to provide services to members – such as offering cheaper food through a co-operative scheme – in partnership with management. Striking to get an unpredictable firebrand his job back was not conducive to this strategy.

Lack of solidarity was compounded by paranoia. Union representatives did not think that the colonial state was on their side and repeatedly requested reassurances that troops would not be deployed to the Copperbelt to break strikes. Several had experienced this elsewhere in the world and Graves himself assumed that trade unions in the territory would soon be suppressed by the

[185] "Lightning Jimmy' is in there', *Northern News*, 29 October 1958.

[186] Roan Antelope Copper Mines Limited and Mine Workers Union meeting re T.R. Graves, 10 May 1939, NAZ SEC1/1381.

[187] V. Welsford to Provincial Commissioner, Ndola, 31 May 1939, NAZ SEC1/1381.

[188] Harold Williams to Chief Secretary, 23 May 1939, NAZ SEC1/1381.

army.[189] Such worries were more prescient than farfetched. In 1942, the army was deployed on the Copperbelt to quell anticipated industrial unrest by white workers, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Anger about the lack of support for Graves caused a rift between the Roan Antelope NRMWU branch and the rest of the union. In August 1939, the branch was expelled and reconstituted itself as the Roan Mine Workers' Federation. This too was a whites-only organisation and its founders stressed that they had decades of experience as active trade unionists. The Federation, as they saw it, was heir to a long history and would "maintain the advances made in social and labour conditions by Unionism during the last 100 years." This meant acting "as a deterrent to exploitation" by preventing African workers – who were not regarded as legitimate heirs to this century-long tradition of trade unionism – from performing skilled work. Indeed, one reason the new union was urgently required was because of the "imminent danger of a greater proportion of native labour resulting in loss of jobs to white men."[190]

Conclusion

The significance of the formation of a trade union for "white persons employed in or about the mines" was not apparent at the time.[191] In 1939, the union was bitterly divided, heavily indebted, and with an ever-changing cast of characters in charge. Its survival was in doubt, another aspect of the general instability and unpredictability of life for whites on the Copperbelt during the 1930s. Wages for white mineworkers were high but material prosperity was tenuous. Individually, they could be easily sacked and then face a lengthy journey to secure comparable work, while the entire industry was susceptible to boom and bust.

Still, most white mineworkers were accustomed to such a life and the continent-hopping careers it entailed. Indeed, the frequency of their moves and the limited number of work sites that they moved between meant that it was not uncommon for the white men who came to the Copperbelt to have worked together before. Two of the men who founded the NRMWU, Tommy Graves and Richard Olds, had worked at the same iron ore mine in northern England at the same time. It is significant that no-one at the time considered it was noteworthy or unusual that two men who had been born a few miles apart, begun their working lives at the same mine and both subsequently worked in the United States were now involved in forming a trade union in Central Africa. This was an entirely normal career path.

Life and culture for the Copperbelt's white mineworkers was necessarily an international one. Mining jobs, gender and racial hierarchies, management practices, the built environment of the mining camps, sports teams, social clubs, and trade unions all bore strong similarities with other mining regions around the world. These similarities were generated and sustained by the global links forged in this period, particularly by constant migration of the white workforce on the mines

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

[190] Notice, Roan Mine Workers Federation, October 1939, ZCCM 15.1.6E.

[191] Constitution of the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union, 1936, NAZ SEC1/1376.

and, eased the arrival of thousands of people from around the English-speaking world. Yet this wide vista of international experience helped produce a narrow kind of parochialism among white mineworkers: lucrative employment opportunities on the Copperbelt should be reserved for them and people like them, working-class British whites.

The creation of a white working-class was not a pre-ordained outcome. In the 1900s, for instance, new gold mines in colonial Ghana recruited white miners from goldfields in Australia, South Africa, and the United States to work in new underground mines, yet their high wages and frequent bouts of sickness kept their numbers low.[192] These same potentially limiting factors were evident on the Copperbelt, yet the late 1930s saw the first stirrings of collective action that would establish white workers as a powerful presence on the mines for the next three decades. We must turn to look at the agency of white workers themselves in bringing this about during the Second World War.

[192] Mark-Thiesen, *Contract Men*, 71-5.

Chapter 3

A Good War, 1940-47

Frank Maybank made no secret of the fact that he had spent time in the Soviet Union and had liked what he had seen there. Born in England, Maybank had worked as a miner, among many other jobs, in New Zealand and Western Australia before he arrived at Mufulira in 1939, where he got a job as an underground timberman. He was a man in the right place at the right time. His peripatetic background and radical politics made him a good fit among the Copperbelt's white workforce in the 1940s, many of whom had similar backgrounds and experiences. Maybank had a confrontational approach to industrial relations and this approach found a ready audience among the white workforce, and he was soon appointed general secretary of the NRMWU. He himself was already a seasoned union militant with experience of strikes in Australia and New Zealand and he had been a member of the Communist Party of Australia.[1]

Maybank saw the Copperbelt's white workforce as part of a much wider movement. Other white workers thought the same. The Copperbelt's white workers had a clear understanding of their place in the world in this period: they saw themselves as part of an international white working class and their actions, therefore, were of interest and concern to the labour movement across the world. This was an assessment which was not entirely wrong. During this period white mineworkers increasingly did secure support and recognition from trade unions around the world. This recognition of white mineworkers as a component of the labour movement was manifested in practical assistance during disputes and when Maybank was arrested and deported from Northern Rhodesia.

The circumstances of the Second World War placed white mineworkers in a strong position. Harold Macmillan, the future British Prime Minister and then parliamentary secretary at the Ministry of Supply, made the point succinctly: "As long as we must have copper we are in the hands of the Mine Workers' Union."[2] By the mid-twentieth century, copper was a critical resource for fighting a war. Brass cartridges, artillery shells, and copper wiring for electrical systems in aircraft, tanks and warships required vast quantities of copper.[3] In October 1939, Britain's Ministry of Supply established a bulk-purchasing scheme to purchase Northern Rhodesia's entire copper output at a fixed price of £62 per ton – the price quoted on the London Metal Exchange at the outbreak of war – and instructed the companies to produce as much copper as possible.[4]

[1] Duncan Money, 'The World of European Labour on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, 1940-1945', *International Review of Social History* 60, 2 (2015): 235-36.

[2] Harold Macmillan to Arthur Creech Jones, 2 May 1942, ACJ Box 22, File 3.

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

[4] Butler, *Copper Empire*, 62-63.

The state became more important during the Second World War as both the imperial and colonial state intervened in industry to try to secure adequate copper supplies.[5] State intervention encompassed control over price, distribution of output, investment decisions and, especially pertinent to the discussion here, labour relations. The power of managers and company executives was circumscribed and colonial officials, who had largely been trained to administer vast rural territories, found themselves turning their hand to industrial relations. In the 1930s, the state had been more of a hypothetical presence on the Copperbelt. Now events on the mines were discussed at the highest levels of government.

This is because of the importance of copper as a strategic metal and the persistent threat of industrial unrest from white workers that threatened the supply of copper to Britain. White mineworkers had little interest in Northern Rhodesia as a future home or as a colony to 'build up'. Indeed, Northern Rhodesia's Chief Secretary complained "they [white workers] have no feelings of patriotism towards us."[6] His use of 'us' is significant, drawing a distinction between British colonial officials and white workers. This distancing was reciprocated. The claim of the chair of Roan Antelope's NRMWU branch that "We are outcasts. We do not belong to any country," was something of an exaggeration but there was a general disregard towards the colony.[7] This was perhaps best expressed by NRMWU president Brian Goodwin's claim that "the public have never been sympathetic towards the workers' demands on the Copperbelt" but their criticism was "like water off a duck's back."[8] What other whites in Northern Rhodesia thought of them was of no consequence, white mineworkers were appealing to a different audience outside the colony.

Strikes were primarily directed against the mining companies, however, rather than the colonial administration as white mineworkers took advantage of the demand for copper to better their pay and conditions. The actions of white mineworkers were strongly influenced by their global work experience and the connections they made during the war, which informed their militant, racist strategy and helped secured wider support in the international labour movement. Demands for better pay and conditions were informed by developments in other mining regions, but not just any mining regions. For white mineworkers, the only relevant comparisons were the wages and working conditions of white workers in the British Empire and the United States. The Copperbelt's white workers largely circulated around places that were on one side of what Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds termed the "global colour line," the self-described 'white man's country's' in which whiteness had become a "transnational form of racial identification."[9]

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[5] On the impact of war, see Alfred Tembo, *War and Society in Colonial Zambia, 1939-1953* (Athens, Oh.: Ohio University Press, 2021).

[6] George Beresford-Stooke to Andrew Cohen, 1 February 1944, NAZ SEC1/1399.

[7] Southern Africa Labour Conference, 17-18 July 1943, Welensky Papers, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford [hereafter WP], 505/10.

[8] Extract from the Official report of the Legislative Council Debates, 26 August 1946, ZCCM 12.2.1B.

[9] Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White men's countries and the international challenge of racial equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3-4.

This period saw the emergence of a more clearly defined racialised working-class on the mines. The imposition of a colour bar by the NRMWU in 1942 brought about a closer identification between race and skill and resulted in the expansion of the boundaries of whiteness. In this sense, a section of the working-class on the Copperbelt made itself white. People working in jobs covered by the colour bar came to be recognised as white and 'white' was no longer equated with 'British', as it had been in the 1930s. Workers who spoke little English and even some workers not of European descent could be categorised as white. People could become white.[10]

Wildcat strikes in 1940

Wildcat strikes by white mineworkers at the beginning of the war had significant consequences. Swift and determined collective action secured both material gains and a closed shop that restricted skilled work to white union members. The key to understanding why these strikes broke out in 1940 is the mobility of white mineworkers, or lack of it. There had been longstanding dissatisfaction with wages and with the union leadership. As one union member at Mufulira had put it in 1939, "Union officials should stop running around to commissions and committees and get down to the root of the matter – which is wages and the cost of living."[11] Dissatisfaction had not resulted in action during the 1930s because whites unhappy with conditions on the mines could leave, and frequently did. During 1939, over one-third of the white workforce had left, mostly for other mining and industrial centres, and had been replaced.[12]

After September 1939, they could no longer do this. At the outbreak of war, Northern Rhodesia's Governor John Maybin issued The Emergency Powers (Control of Movement) Regulations "which prohibit the movement of all male British subjects employed in the Mining Industry or on the Railways from this Territory except by permits."[13] Discontent with this order was quickly apparent. In February 1940, the Governor received several mineworkers' delegations who protested that they could not leave the industry, but the companies could still sack them. White mineworkers were stuck. This had important consequences. If wages and working conditions were better in other mining centres, and white workers could no long travel there, then they would have to be emulated or bettered on the Copperbelt.

Militants in the white workforce quickly moved into action and began planning for a strike against both the companies and the NRMWU leadership. The opportune moment came at a 300-strong meeting at Mufulira on 15 March 1940, where the union and existing negotiating procedures were disavowed. Instead, the meeting elected a Committee of Action headed by Frank Maybank and compiled a list of demands. These were delivered to the mine manager accompanied with a threat: they would take "direct action… the only action which will bring immediate and certain

[10] The classic text on this process is Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

[11] Letter from 'Disgruntled Old Timer' in NRMWU Bulletin No. 2, February 1939, NAZ SEC1/1389.

[12] Gann, *History of Northern Rhodesia*, 333.

[13] Governor's Deputy to Colonial Secretary, 6 March 1940, TNA CO 795/118/15.

results" unless the demands were conceded within 24 hours.[14] Jack Hodgson, later a key figure in Umkhonto we Sizwe but then a miner on the Committee of Action, explained what happened next:

> We got together all the militants we knew on the mine, about 50 men in total… Early on Sunday morning – 5 o'clock we had all the militants take up a position 200 yard from the shaft-head. They looked like a guard… We set up a picket line around the shaft. The Mufulira men were on strike.[15]

[PLACE FIGURE 5 HERE]

Not a single daily-paid mineworker crossed the picket, and those gathered at the shaft-head voted by show of hands to strike. No provisions were made for halting operations and some surface plants were damaged in the ensuing disorderly shutdown.

Entreaties were now sent to other mines. Two days later, around 700 people crowded into the Nkana Cinema to witness a scene doubtless carefully planned by militants. Brian Goodwin, a South African miner, began by reading a list of grocery prices, then informed the crowd that demands for wage increases had been rejected and rhetorically closed the meeting because the union now had "to go to conciliation or to arbitration and it may be months and months before we get anywhere." Immediately, another miner leapt upon a table and declared "Are we to take this lying down or are we going to take action?" Maybank was also in the audience and urged a strike, arguing "we have the right to withdraw our labour which we sell." Only a few called for moderation. "You must realise what the strike of 1922 was like" warned one man, referring to the Rand Revolt, and pleaded with others not to undermine the war effort. Others voiced the rumour that the copper they produced was being sold to Italy, and from there sent to Germany.[16]

White men were not the only attendees at the meeting. Around 200 white women were also present and appear to have voted on the demands, including Catherine Olds who urged those present "you have to fight your battle" and not be dissuaded from striking by their wives or children. The meeting quickly reached a decision. A Committee of Action was elected, with Goodwin at its head, and the demands made at Mufulira were adopted, followed by a resolution to deliver an even sharper ultimatum to the mine management: agree to the demands within 12 hours or face a strike. White mineworkers, backed up with strikers from Mufulira, then picketed all shafts and workshops, shutting the mine.[17]

The white workforce was not unanimous in the desire to strike. White workers at Roan Antelope, where the breakaway Miners' Federation held sway, proved less receptive. Strikers'

[14] John Maybin to Colonial Secretary, 2 April 1940, NAZ SEC/1383.

[15] Seventh interview with Jack Hodgson, 16 November 1968, HPA A2729 E3.

[16] Notes of meeting of Mine Workers Held in Cinema Hall, 19 March 1940, ZCCM 3.8.1A. The Rand Revolt was a strike by white miners in South Africa in 1922 that escalated into an armed uprising and was crushed by the state. Krikler, *Rand Revolt*.

[17] Alfred Royden Harrison to Anglo American Johannesburg, 30 March 1940, ZCCM 3.8.1A.

representatives were heckled and shouted down by a crowd of around 350 crammed into the Luanshya Hotel. Two hecklers, both drunk, began fighting in front of the crowd, before one of them clambered onto the stage to announce that workers at Roan Antelope had no grievances. Someone then struck up the chorus of a well-known First World War song: "We don't want to lose you, but we think you ought to go." Another man's declaration that he was a First World War veteran and "anybody who strikes now is a traitor" was met with cheers.[18] There was no question of a strike.

The fourteen demands made by the strikers were wide-ranging and covered a 5% wage rise, a closed shop, increased overtime rates, better housing, investigation into silicosis, a shorter working day for underground workers and a new recognition agreement.[19] These demands had been formulated with reference to wages and working conditions in other industrial centres across the British Empire, with particular praise reserved for conditions of workers at mines in Broken Hill, Australia.[20] Both companies and their local managers were adamant that no negotiations would be held with the Committees of Action and that all demands should be rejected.[21] Pressure from the state and the clear effectiveness of the strike in closing the mines made this hard-line stance unviable. After brief negotiations, almost all the strikers' demands were conceded, apart from the closed shop. Strikers' representatives also made a conscious effort to form white mineworkers into a single group as they successfully demanded that these concessions be granted to the whole Copperbelt, even Roan Antelope where the strike had been rejected.[22] There were other gains. Strikers had demanded the removal of Frank Ayer, mine manager at Roan Antelope, and several months later RST transferred him from the Copperbelt.

> A much larger strike by African mineworkers erupted as soon as a settlement had been reached in the white mineworkers' dispute. Significantly, this strike was limited to the mines where whites had been out on strike. On 28 March, one day after white workers had resumed work, African workers walked out at Nkana and Mufulira after rejecting the offer of a temporary war bonus. Instead, strikers demanded a minimum wage of 10s a day (when average earnings for African mineworkers were slightly below 1s per shift).[23] White strikers had inadvertently set an example to African mineworkers about the power of collective action. African mineworkers at Nchanga and Roan Antelope, where whites had continued

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

[19] Workers' Demands from Mine Management, NAZ SEC1/1382.

[20] Broken Hill was a mining town dominated by the labour movement. Bradon Ellem and John Shields, 'Making a 'Union Town': Class, Gender and Consumption in Inter-War Broken Hill', *Labour History* 78 (2000): 116.

[21] Preliminary reaction of London Company to Union's demands, TNA CO 795/116/1.

[22] Consequently, the Roan Mine Workers' Federation re-joined the NRMWU. Memorandum setting out the terms and conditions of the settlement, NAZ SEC/1383.

[23] The average was 0.8s for surface workers and 1.09s for underground workers. African Labour – Wage Earnings (Shillings per Shift), ZCCM 12.7.3A.

working, had accepted the offer of a war bonus.[24] The reaction of the state to a strike by Africans was very different, however. On 3 April, soldiers opened fire on strikers protesting at Nkana, killing 17 and injuring around 65.[25]

Both the mining companies and the colonial administration blamed white workers for triggering the strike by African workers. At the Forster Commission established to investigate the unrest, several African witnesses were asked to name which white mineworkers had told them to strike.[26] It did not seem possible to colonial officials that African workers could act independently and collectively over their grievances, which were much more severe than those faced by white workers. There is no evidence of direct and organised incitement by white mineworkers, though it does appear that, individually, some whites boasted about their victory and told African mineworkers they should strike if they wanted more pay. Moreover, some African workers read the NRMWU's increasingly incendiary publications – which openly discussed revolution – as some were found in the possession of Africans.[27] More importantly, the strike by white workers was a salutary lesson for African mineworkers in how to achieve better pay and conditions.[28] At Nkana, for instance, notices were posted in the compound calling for action like the strike by white workers to win pay increases.[29]

In contrast, whites made almost no reference to Africans during their dispute. The consensus at the Nkana public meeting was that "Africans should remain in their compounds" and had no part in the dispute.[30] Eight representatives of the white workforce appeared before the Forster Commission and none expressed any interest in discussing the African strike. Most spent their time justifying their own strike. Only Brian Goodwin raised the grievances expressed by African strikers and argued that African miners at Nkana were underpaid and made to work excessive overtime. He did not dwell on the point though and also reiterated that the NRMWU was a whites-only union and that they did not intend to change this.[31]

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[24] There was also a short strike at Nchanga on 20 March after an African woman was assaulted by an African clerk and a white compound manager.

[25] For an account of the strike see Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, 110-25. For a list of those killed, see Riot Deaths, 3 April 1940, TNA WO 276/203.

[26] Testimony of Changa Mwinangumbo, 23 May 1940, TNA CO 795/117/2.

[27] Intelligence report: Western Province, December 1941, NAZ SEC1/1758.

[28] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 84. The same was true of strikes by white workers on South Africa's mines, see Frederick Johnstone, *Class, Race and Gold: A study of class relations and racial discrimination in South Africa* (London: Routledge, 1976), 168.

[29] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the Disturbances in the Copperbelt, Northern Rhodesia, 1940* (*Forster Report*) (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1940), Appendix IV.

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

[31] Evidence of Brian Goodwin, 25 May 1940, TNA CO 795/117/2.

The strikes produced a backlash from conservative elements and newly formed self-proclaimed patriotic groups in white society. Large public meetings took place in May 1940, spurred on by the invasion of Belgium and the Netherlands by Nazi Germany, organised by local Legislative Council member Captain Arthur Smith, who warned of a fifth column operating on the Copperbelt. Smith urged whites "to sink all their differences in the face of the danger now confronting the Empire" and stressed "industrial trouble is contrary to the principles of all Servicemen." His meeting did not go entirely to plan. Some of Smith's claims were "greeted with loud laughter" from the audience, and his claims about a fifth column were loudly interrupted by Martinus Visagie, an Afrikaner member of the Nkana Action Committee, who demanded anyone accusing him of being a fifth columnist should say it "to his face there and then." No-one took him up on this offer.[32] Nevertheless, colonial officials were convinced that newly established patriotic societies would "not permit another strike to occur during the continuance of the war."[33] Maybank, however, was prepared to play the long game. War would last several years, he warned the Forster Commission, and "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."[34]

Shifting the Racial Division of Labour

The racial division of labour on the mines had two aspects that impinged directly on everyday life. The first was segregation by occupation, so whites and Africans were not employed in the same job. The second was that white workers had direct authority over African workers and no African worker, whatever their job, had any authority over any white worker. This racial division was not static. Unlike South Africa, there were no state regulations that specified certain jobs could only be performed by white men, nor were there corporate policies to this effect. Racial boundaries in the workplace could and did shift. The American mining engineers who ran the industry had a racialised and gendered view of work that white men were best suited to perform all work deemed skilled but they were also closely focused on operating costs. They used crude rules of thumb to determine when it was cost-effective to replace expensive white workers. As one manager at Roan Antelope explained, "in ordinary manual labour" the average white worker could do "four times the work of an average African and in more advanced types of work the proportion was six to one."[35]

During the 1930s, Africans had steadily taken on work that had previously been performed by whites and RAA and RST intended to continue this process. At the outbreak of war, both companies planned to recruit African workers from Nyasaland – where the relatively good education system gave Africans from the colony an advantage in the regional labour market[36] – who

[32] A.T. Williams to Provincial Commissioner, 27 May 1940, NAZ SEC1/1735.

[33] H.F. Cartmel-Robinson to Chief Secretary, 16 September 1940, NAZ SEC1/1641

[34] Testimony of Frank Maybank, 29 May 1940, TNA CO 795/117/2.

[35] Extension of Opportunities for African Workers on the Copperbelt, 10 April 1941, NAZ SEC1/1351.

[36] Anusa Daimon, 'Ringleaders and Troublemakers': Malawian (Nyasa) Migrants and Transnational Labour Movements in Southern Africa, c.1910–1960', *Labour History* 58, 5 (2017): 662–63.

would "be trained to take on some work at present undertaken by Europeans."[37] Auckland Geddes, chair of Rhokana Corporation, thought "it was essential" that "Africans should be trained for the jobs" performed by whites.[38]

The companies were heavily influenced by the labour policy of Union Minière. In the 1920s, Union Minière had embarked on a policy of 'labour stabilisation' to transform its migrant African labour force into a stable urban workforce who would remain at the mines for their working lives and could be trained to perform skilled work, and therefore replace more expensive and strike-prone white workers.[39] Union Minière encouraged male African workers to marry and constructed family accommodation, with the intention to ensure future labour supplies. By the 1940s it was clear that the policy of training African labour had been successful – white workers made up only 5.7% of Union Minière's total workforce by 1941 – and that this had allowed the company to greatly reduce labour costs.[40] By 1941, Union Minière's Prince Leopold Mine, located right on the border with Northern Rhodesia, had 38 whites working underground and around 1,100 Africans.[41] RAA and RST wanted to emulate this.

White mineworkers were well-aware that their employers sought to replace them and were well-aware of what had happened in Katanga, where many had previously worked. On the South African Rand, the presence of a much larger African workforce who could be employed on much lower wages caused white mineworkers to fear displacement from below.[42] These same fears were present on the Copperbelt mines. Jim Purvis worried that Africans worked "at a wage the white man could not possibly compete with." "If he does not rise up," Purvis warned, "we go down."[43] Anxieties about displacement were also rooted in mobility and wartime movement restrictions. If white mineworkers had to stay on the Copperbelt, then the prospect of being displaced would have to be resolved on the Copperbelt. Whatever most whites believed about racial superiority, they knew that Africans could perform 'their' jobs and acted accordingly, as will be discussed below.

The mining companies had no effort to alter the other aspect of the racial division of labour: the authority that white mineworkers had over African mineworkers. All African workers were supervised by white workers who had a disciplinary and monitoring function. At the beginning of each shift, the white worker checked off each African under their supervision in a 'Gang Book' and

[37] Notes of a meeting held in Mr Boyd's room, 14 September 1939, TNA CO 852/257/6.

[38] Notes from a meeting with Lord Geddes, 22 December 1942, TNA CO 795/123/9.

[39] The falling value of the franc also raised the cost of recruiting African labour from Northern Rhodesia, who were paid in sterling. Perrings, *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa*, 54-62, 89.

[40] Between 1932 and 1935, copper output at Union Minière doubled, while the company's total wage bill increased only slightly. John Higginson, 'Bringing the Workers Back in: Worker Protest and Popular Intervention in Katanga, 1931–1941', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 22, 2 (1988): 205-7

[41] Report on Visit to the Congo, W.F. Stubbs, 7 October 1941, NAZ SEC1/1341.

[42] Krikler, *Rand Revolt*, 30-3; Johnstone, *Class, Race and Gold*, 50-75.

[43] Evidence of Jim Purvis, 29 May 1940, TNA CO 795/117/2.

at the end of the shift marked the ticket of each African worker with the date and type of work they had done. African workers had to collect 30 marked tickets before they could be paid. Gang Books were collected daily and used by the mine management to monitor which Africans were actually at work. White supervisors could also issue a 'loafers ticket' to their African subordinates – which entitled them to rations but no pay – if they wished. Any Africans who were absent without leave were "rounded up and brought before a Compound official for punishment." Mine managements emphasised that the Gang Book was "the whole basis of control and discipline in regard to absentees," though complained that white mineworkers often did not take this function seriously and recorded information inaccurately.[44] White mineworkers therefore played an important role in the control of African labour.

Although officially prohibited, assaults by white miners on Africans working underground were also an integral part of this disciplining process. Almost all African witnesses to the Forster Commission complained of being assaulted by whites with impunity. A letter from Kwafya Kombe, a miner, in May 1940 gives an idea about the experiences of Africans working underground:

> Even though the African is educated [he] is… like a monkey to the Europeans. All the Africans who are at work at [the] mines are treated like this: when an African is carrying a very heavy load, [and] a European is coming behind him without the notice of an African, the European kicks him. When the African says 'What's the matter Bwana?' now the Bwana says, 'shut up, get away,' and gives the African a very hard blow.[45]

NRMWU representatives had given these claims short shrift. Jack Hodgson blamed Africans themselves for the assaults, claiming that African miners often "deliberately caused a white man to strike them, with the object of getting him fired."[46] Others thought that it was necessary. After a white miner at Roan Antelope was disciplined for calling a boss boy a monkey, his union representatives strongly objected, arguing "if they were not allowed to beat them [Africans], then they should be allowed to curse them with impunity, otherwise no work would be done."[47]

White workers who supervised large numbers of African workers, such as white miners, could not do so alone. Here, the role of the 'boss boy' was crucial. Boss boys, as Kundai Manamere observes, were commonplace across a range of colonial enterprises, but their role as intermediaries was "ambiguous."[48] On the Copperbelt, the job of boss boy was "to assist the European ganger in the supervision of the gangs," "to advise and instruct individual Africans" and "to teach Africans their

[44] Native Labour Gang Books and Time Tickets, ZCCM 16.2.7F.

[45] Robert Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), 160.

[46] Testimony of Jack Hodgson, 29 May 1940, TNA CO 795/117/2.

[47] Provincial Commissioner, Ndola to Chief Secretary, 29 November 1940, NAZ SEC1/1351.

[48] Kundai Manamere, 'Remembering Tom the Boss Boy: The place of black immigrants in the establishment of the southeastern lowveld sugar estates, Zimbabwe, 1906–1972', *Settler Colonial Studies* 10, 3 (2020): 403-21.

work."[49] Rapidly, however, the position of boss boys altered from would-be tools of managerial authority to representatives of the workers they supervised and many of the leaders of the 1940 strike were boss boys.[50] This was quite different to other mines. Boss boys in Southern Rhodesia were often detested and feared by other African workers as collaborators, while on South Africa's gold mines boss boys were used to bolster the power of white mine officials – who "tended to select powerfully built African assistants" – through their capacity for physical violence.[51] The different position of boss boys on the Copperbelt mines was based in part on their background and training. Prospective boss boys had to have at least twelve months experience underground and a blasting license and underwent a training programme in all aspects of underground work. The skill and experience of these men as 'all-round' miners meant that their authority underground was not only dependent on their connection to white miners.

While the companies had their own motivations for training African labour, the mining skill and agitation of boss boys points us to the agency of African workers in demanding access to better-paid skilled work. Many were already doing this work. A colonial official visiting Mufulira Mine's repair shop observed one newly recruited white worker being "tactfully" shown how to repair some underground equipment by the "native hammer boy who has been on the job sometime."[52] The situation underground changed during the war as African workers became more assertive, particularly at a collective level. In the 1940 strikes, some African strikers at Nkana and Mufulira offered a direct challenge to white workers and the racial logic of the mines: they demanded that white mineworkers go underground and work a shift without African labour, then African mineworkers would work a shift without white labour, and they would see who produced the most copper.[53] Following the strike, Ambrose Lynn Saffery was tasked by the colonial administration to investigate rising living costs for African mineworkers, and his subsequent report emphasised "the bitterness with which Africans speak of their wages. They declare openly that although it is they who do the work, it is the Europeans who get the money."[54] These changing attitudes had an impact on everyday relations on the mines. Some 'gangs' of African mineworkers refused to work under whites who had assaulted or insulted them.[55] Several Africans were also prosecuted for assaulting

[49] Memorandum on the Training of Boss Boys, 12 April 1942, NAZ SEC1/1351.

[50] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 83-84.

[51] Charles van Onselen, 'The Role of Collaborators in the Rhodesian Mining Industry 1900-1935', *African Affairs* 72, 289 (1973): 401-18; 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): 688.

[52] Extract from January Report by L.O. Copperbelt, NAZ SEC1/1351.

[53] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Forster Report*, 29.

[54] A.L. Saffery, *A Report on Some Aspects of African Living Conditions on the Copper Belt of Northern Rhodesia* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1943), 20.

[55] Report on Public Opinion: Western Province, May 1941, NAZ SEC1/1351.

white workers, and one colonial official suggested that the threat of retaliation "makes the European think twice before committing a serious assault."[56]

The closed shop and white working-class identity

The clear intent by the mining companies to utilise skilled African labour and the growing challenge from African workers in the workplace pushed the NRMWU to demand a closed shop whereby all workers performing what they regarded as skilled work had to be NRMWU members. Since the union only allowed white members this created a de-facto colour bar. This indirect way of establishing a colour bar had important consequences, namely that it fostered a racialised class identity on the mines. It made affirming a racial identity as white necessary to access skilled work and, as will be seen, for those performing this skilled work to be identified as white. This was a clear case of the working class making itself white.

A colour bar was common at mines across Southern Africa. The use of the closed shop to enforce a colour bar – rather than via mining regulations or state legislation – meant it took a different form on the Copperbelt. White mineworkers had little faith in the colonial state so did not propose a change in the law to restrict skilled work to whites. Instead, the colour bar was enforced through an argument between the NRMWU and the mining companies. The significance is that power for monitoring and enforcing racist working practices was not situated in the state, but with the union and in the workplace.

Union membership rose markedly following the strike and a closed shop was becoming a de facto situation. Guy Spires, a South African miner, warned in September 1940 that union members "were objecting to working with non-union men," while Jack Hodgson threatened that "they would have to get the closed shop and, if necessary, might have to go to extreme ends to get it."[57] The immediate trigger occurred in April 1941 when three white screen operators (who prevented larger rocks from entering the milling process) in the Nkana mill were replaced with three African workers, justified on the grounds that the mill was not operating at full capacity.[58] Strike threats followed, and the companies were not willing to risk a strike without the explicit backing of the British Government that a colour bar must be prohibited. When the British Government declined to take a public stance, both RAA and RST reluctantly implemented a closed shop for white daily-paid workers in September 1941.[59] Continual negotiations with the white workforce brought the companies closer together and in 1941 they agreed to form a common organisation: the Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines.

[56] R.S. Hudson to Chief Secretary, 25 November 1943, NAZ MLSS1/26/5.

[57] Notes on a meeting between the Mine Managements and the N.R. Mine Workers' Union, 18 September 1940, NAZ SEC1/1420.

[58] R.M. Peterson, Luanshya to Selection Trust London, 25 April 1941, TNA CO 795/117/2.

[59] Notes of a meeting held in Mr Hall's room, 20 May 1941, TNA CO 795/117/2.

The closed shop was a de facto colour bar. The relevant clause in the NRMWU's revised recognition agreement read:

> The Company agrees that work of the class or grade that is being performed, or jobs that is being filled, by an employee at the time of the signing of this Agreement shall not be given to persons to whom the terms and conditions of this Agreement do not apply.[60]

The first clause of this agreement limited the NRMWU to "representing the daily-paid European employees." The closed shop meant that all skilled work needed to be done by NRMWU members and the recognition agreement restricted union membership to whites. This gave the NRMWU a considerable degree of control over the workplace, as the companies agreed to dismiss any daily-paid worker who was not a union member.[61]

There was an important transnational dimension to the closed shop and the colour bar. Two of the men who negotiated it – Frank Maybank and Jim Purvis – had both been officials in the Australian Workers' Union, which was effectively a whites-only union at the time.[62] A generation earlier, migrant Australian trade unionists had played an important role transmitting racist ideas to the labour movement on the Rand, and a similar process is evident here.[63] Purvis held racist views that were extreme even by the standards of the white workforce. In 1940 the Provincial Commissioner had tried to impress upon a group of white mineworkers the need to avoid insulting Africans by explaining "it should be more widely realised that the Natives of this Territory resented being called monkeys almost as much as Australians resented being called bastards." In response, Jim Purvis, stated openly "that they regarded the 'niggers' as only one-quarter human."[64]

The closed shop was also informed by close knowledge of conditions in South Africa's mining industry. The NRMWU "emphasised they would not sign any agreement similar to the Witwatersrand closed shop," and wanted an agreement "without conditions" such as those "in industries and engineering works in England."[65] Eight whites-only unions on the Rand mines had agreed a closed shop in 1937 with restrictive conditions: strikes could only take place after a secret ballot and unions promised to discipline any member who engaged in activity "which in the opinion of the manager is likely to cause unrest."[66]

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[60] Agreement between the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union and the Rhokana Corporation Limited, 13 July 1944, NAZ MM 1/10/2.

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] Mark Hearns and Harry Knowles, *One Big Union: A history of the Australian Workers Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 142.

[63] Hyslop, 'The Imperial Working Class', 405-9

[64] Provincial Commissioner, Ndola to Chief Secretary, 19 November 1940, NAZ SEC1/1351.

[65] R.M. Peterson to Roan Antelope Mines, Guildford, 4 August 1941, TNA CO 795/122/14.

[66] 'Closed Shop Agreement', *The Mineworker*, April 1937.

'White' was a self-designation by these workers. One protest to the Governor over movement restrictions began: "we white workers."[67] The imposition of a colour bar helped expand this definition of 'white' from being a synonym for 'British', which it had been in the 1930s. Indeed, this white identity no longer equated with a British imperial identity. Brian Goodwin declared "publicly that he was a Trade Unionist first and a patriot afterwards," while Pat Murray wrote to Clement Attlee to argue "that international trades' unionism is of equal importance" to copper production for Britain's war effort.[68]

The definition of 'white' change in this period. Some men came to be regarded as white because they were union members and performing jobs covered by the colour bar. In November 1941, for instance, several Yugoslavians were assaulted during a brawl at the Nkana Club, and when the police began investigating who was responsible a union official warned the District Commissioner that "if white men are prosecuted… for beating up the Yugoslavs, they will clear the whole *** lot up."[69] Here, there was a clear distinction drawn between 'white men' and Yugoslavians, with the inference that Yugoslavians were not white. Yet, in response to the brawl the Roan Antelope NRMWU branch published "A message to our Yugo-Slav members" in English and Serbian calling for "working men" to unite.[70] This message was a statement that Yugoslavians were part of a white working-class and other white workers on the Copperbelt increasingly acknowledged this, as hostility towards workers from Eastern Europe dissipated.

Another incident at Roan Antelope is an apt illustration of the elastic and expanding boundaries of whiteness. In 1943, E.H. Nahman, a miner, was sacked for sleeping during his nightshift and was vociferously defended by his local union branch. What makes the case remarkable is that Nahman was Turkish, and performing what was, under the recently enacted colour bar, a whites-only job. Union officials declared his dismissal "a case of victimisation" because Nahman "could neither speak nor understand English very well" so he possibly did not understand the orders given to him. Moreover, astonishingly, they also alleged that mine officials "were prejudiced because of Nahman's nationality." These protestations were ignored – partly because Nahman had promised to continue sleeping at work until he was transferred to a surface job – but the implication is clear: Nahman was in the union and working as a miner, therefore he was white.[71] Since he was white, it was considered prejudice, on grounds of nationality not race, if the mine management treated him differently to other white workers.

This was not a one-way process, and some European nationals pressed for their inclusion in the category of white. As discussed in the previous chapter, workers from various European

[67] Roan Mine Workers' Federation to the Governor, 20 November 1940, NAZ SEC1/1351.

[68] Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 25 September 1940, NAZ SEC1/1420. F.E.J.P. Murray to Clement Atlee, 18 August 1942, TNA CO 795/123/7.

[69] Report on public opinion in Western Province for November 1941, NAZ SEC1/1758.

[70] Roan Mineworkers Review, Christmas 1941, NAZ SEC1/1758.

[71] Minutes of Conciliation Board, 15 December 1943, NAZ SEC1/1389.

countries had come to the Copperbelt in the 1930s. German and Italian nationals were interned at the outbreak of war, but there were also workers on the mines from Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and Greece. More were recruited during the war, including miners from copper mines in Cyprus that had been closed by the conflict and from among the hundreds of Polish refugees hosted in a camp at Bwana Mkubwa.[72] One German artisan, who had been interned and thus fired from Roan Antelope, appealed against his detention by stressing his commitment to white racial solidarity, claiming that "in 1935 I was amongst the first together with the Police and troops against the natives," though this was to no avail.[73] Similarly, one Polish refugee who had been hired at Mufulira Mine wrote angrily to the Governor after official permission to begin work was delayed:

> Did I deserve to be treated as a native? I am a White man, coming as I mentioned from the most cultural parts of Poland, and I know how to behave, but here, as I see, I am treated as a native.[74]

The antagonism against non-British whites evident during the 1930s dissipated during the war, which was not the case elsewhere in the region.[75] White trade unionists began drawing a sharper distinction between white and African workers. At Nchanga, Guy Spires pressed for the removal of a magistrate who had referred to whites and Africans on the mines as "fellow workmen" because "We regard the Natives as a step below us."[76] Greater inclusion towards non-British whites occurred alongside more open hostility towards Africans. It also involved a closer identification with white workers across the border in Katanga.

Strikes in Katanga and the removal of Frank Maybank

The NRMWU was not mollified by higher wages or the colour bar and became increasingly more assertive and ambitious. "We can see a nasty lot of problems, that require settling right now," warned the Roan NRMWU branch, otherwise, "they can only be settled by revolution" which would put "the needs of the people before the profits of a few."[77] Both mine management and colonial officials, however, were convinced that white industrial unrest was whipped up by a few agitators and could be resolved by physically removing those agitators. In particular, they became fixated on Maybank,

[72] British colonies in East and Southern Africa hosted several thousand Polish refugees from 1942. Baxter Tavuyanago, Tasara Muguti, and James Hlongwana, 'Victims of the Rhodesian Immigration Policy: Polish Refugees from the Second World War', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38, 4 (2012): 952.

[73] F.A. Stiglitz to Provincial Commissioner, 7 November 1939, NAZ WP 1/14/4.

[74] Dobrosielski Jozef to Governor of Northern Rhodesia, 18 August 1943, NAZ SEC1/1700.

[75] In Southern Rhodesia, this hostility intensified during the war, fuelled by suspicion of disloyalty and a desire by white manual workers to distinguish themselves from derogatory stereotypes towards other national groups. Ginsburgh, *Class, Work and Whiteness*, 116.

[76] Extract from Minutes of H.E's Tour of the Copperbelt, June 1943, NAZ SEC1/1351.

[77] Roan Mineworkers Review, Christmas 1941, NAZ SEC1/1758

who was regarded as a "fanatic" who "hates all forms of capitalism."[78] His removal, one company executive estimated, "would result in production being increased by no less than 25%."[79]

Maybank was not the first to go. In October 1940, Jack Hodgson, who had gone to South Africa on leave, was informed he would be interned if he re-entered Northern Rhodesia, and instead joined the army.[80] Removing Maybank proved more difficult, however, as he was popular among the workforce. In mid-1941, he became the NRMWU's general secretary and easily defeated the other candidate, the widely disliked Richard Olds, who subsequently abandoned his ambitions to lead the labour movement and established a plot to grow and sell pineapples instead.[81] The fact that Maybank became general secretary is a good illustration of how revolutionary politics were commonplace and acceptable among the white workforce in these years. Maybank was open about his communist politics and he had spent several months in the Soviet Union in the mid-1930s.

Official anxieties over white mineworkers reached a peak in 1942 when the NRMWU became embroiled in events in Katanga and tried to organise a cross-border strike of white workers. After the occupation of Belgium in May 1940, the British Government began purchasing copper from Katanga.[82] This, NRMWU representatives later explained, represented a threat to their members:

> There is a great disparity between the wages of the Congo mine workers and the Northern Rhodesian mine workers … 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 were much higher for the same work… Naturally the NRMWU were forced to take a very keen interest in the standards of the Congo.[83]

'Keen interest' was reciprocated. White mineworkers in Katanga, contractually forbidden from joining a union, approached the NRMWU for assistance in forming a union after a wildcat strike in October 1941, and one was established clandestinely in December 1941: Association des Agents de l'Union Minière et Filiales. Union Minière and the Belgian colonial authorities had little tolerance for insubordination by white workers and arrested and deported the new union's leadership after strikes in June 1942, triggering further strikes in August.[84] The NRMWU was already

[78] Note on Maybank, Director of Intelligence, May 1941, TNA CO 795/122/14.

[79] Notes on a meeting held in Mr Macmillan's room, 23 March 1942, TNA CO 795/122/15.

[80] Eighth interview with Jack Hodgson, 19 November 1968, HPA A2729 E3.

[81] Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 25 November 1941, NAZ SEC1/1387.

[82] Bruce Fetter, 'If I Had Known That 35 Years Ago: Contextualizing the Copper Mines of Central Africa', *History in Africa* 26 (1999): 451-52.

[83] Memorandum submitted on behalf of the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers Union by Mr J. Purvis, HPA AH 646 Dc12.20.

[84] John Higginson, *A Working Class in the Making: Belgian Colonial Labour Policy, Private Enterprise, and the African Mineworker, 1907-1951* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 188, 194.

entangled in these events. Three white miners from Nchanga had been arrested at a nocturnal meeting in Lubumbashi on the eve of the strike in August – they implausibly claimed they were on holiday – and the NRMWU was discussing launching sympathy strikes on the Copperbelt.[85] On 2 August, 20 delegates from the white workforces on both sides of the border met in secret to pledge support for each other.

A strike in Jadotville in Katanga in September followed by a threatened strike at Nchanga caused panic among the colonial authorities. Governor John Waddington pleaded with London to send troops because with "extremists on both sides of the border… in close contact" the territory could see an uprising like the Rand Revolt.[86] Maybank had stoked these fears. Back in April, he had warned that in the next strike "Somebody is going to get hurt… There is going to be no quarter." He now followed this up with a direct warning to the colonial administration on September 15 that "you must realise that a strike on the Copperbelt is not an ordinary strike. The men there are armed."[87]

The severity of the threat to copper supplies vital for Britain meant the matter was discussed at the Chiefs of Staff Committee in London on 16 September, where Winston Churchill ordered the deployment of a battalion of troops from the Middle East as a matter of urgency.[88] Blithely unaware of this, Maybank contacted the RRWU on September 24 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.[89]

The British Government took this as a clear indication that they were losing the initiative. Deploying troops from the Middle East would take several weeks, so instead the Southern Rhodesian Armored Car Regiment, then stationed 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, who usually carried a pistol but had left it in his car. Chris Meyer, a shop steward at Mufulira and former SAMWU branch official, was also arrested. Troops then remained on the Copperbelt for two weeks.[90]

[85] T.R. Shaw to F.M. Shepherd, 11 August 1942, TNA CO 795/123/7.

[86] Governor Waddington to Colonial Secretary, 6 September 1942 and 11 September 1942, TNA PREM 4/43A/4.

[87] Frank Maybank to Roy Welensky, 3 April 1942, WP 1/6. R.O. Sinclair to Resident Magistrate, Ndola, 24 October 1942, TNA CO 795/122/13.

[88] Reinforcements for Northern Rhodesia, 16 September 1942, TNA CAB 79/57/32.

[89] Meeting between His Excellency the Governor and the General Council of the Mine Workers' Union, National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria [hereafter NASA], ARB 119/5 1193.

[90] Note from Viscount Cranbourne, Colonial Secretary, 28 October 1942, TNA PREM 4/43A/4.

Stunned, the NRMWU leadership initiated an immediate international campaign to release Maybank, drawing on their personal connections to trade unions elsewhere with carefully crafted appeals. Demands for Maybank's release were soon raised by trade unions in Australia, Britain, and South Africa, who recognised common interests with the Copperbelt's white mineworkers and acknowledged their union as part of an international labour movement. Unusually, one of the central figures in this campaign was a white woman Sarah Zaremba, an activist in the Northern Rhodesia Labour Party, which is discussed below, who became acting NRMWU General Secretary. Zaremba's husband worked at Nchanga Mine and she became the only woman to ever occupy an official position in the union. Zaremba already worked for the NRMWU but her sudden ascendance is a sign of the abrupt shock to the union and its unsettled position.

Meyer was deported to Johannesburg, where help was at hand. Jack Hodgson was convalescing in a military hospital, having sustained injuries fighting in North Africa, when he heard the news about the deportations and threw himself into the campaign to get Maybank released. Radicals in the local white labour movement soon secured support from the South African Trades & Labour Council, who lobbied the South African Government.[91] In London, the British Trade Union Congress (TUC) sent delegations, including 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.[92] In Australia, the Australian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation called on the Government to help establish an "Australia-wide campaign to demand that the Rhodesian Government allow Maybank and Meyer to carry on their union activities"[93] Maybank's former membership of the Communist Party of Australia also helped secure the support of Communist Parties in Australia, Britain and South Africa.

In these appeals to international allies, the NRMWU avoided racist language or explicit racial appeals but also studiously avoided mentioning African workers. Any person reading their statements, which placed heavy emphasis on internationalism, could be forgiven for thinking that the Copperbelt mines were entirely operated by white workers. In their self-image, they, the white workers, were the real workers. In their statements, the NRMWU leadership laid explicit claim to the legacy of the international labour movement, from whose "ranks is drawn the bulk of the sweat, the tears and blood sacrificed" in the war, and denounced Maybank and Meyer's arrest as an "attack upon the working man's organisation… a deliberate attempt to smash that organisation and throw the workers into a state of chaos."[94]

Developments on the Copperbelt derailed this campaign. On 27 November, Governor John Waddington revealed to the NRMWU General Council that Jim Purvis had complained to him in

[91] 'S.A. Labour Council to take Action', *The Star* (Johannesburg), 2 December 1942.

[92] Telegram from Walter Citrine to William de Vries, 18 December 1942, HPA AH 646 Dc12.20.

[93] 'Miners Seek Federal Aid', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 6 January 1943. Australasian Coal and Shale Employees' Union, Minutes of Annual Central Council Meeting, 1-5 February 1943, Noel Butlin Archive Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, E165, N144/5/5.

[94] Memorandum from the General Council, NRMWU to the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, HPA AH 646 Dc12.20.

mid-1942 that Maybank was stirring up trouble and that Meyer was "the most dangerous man on the Copperbelt."[95] Unsurprisingly, this provoked a huge internal row in the union and the campaign to prevent the deportations collapsed amidst mutual recriminations. Maybank was deported to Britain in December 1942. Martinus Visagie was appointed general secretary in his stead, and Sarah Zaremba removed.

Wartime politics and the Labour Party

The creation of a self-consciously white working-class was manifested in the emergence of racialised social democratic and radical politics, exemplified by the formation and brief flowering of the Northern Rhodesia Labour Party. It helped make life more familiar for whites on the Copperbelt and facilitated engagement with similar labour organisations elsewhere in the world. It was also part of a wider upsurge of political radicalism among whites across Southern Africa, including new-found sympathy for the Soviet Union.

"The working classes are almost unanimously enthusiastic in a desire to help Russia" reported the Provincial Commissioner, "one finds admiration for the Russians openly expressed everywhere."[96] Donations, letters and news reports were sent to the Communist Party of South Africa – then enjoying a moment of hitherto unachieved popularity and respectability – and the party's newspaper *The Guardian* circulated in the Copperbelt towns.[97] The NRMWU distributed propaganda poems and posters from the Soviet Union, urged the government to screen the anti-fascist film 'Professor Mamlock', and reprinted articles from communist parties in its publications. An exhibition of Soviet posters to raise money for the Soviet war effort was organised in Luanshya by the Friends of the Soviet Union, and branches of this group were established in all the Copperbelt towns.[98] Pro-Soviet sympathy and the circulation of communist publications added to agitation against the copper companies, but it was relatively shallow. There was never any attempt to establish a communist party in Northern Rhodesia, as white radicals in Southern Rhodesia tried to do in this period.[99] Instead, a labour party was established.

The Northern Rhodesia Labour Party was established in 1941 primarily by the RRWU, who had played a central role in founding the Labour Party in Southern Rhodesia, and the NRMWU.[100] The central figure was Roy Welensky, an engine driver and chair of the RRWU branch in Broken Hill. The party reflected the politics of the white trade unions and its intended constituency, the white working class. Membership was for whites only and it advocated racialised social democratic policies: free compulsory primary education, old-age pensions, higher minimum wages,

[95] Governor Waddington to Colonial Secretary, 27 November 1942, TNA CO 795/122/16.

[96] Provincial Commissioner, Ndola to Chief Secretary, 2 December 1941, NAZ SEC1/1758.

[97] 'Marching on!', *The Guardian* (Johannesburg), 28 May 1942.

[98] Bob Robertson to Roy Welensky, 29 December 1942, WP 507/1.

[99] Ginsburgh, *Race, Work and Whiteness*, 118.

[100] Stanlake Samkange, 'A History of the Rhodesia Labour Party, 1920-1948' (BA thesis, Harvard University, 1980), 1-27,

nationalisation of the railways, free milk for school children, and a welfare state "but wanted something better than offered by the Beveridge Report."[101] The party's founding statement also emphasised that Northern Rhodesia "be recognised as a country of European settlement."[102]

The party was also immediately successful and in the 1941 territorial elections all five candidates won their seats.[103] Party leader Roy Welensky was subsequently appointed Director of Manpower in June 1941, and no white employee could be dismissed without his agreement. Its status as 'labour party' also gave it some degree of fraternal standing with other social democratic parties in white settler societies. The party's second congress in 1943 received greetings from the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation of Canada, the New Zealand Labour Party and South African Labour Party and the party was invited to the Southern Africa Labour Congress, a gathering of representatives of the white labour movement from across the region.[104]

While the Northern Rhodesia Labour Party regarded itself as a kind of local version of the British Labour Party, Welensky admitted privately that "we do contain people in our ranks whose views are nearly Fascist."[105] Outside their ranks, however, there was a clandestine and organised far-right presence on the Copperbelt. Regular pro-Nazi meetings were organised in the late 1930s by Martin Eichler, a welder at Roan Antelope, and Hugo Bartels, a fitter at Nkana.[106] Most Nazi sympathisers left for Germany prior to the outbreak of war, and suspected sympathisers remaining were interned and then transferred to South Africa. Internment, however, missed the small number of supporters of Ossewabrandwag, a far-right Afrikaans paramilitary group, who unsuccessfully tried to form a section headed by Jacobus Theunissen during 1942.[107]

Much of the Northern Rhodesia Labour Party's propaganda was written as if Africans simply did not exist. Leaflets to white voters asserted "that the interests of the majority must at all times outweigh the issues of a minority," the majority being a reference to white workers, not the African population.[108] Only a small minority in the party were sympathetic to African workers. Most sympathetic was Bob Robertson, an Australian mine official at Roan Antelope and a communist, who foresaw that "racial prejudice… would evaporate like mist before the bright sunshine" when

[101] Minutes of second meeting of Congress, 11 July 1943, WP 505/2.

[102] The Northern Rhodesia Labour Party, WP 505/5.

[103] Gann, *History of Northern Rhodesia*, 345. There were eight constituencies in total.

[104] Duncan Money, 'Race and Class in the Postwar World: The Southern Africa Labour Congress', *International Labour and Working-Class History* 94 (2018): 133-55.

[105] Roy Welensky to Bob Robertson, 15 March 1943, WP 507/1.

[106] Commissioner of Police to Provincial Commissioner, Ndola, 18 April 1939, NAZ WP 1/14/4.

[107] R.O. Sinclair to Resident Magistrate, Ndola, 23 October 1942, TNA CO 795/122/13.

[108] Northern Rhodesia Labour Party leaflet, WP 506/9.

the Copperbelt "was under a Socialist system."[109] Robertson was subsequently one of the very few white mineworkers who were became sympathetic to African nationalism.[110]

The NRLP, however, had little independent existence outside of the NRMWU and the RRWU. Most NRMWU members resigned from the party in 1944 after a fall-out with Welensky that was partly about Welensky's support for Maybank's deportation.[111] The result was a dismal showing in the 1944 elections. All the Copperbelt candidates were beaten, including, most embarrassingly, in the Nkana-Chingola seat where Brian Goodwin won as an independent labour candidate. The party disintegrated and some candidates simply left the territory, the wife of one fulminating, "am thoroughly disgusted… We certainly won't be there to see another election in this country. I never liked it nor its mob of selfish people."[112]

White radicalism dissipated from the mid-1940s, and not just on the Copperbelt. White labour parties in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa also suffered damaging splits around the same time and slid into irrelevance.[113] The end of the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union lessened the appeal of Soviet communism and Friends of the Soviet Union groups soon disbanded, though the NRMWU continued to circulate publications from the Communist Party of South Africa until the late 1940s. The other significant context is the lifting of movement restrictions in 1944 – on which more below – and it is telling that the Labour Party disintegrated once white mineworkers were again able to come and go as they pleased. Interest among white mineworkers in formal politics reduced and, in any case, most preferred to settle their grievances through industrial action.

Wartime Working Conditions

The removal of Maybank had, unsurprisingly, not mollified the white workforce and there was continual unrest. The imperative to produce as much copper as possible for Britain's war effort placed the mines and the mining workforce under great strain and led to diminishing returns. Continuous production wore out equipment and machinery, sufficient spare parts could not be obtrained, average ore grades declined in the absence of development work, and coal from Southern Rhodesia needed to generate power and fuel the smelters was in short supply. Copper output reached a wartime peak of 251,000 tons in 1943 and thereafter declined to 182,000 by 1946. Demand from Britain only slackened in 1944 when bulk purchasing was suspended temporarily.[114]

The tempo of work placed greater demands on the white workforce. Time off the job reduced and for white workers maintaining a family and social life became more difficult. Mary Hart

[109] Bob Robertson to Roy Welensky, 29 December 1943, WP 507/1.

[110] Simon Zukas, *Into Exile and Back* (Lusaka: Bookworld Publishers, 2002), 41. More dramatic is the case of Jack Hodgson, who broke completely with white labour politics and became a prominent anti-apartheid militant.

[111] Gann, *History of Northern Rhodesia*, 435.

[112] Mrs R. Murray to Roy Welensky, 7 December 1944, WP 506/11.

[113] Money, 'Southern Africa Labour Congress', 148-50.

[114] The bulk-purchasing scheme resumed in 1947. Butler, *Copper Empire*, 65-67.

recalled that her husband was on permanent shift work at Nchanga Mine's power plant and his eight-hour shift was extended to a twelve-hour shift – 7am-7pm one week, 3am-3pm the next – for the duration of the war.[115] Demands were particularly high on underground workers. In October 1942, white miners at Nkana requested a scheduled day off because a "section of the European underground labour has to work more or less continuously through the month with no day off."[116]

The most serious worries were that continual production and the neglect of development work was making working conditions underground more dangerous and exposing miners to disease, especially the much-feared silicosis. In the 1940 strike, white mineworkers demanded an investigation into silicosis and when the investigation was repeatedly delayed it raised suspicions that their employers and the colonial state regarded them as disposible. The issue was repeatedly raised by white workers throughout the war with greater urgency.[117] The first official detection of silicosis in the Copperbelt mines occurred during the war when a white timberman at Mufulira was diagnosed in 1943. He later explained the callous way his diagnosis had been relayed to him:

> The day I was put out of the mine, Mr Jackson, my Mine Captain, came to me and told me that the doctor had sent word to the mine seven days before for me to be put out of the mine because I had silicosis, but seeing that they were short-handed they had kept me on for the extra seven days.[118]

Fears about safety fed into demands for greater control by white workers over the workplace. In June 1942, at the suggestion of the NRMWU, copper production committees were formed at each mine to discuss ways to increase production. This involved white shop stewards in decisions about production and the running of the mines and eroded the authority of mine managements.[119]

There is evidence that mining became more dangerous during the war. In October 1942, the Chief Inspector of Mines reported that the "casualty rate on the copper mines has been far above the average this year."[120] Many white miners had personal experience of accidents and disasters at mines elsewhere in the world and feared the same would occur on the Copperbelt. Hugh Handford had come to Roan Antelope after an underground explosion tore through the colliery where he worked in South Africa, killing 38 miners: "I remember it took six weeks to get the last body out, and that experience drove me out of the country."[121] Moreover, early in the war there was a disaster at

[115] Heather Mary Hart, *Gran's Story* (unpublished manuscript), 2. In author's possession. I am grateful to Mike Hart for sharing his grandmother's autobiography.

[116] Memo No. 2 from Nkana Copper Production Committee, 31 October 1942, NAZ SEC1/1630.

[117] Industrial Diseases Committee Report, 1940, NAZ SEC1/1379.

[118] Testimony of Charles Hobson, Silicosis Commission, 11th Sitting, 29 August 1949, NAZ ZP 21/1.

[119] Copper Production Committee, NAZ SEC1/1620.

[120] J.A. Fawdry to Provincial Commissioner, 27 October 1942, NAZ SEC1/1620.

[121] 'Personally Speaking: Hugh Handford', *Rhokana Copper Miner*, 20 September 1963.

Mufulira Mine that killed 16 people. At 5am on 7 November 1940, a worked-out section of the mine collapsed and propelled an air blast through nearby workings so powerful that it smashed wooden timbers and bent metal pipes. Thirteen miners were killed instantly, their bodies lifted up and smashed against the walls by the force of the blast. Three more were severely injured and later died in hospital.[122]

The constant dangers of working underground were faced by African and whites alike – though white workers were slightly more likely to be killed underground[123] – and these common dangers could erode the hostility of whites towards the Africans they worked alongside. For instance, Jacobus Oosthuizen, a South African miner, was working nearby when the accident occurred at Mufulira and survived. There can be no doubt about Oosthuizen's racist views – he referred to Africans only as 'boys' in his testimony in the accident report, and never once mentioned any by name – but he also, at immense personal risk, re-entered the partly collapsed mine workings to rescue injured African workers.[124] Similar sentiments are evident in attitudes towards industrial diseases. An NRMWU delegation from Mufulira, for instance, informed the Governor that "no discrimination should be made between black and white" in silicosis legislation.[125]

More exacting wartime conditions encouraged unionisation of mine officials and staff. Underground officials were also increasingly concerned about unsafe working conditions and the possibility of contracting silicosis. In 1941, the Mine Officials and Salaried Staff Association (MOSSA) was formed, largely by underground officials. This followed the practice in other mining regions of establishing separate trade unions for officials. One of MOSSA's founding members, K.L. MacKenzie, a safety officer from Scotland, had also been a founding member of the Underground Officials Association on the Rand.[126] Indeed, like their counterparts in the NRMWU, several MOSSA members had wide geographical experience in the labour movement. One founding member subsequently referred to his involvement in MOSSA as part of his "40 years' association with the Trade Union Movement in the Mining Industries in Britain, South Africa and Rhodesia."[127]

MOSSA's founders were mostly professional men. The Association's first president, O.B. Bennett, had studied at Cambridge and the Royal School of Mines, and later became manager of Rhokana. However, the Association's central figure was Hugh Handford, a mine captain who led the organisation until the early 1960s. MOSSA saw itself as a representative of a moderate and respectable tradition in British trade unionism. Handford and many other MOSSA founders were

[122] One white miner and 15 African miners were killed. Accident in 660 Stoping Area, 7 November 1940, TNA CO 795/122/20

[123] In 1941, there were 4.38 fatalities underground per 1,000 whites at work and 3.85 fatalities per 1,000 Africans at work. Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, *Year Book 1956* (Kitwe: Chamber of Mines, 1957), 90.

[124] Accident in 660 Stoping Area, 7 November 1940, TNA CO 795/122/20,

[125] Meeting between His Excellency and the Mine Workers' Union, 21 June 1942, NAZ SEC1/1379.

[126] 'Twenty-four old-timers say goodbye', *Mufulira Magazine*, July 1953.

[127] ZCCM 11.1.2A, Untitled statement, Hugh Handford, 19 April 1959.

involved in self-described patriotic organisations that opposed strike action during the war and the Association was founded with a no-strike clause in its constitution. Relations between the two white unions were poor. One other motivating factor for mine officials to form a union was reportedly "to protect themselves against the MW Union."[128]

Artisans, mobility and strikes

Artisans were skilled manual workers whose skill in their chosen occupation took time and effort to obtain through an apprenticeship. There were 651 white artisans on the mines in mid-1944, encompassing:

> blacksmiths, boilermakers, bricklayers, carpenters, drill-makers, electricians, fitters, garage mechanics, masons, moulders, painters, patternmakers, plumbers, riggers, rockdrill fitters, sawdoctors, sawyers, tinsmiths, tool and die-makers, turners, welders and leadburners.[129]

Artisans had long carefully guarded what they considered to be 'their' work – tasks that could only be performed by an appropriately qualified artisan – through collective organisation and had been at the forefront of the labour movement in Britain.[130] White artisans were serious about limiting their own work to workers deemed appropriately skilled, and about securing what they regarded as adequate compensation for this work. Seemingly trivial issues around demarcation between different artisans could cause major problems. In September 1945, for instance, a fitter at Mufulira, A.J. Fourie, was instructed to repair an electrical motor, refused to do so on the grounds that this was the job of an electrician, and was then immediately fired. All artisans walked out the following morning, followed by the rest of the white workforce, and Fourie was swiftly reinstated.[131]

In the mid-1940s, white artisans played a central role in a chaotic period of industrial unrest and took wildcat strike action in 1944 and again in 1946. Both times artisans protested against a new pay deal signed between the NRMWU and the companies that did not sufficiently increase their wages and both times succeeded in wrecking that agreement. Wage demands made by artisans were shaped by the transnational character of the white workforce. Artisans were well-aware that wages for the kind of work they performed were rising elsewhere and chafed against the movement restrictions that prevented them from taking advantage of this.[132] In a revealing remark, one artisan at Roan Antelope noted 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

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

[129] Evidence of the Copper Mining Companies, 4 October 1944, ZCCM 3.8.1A.

[130] Eric Hobsbawm, 'Artisan or Labour Aristocrat?' *The Economic History Review* 37, 3 (1984): 355-72.

[131] Strike at Mufulira September 28th – October 1st 1945, TNA CO 537/1515.

[132] For instance, the British TUC sent bulletins to the Copperbelt showing that wages for artisans working in engineering and metals industries in Britain had increased significantly.

country."[133] White artisans therefore demanded wage increases and that wartime movement restrictions be abolished.

These disputes saw the Copperbelt's white mineworkers explicitly position themselves within a transnational white working class. In 1946, the NRMWU demanded wage increases for their members because "in the United States of American the workers were getting very considerable increases" and demanded a clear racial division of labour: "it should be definitely laid down which work was to be done by Africans and which by Europeans."[134] When the mining companies insisted on comparing wages with mines on the Rand, the NRMWU replied "if comparisons are made, let us compare with... the largest copper mining areas in the USA."[135] The wages of copper miners in the United States were seen as relevant for white workers who moved great distances between work sites and saw themselves as part of a transnational working class. As one American miner who came to Nchanga in 1940, having worked at copper mines in several US states, later recalled, he was "always on the look out for... improved and stable working conditions."[136]

White artisans were in no sense impoverished. One woman, whose husband was a carpenter, complained at arbitration hearings that they were considering returning to Australia because they could not afford uniforms for their two servants or private education for their two children.[137] Nevertheless, they deserved more pay because other workers, specifically workers in Britain and white settler societies, were getting more. Furthermore, the companies could afford it and white mineworkers contested the amounts paid to company executives and shareholders. "What are the daily earnings of Sir Ernest Oppenheimer... who works no night shifts" the NRWMU asked rhetorically.[138]

White artisans were militant in pursuit of their wage demands – which in 1946 was an increase from 30s a shift to 40s – and strikes in this period were chaotic. In 1944 and 1946, artisans refused to provide essential services, shut the mines by blocking the roads from the white township, and tried to run the disputes through mass meetings with decisions taken by show of hands. The NRMWU leadership was not in control of these disputes. When artisans struck at Roan Antelope in June 1944, they castigated union officials "for selling them out." The union's general secretary Martinus Visagie refused to meet with them, claiming that the last time he had visited the mine to discourage a strike, other union officials had threatened to lynch him.[139] This was all justified,

[133] Notes on the Conciliation Proceedings held at Ndola on the 26th and 27th June 1944, ZCCM 3.8.1A

[134] Notes on the conciliation proceedings, 18th February-5th March 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B

[135] Statement presented by the NRMWU, 13 July 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[136] 'Footage Bonus King Has Retired After 18 Years' Service at Nchanga Mine', *Nchanga News*, 29 August 1958.

[137] Evidence of Anna Florence Arbitson, 2 October 1946, TNA CO 537/1515.

[138] NRMWU Leaflet, 25 January 1946, NAZ MM 1/10/2.

[139] Thirty-Ninth Meeting of the Chamber of Mines Executive Committee, 2 July 1944, ZCCM 3.8.1A.

artisans argued, because "the employees have only been able, in the main, to hold or improve their position by cessation of work."[140]

The white workforce was not unanimous in its desire for bruising encounters with their employers. One critic was A.B. Hayward, an artisan at Roan Antelope, who was so fed-up with industrial unrest that he personally delivered a letter to the houses of all other daily-paid men on the mine. Hayward's unsolicited advice to his "fellow workers" was that striking was "pig-headed and selfish, yes, and half-witted too" as prices always rose when wages rose. 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." Hayward's 'fellow workers' may not, however, have appreciated his advice, as it was in fact him who shoved off. He left for New Zealand not long afterwards.[141]

These strikes forced the companies to reopen pay negotiations in 1944 but in 1946 the companies took a harder line. A few days into the strike, on 12 August 1946, both companies announced that all four mines would be closed indefinitely unless artisans returned to work in three days' time. This nuclear option had worked previously. In November 1945, RAA had ended a six-week strike at Nchanga – triggered when white miners protested about the appointment of a shift boss with allegedly insufficient underground experience – by threatening to close the mine.[142] The hard-line strategy worked again in 1946, artisans quickly caved and agreed to arbitration.

Arbitration hearings in 1946 illustrate both the extent of international support for the Copperbelt's white mineworkers and how wages were set and contested in relation to developments in other mining and industrial centres. Support for the NRMWU's case came from trade union contacts from the South African Rand, the mining town of Broken Hill in Australia, copper camps in the American West, and Britain's shipbuilding and coal industry, all of whom furnished information on wages and conditions of work of artisans. Closer by, a French-speaking electrician crossed the border to obtain the same information for white artisans employed by Union Minière.[143] Such was the standing of the NRMWU, that initially both the president and vice-president of Britain's National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) agreed to come to the Copperbelt to assist the NRMWU at arbitration hearings, though the companies vehemently objected to their presence.[144]

Information on wages from Australia, Britain, South Africa and the United States were considered relevant because white workers asserted that the jobs they performed on the Copperbelt were substantially the same as the jobs performed by mineworkers elsewhere, an assertion rooted

[140] Outline of the Artisans' Case to the Arbitration Tribunal for an Increase of their Wages, ZCCM 3.8.1A.

[141] Letter from A.B. Hayward, 17 August 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[142] 'Application to close Nchanga Mine', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 29 December 1944.

[143] Arbitration Proceedings, Verbatim Record of Proceedings Volume I, TNA CO 537/1515.

[144] Organisation Sub-Committee minutes, 20 August 1946, National Union of Mineworkers' Archive, Barnsley [hereafter NUM].

in personal experience. Maybank flatly rejected the assertion by mine managers that jobs were not comparable between different mining regions as, on the Copperbelt, whites mainly supervised African workers: "No, I have had too many years of experience on mines."[145]

The companies too used international comparisons to make their case and drew on the international connections and experience of company executives and managers. In 1940, for instance, there were enough men working in the Mufulira smelter with experience in copper smelters in Montana and Arizona that Frank Ayer could have them attest to the comparatively better working conditions at Mufulira.[146] The companies contested the wage claims of artisans by gathering their own data on artisans' wages from mines in the United States, Canada, and Australia.[147] This was relevant because this was a transnational workforce and, as one mine manager explained, artisan's pay "was calculated at current world rates."[148] Even industrial relations were often similar. RST found the agreement reached between mining unions and copper companies in Arizona "surprisingly similar" to the agreement they had with the NRMWU.[149]

There was, however, one other feature of this dispute that did not fit into the world of white labour. In 1946, for the first time, white mineworkers attempted to involve African mineworkers in their dispute. This was in response to persistent efforts by the Chamber of Mines to discipline white workers by warning that their actions would lead to unrest by Africans and destabilise the colonial order. In March 1940, for instance, notices were posted around Nkana Mine urging white workers to "avoid any incidents which might disturb the Native population" while at Mufulira the mine manager warned union representatives that a strike would agitate African workers.[150] In 1946, the Chamber publicly warned that any strike would put Africans out of work and there was a "problem of holding a large number of them idle, which would create a most dangerous situation." The companies threatened to remove African workers from the Copperbelt to rural areas.[151]

These appeals to racial solidarity were ignored by their intended targets and the announcement that African workers would be sent to rural areas was interpreted by union representatives as a direct threat. If unemployed African mineworkers were removed from the Copperbelt, thundered Goodwin, "the Companies would never re-open the Mines because every Union in the world will prevent labour coming to these Mines."[152] Under pressure from the companies, the NRMWU leadership attempted for the first time to enlist the support of African

[145] Evidence of Frank Maybank, 1 October 1946, TNA CO 537/1515.

[146] Frank Ayer to Chief Secretary, 9 September 1940, NAZ SEC1/1420.

[147] Memorandum on wage scales at mines in Western United States, 30 August 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[148] Note, 29 July 1944, NAZ SEC1/1351.

[149] H.R. Finn, Roan Antelope to John Payne Jnr, American Metal Company, 16 September 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[150] Notice to Employees, Rhokana Corporation, 20 March 1940, ZCCM 3.8.1A.

[151] 'Nth. Rhodesian mines to close?', *Financial Times*, 2 May 1946.

[152] Notes on meeting between representatives of the Chamber of Mines and the NRMWU, 31 July 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

workers in their dispute. The threat by the companies to remove African workers was a serious one, Despite the claims of white workers to be the 'real' workers, many knew that the mines could not function without African workers. Leaflets in English, Bemba, Nyanja, and Swahili were distributed by white shop stewards and African boss boys – who had presumably translated them – in compounds on all the mines. These leaflets urged African workers not to leave the Copperbelt if they were laid off and encouraged them to make demands on the companies: "the Bwanas feel that the African should not suffer because of the dispute. The Companies have ample money to feed the African and his family."[153]

In some ways, this was a remarkable intervention into the debate over labour 'stabilisation', the issue then bedevilling the colonial administration about whether Africans should be allowed to become permanent urban residents. It was an unambiguous statement from the NRMWU to African male workers and their families that they belonged in urban areas and should remain there. The significance of this tentative encouragement of solidarity across the workforce should not be overstated. Leaflets in English and Afrikaans distributed to union members suggest that the NRMWU leadership were somewhat apprehensive about the reaction of their own members to this move: "the Union Executive earnestly request that all members of the Union shall be considerate and diplomatic if their mine boys consult them."[154]

It is however unknowable what form of inter-racial solidarity could have emerged during this dispute as the white artisans' strike collapsed shortly afterwards. Nevertheless, attempts by the NRMWU leadership to win support from African workers continued into the late 1940s, as is discussed in the following chapter. Frank Maybank was a key figure in these efforts.

Return of Frank Maybank

Following the strike by artisans in 1944, Martinus Visagie was pushed out of the union and went to try his luck as a tobacco farmer in Fort Jameson (Chipata). The search for his replacement shows both the growing prominence of the NRMWU – a union, it must be remembered, of only 2,300 members at this time – in the international labour movement and its international orientation.

British TUC officials could quite literally not find the Copperbelt on a map but were nevertheless prepared to help fill the vacant job of general secretary and advertised widely for the position.[155] 60 people applied for the job, including Tommy Graves, last seen in 1939 departing Luanshya under a cloud and then working in the iron ore industry in northern England. Applicants were mostly British trade unionists, and it is a good indication of how the Copperbelt's white workforce were regarded by many British trade unionists as part of the same labour movement.

[153] NRMWU Notice, 3 August 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[154] *Ibid.*

[155] One TUC official asked about the largest town nearest Kitwe because Kitwe did not appear in lists at the telegraph office, "nor can I locate it even on a large-scale map." H.B. Kemmis to F.S. Maybank, 17 April 1945, Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick [hereafter MRC], MSS.292/968.1/1.

Most applicants had many years' experience in the labour movement, mostly the NUM and its predecessor organisations, including two men who had each spent two decades as officials in the South Wales Miners' Federation. The TUC's preferred candidate was Brian Roach, who had, in his own words, "spent the whole of my working life in the service of the Trades Union Movement" in Canada and in Britain. He was willing to move to the Copperbelt because "I believe that I should go where my ability to work and organise can be used to the best advantage of Labour." Two other candidates were suggested: Robert Currey – a miner and trade unionist who had been jailed during Britain's 1926 General Strike – and Frank Maybank.[156]

Maybank was offered the job, and this revived the campaign to allow him to return. This campaign was assisted by a powerful new ally that extended international support for the Copperbelt's white mineworkers beyond the British Empire. The NRMWU were invited to send representatives to the inaugural conference of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in London in February 1945, a short-lived attempt to unite trade unions around the world into one body. MOSSA, to their chagrin, were not invited. Brian Goodwin and Maybank attended the conference, but not as bystanders to the proceedings. Astonishingly, Goodwin, attending in his capacity as president of a whites-only union, was elected as the representative for Africa on the WFTU Executive and served on this body for the next four years. His candidacy received widespread support, including from trade unionists from West Africa, who also elected as Goodwin's alternate Isaac Wallace-Johnson, a trade unionist from Sierra Leone only recently released from internment. Delegates from France, Italy, Latin America, and the Soviet Union also backed Goodwin.[157]

Although Goodwin's position today seems extraordinary, this was the reality of labour internationalism in the 1940s. The positions of Goodwin and Maybank, who was elected to the WFTU General Council, as representatives for Africa was not regarded as unusual. General Council representatives for Australia, New Zealand and the United States were all white men who had been born in Britain, so there was no reason for them to consider white migrants in Central Africa an aberration. The claim and self-belief of white mineworkers to be the real workers on the mines was taken at face-value by trade unionists elsewhere in the world. When this position was contested by African mineworkers later in the 1940s, white trade unionists were disconcerted and reacted with surprise.

Maybank had not been idle while in Britain, and his enforced stint greatly raised the visibility of white mineworkers' struggles there. He had toured Britain's coalfields to talk about his case under the auspices of the Federation and "made an excellent impression on all the District Officers of the Miners' Union," according to the union's general secretary.[158] Later that year, Abe Moffat, the communist Scottish miners' leader, declared to the TUC's annual congress "without any

[156] Walter Citrine to Brian Goodwin, 19 December 1944, MRC MSS. 292/968.1/9.

[157] Report of the Committee on Nominations to the General Council, the Executive Committee and the Auditors, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam [hereafter IISH], WFTU, Box 10.

[158] Notes of a meeting held in the Secretary of State's room, 7 December 1943, TNA CO 795/122/13

fear of contradiction, that his Association could vouch for Mr Maybank's integrity."[159] After a delegation of trade union leaders lobbied the Colonial Office, the British Government reluctantly agreed to allow Maybank's return after the end of hostilities in Europe.[160]

"Our perspective is too narrow out here" warned Brian Goodwin on his return from the WFTU conference. They needed to "keep more or less in touch with the Trade Union World which it is so necessary to be in touch with." Consequently, the NRMWU became one of the first unions outside Europe to affiliate to the Miners' International Federation. NRMWU leaders prized these international links. Goodwin reported that at the WFTU he had strengthened links with "the Miners' Federation men" and had made contact:

> with numerous other leading trade unionists; the most outstanding of which were: Ernest Thornton, Australia; Vincenter Lombardo Toledanom, Mexico; Saillant, France; Keznetsov, leader of the Russian Delegation; Reid Robinson, Sidney Hilman; James Care; all of the CIO of America.[161]

The End of Hostilities

The end of the Second World War appeared to herald a showdown between the mining companies and their white workforce. The Chamber of Mines sensed weakness after the artisans' strike collapsed in 1946 and concluded that the "present situation offered long awaited opportunity" to abolish the closed shop, reduce wages and "progression of Africans" into jobs performed by whites.[162] Both companies seriously considered firing the entire white workforce and to "proceed to get new crews" to restart production.[163] Developments in other mining regions had shown that different forms of the racial division of labour were possible, and that many white workers could be replaced. In Gold Coast (Ghana), for instance, where RST's sister company the Consolidated African Selection Trust operated mines, Ashanti Goldfields employed 6,693 Africans and only 111 whites at their mines in 1945.[164]

The NRMWU too were gearing up for a struggle. In August, near-unanimous votes at union meetings agreed to raise membership fees "for no other purpose than to be able to contest any future dispute."[165] NRMWU officials professed to be "not troubled" by the prospect of further confrontation because "their struggle against the Companies… would have the support of the influential World

[159] Trade Union Congress. *Report of the Proceedings at the 75th Annual Trades Union Congress* (London: Trade Union Congress, 1943), 287-88.

[160] Conclusions of War Cabinet, 26 March 1945, TNA CAB 65/49/36.

[161] NRMWU President's Report on Trip to England, 12 April 1945, TNA CO 795/128/5.

[162] Chamber of Mines to Selection Trust London, 19 August 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[163] Confidential Memorandum to Directors, 6 November 1946, ZCCM 14.2.7F.

[164] Stephanie Decker, 'Africanization in British Multinationals in Ghana and Nigeria, 1945–1970', *Business History Review* 94, 2 (2018): 702.

[165] Arbitration Proceedings, Verbatim Record of Proceedings Volume I, TNA CO 537/1515.

Federation of Trade Unions."[166] The end of 1946 was chaotic. Winding engine drivers, rockbreakers and underground operators all made pay demands and the latter group shut down Roan Antelope without warning in December by picketing the changing houses and threatening white cage tenders who tried to take workers underground.[167]

The companies decided that dealing with a reliably belligerent but organised union was preferable to an unpredictable situation where different sections of the white workforce formulated grievances and then acted on them. Plans for a wholesale confrontation with the white workforce were abandoned and instead further wage increases, especially for artisans, and a new bonus scheme were offered. This mollified white workers and, for the first time in several years, a new pay deal was signed in January 1947 with little disagreement. The pay deal kept wages rising faster than the cost of living, which the colonial administration estimated had risen by 36% for whites between 1939 and 1946.[168] Unexpectedly then, 1946 marked the end of a period of intense industrial struggles and the beginning of a period of extraordinary prosperity in the industry, prosperity that enabled the companies to take a more lenient approach to industrial relations.

This change of approach also reflected a change of management at both companies. Among the London-based executives, Alfred Chester Beatty's interest in mining dwindled after the war and he became a collector of Egyptology and ancient manuscripts, RST managing director Arthur Storke resigned to join US mining giant Kennecott Copper and Auckland Geddes was forced to retire from RAA after he went blind. On the Copperbelt, the influence of globe-trotting American mining engineers, who had usually favoured a hard-line approach in industrial relations, diminished. When one former American manager returned to assess RST's Copperbelt operations in 1953, he worried that mine managers were becoming "slightly indoctrinated with some facets of the Union ideology," through prolonged contact with union representatives.[169] Recruitment and promotion of management changed at both RAA and RST. Most managers in the post-war era were British or South African, and usually had a long professional association with the Copperbelt mines, moving up the ranks from within the companies rather than being appointed from other copper mines. Lewin Tucker, appointed general manager at Mufulira in 1946, had been part of the first prospecting groups at Nchanga in the mid-1920s. Jack Thompson, Roan Antelope's general manager during the 1950s, had been at the mine since 1929, when he had joined as an engineering assistant. The same was true of those that succeeded them, though Anglo American occasionally rotated managers through their South African operations as well.

The upper echelons of the companies too were increasingly staffed by people with long association with the Copperbelt. RST's new managing director was Ronald Prain, a City of London businessman who had close connections in leading economic and political circles in Britain. He

[166] Conciliation proceedings on contract rates for rockbreakers, 18 September 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[167] Jack Thomson to Secretary, Roan Antelope London, 9 December 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[168] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Interim Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Cost of Living* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1947), 6

[169] Notes on a Trip made to O'Okiep, Tsumeb and the Copperbelt, March and April 1953, 10 June 1953, ST G/73.

succeeded Beatty as RST chair in 1950 and held the position until retirement in 1972, so was involved with the Copperbelt for more or less his entire working life.[170] Prain's first job after leaving school in 1926 was with a London subsidiary of the American Metal Company. 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.[171] Prain became a centrally important figure on the Copperbelt in the 1950s.

Conclusion

Industrial unrest wracked the Copperbelt during the Second World War. The *Financial Times* had no doubt about who was to blame: white daily-paid mineworkers, "whose influence is out of all proportion to their numbers" and whose propensity to cause chaos greatly exceeded "the general unrest that is afflicting industry everywhere."[172] White mineworkers were more than willing to disrupt the war effort to advance their interests. Many had personal experiences of hardship during the Great Depression and now saw a chance to bolster their position on the mines. As the NRMWU's General Council put it in 1942: "The history of the last decade is the most powerful argument in favour of NO COMPROMISE."[173]

This willingness to disrupt Britain's war effort is a good indication that the 'white' identity that emerged strongly in these years did not equate with an 'imperial' identity. Appeals for loyalty from patriotic groups were given short shrift and the NRMWU issued exhortations to defeat Nazism rather than defend the British Empire.[174] White mineworkers saw themselves as part of an international racialised working class and found a ready reception in the international labour movement. By the mid-1940s one of their number represented the African continent in the leadership of a global labour organisation, the WFTU.

In this, white mineworkers were confident that others in the labour movement were on their side and recognised them as members of the same movement, and for good reason. Delegates at the WFTU backed their candidates, trade unions in Australia and South Africa lent support, the British TUC lobbied the British Government in support of their demands, left-wing MPs in the House of Commons asked questions on their behalf, and even Britain's Communist Party wrote favourably on "the bitter struggles" of "the Rhodesian copper miners."[175] As Maybank had jeered to one mine manager in 1945, with the Labour Party in power in Britain they had "a tremendous

[170] Ian Phimister, 'Prain, Sir Ronald Lindsay (1907–1991)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), doi.org./10.1093/ref:odnb/49932

[171] Ronald Prain, *Reflections on an Era: Fifty years of mining in changing Africa* (Worcester Park: Metal Bulletin Books, 1981), 23, 28.

[172] 'The Rhodesian Copper Belt', *Financial Times*, 29 October 1946.

[173] Memorandum from the General Council, NRMWU to the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, HPA AH 646 Dc12.20.

[174] For an account of how support for the idea of white labour could even, in the minds of some white radicals, justify fighting against the British Empire, see Jonathan Hyslop, *The Notorious Syndicalist. J.T. Bain: A Scottish Rebel in Colonial South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2004).

[175] 'A Workers' Notebook', *The Daily Worker*, 7 December 1946.

amount of power" and "could not be interfered with" anymore.[176] Even the colour bar did not place the union beyond the pale. When George Hall, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and former South Wales Miners' Federation official, was questioned in Parliament over the Copperbelt 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."[177]

The form that the colour bar took provided a material base for a white working-class identity and expanded the boundaries of whiteness. 'White' no longer automatically meant 'British', as it had done in the 1930s, and hostility towards workers from Eastern and Southern Europe and towards Afrikaners dissipated. An Afrikaner miner, Martinus Visagie, became NRMWU General Secretary and other Afrikaner workers came to play a prominent role in the union. After 1941, getting a skilled job on the mine meant that a worker had to identify and be identified as white, and this foregrounded racial identity. The agency of white workers themselves was crucial in this process, it was not a natural development. Directly across the border in Katanga, Union Minière and the colonial authorities determinedly stamped out the nascent white working-class movement, despite the best efforts of the NRMWU to assist them.

Rising wages for white mineworkers were based not only on the racial division of labour but also on their collective struggles. A comparative approach shows this. Wages for white artisans and miners on the Copperbelt were significantly higher than wages for white workers doing these same jobs in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa where there was a similar sharp racial division in the workforce. As Table 3.1 shows, wages for white mineworkers in Northern Rhodesia were around one-third higher. When the companies complained that wages were much higher than the Rand, Maybank replied "We agree. Why? Because the daily-paid employees have struggled to make these conditions."[178]

Table 3.1: Comparison of Direct Annual Earnings for Selected Daily-Paid Jobs at Mines in Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and South Africa, 1949.[179]

	Copperbelt Mines	Southern Rhodesia Mines	Witwatersrand Mines
Surface artisan	£953.3.0	£629.11.6	£620.13.3
Underground artisan	£1036.10.5	£672.12.3	£665.0.1
Surface operator	£807.5.1	£595.13.4	£571.2.1

[176] Notes on an interview with F.S. Maybank, 30 September 1945, TNA CO 537/1515.

[177] House of Commons Debate, 10 April 1941, vol370, cc1757.

[178] 'Mr Maybank on the new pension scheme', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 7 February 1947.

[179] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Board of Inquiry to Consider the Proposed 40-Hour Week in the Copper Mining Industry of Northern Rhodesia* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1950), 14-5.

Timberman	£932.6.2	£629.11.6	£601.2.0

The way these benefits were won proved to be a salutary lesson both to white and African mineworkers: strike first and negotiate later, anything and everything on the mines was up for discussion, and no matter was ever closed. As Brian Goodwin argued, "even if we were the highest paid workers in the world, the fact still remains that we are entitled to ask for better conditions, and to fight for them."[180] White workers had a good war, and things were about to get even better.

[180] Extract from the Official report of the Legislative Council Debates, 26 August 1946, ZCCM 12.2.1B.

Chapter 4

Fruits of their Labour, 1948-55

Returning to the Copperbelt in 1946 after an absence of six years, Winifred Tapson was so astounded by the scale of changes that she and her husband "felt like two Rip van Winkles just awakened from sleep." In fact, they felt such "a sense of disorientation" that they left not long afterwards.[1] More changes were to come. Unexpectedly, the copper industry boomed from the late 1940s, stimulated by the general post-war economic recovery and the strategic stockpiling of copper among major powers following the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.

This boom was particularly pronounced on the Copperbelt due to a price anomaly. When Britain's Ministry of Supply resumed bulk buying copper in 1947 it did not establish a fixed price, as it had done in 1939. Instead, it adopted the price calculated by the *Engineering & Mining Journal*, which was a weighted average in US dollars of sales of copper on the New York markets.[2] This decision had enormous consequences as in September 1949 the British Government devalued Pound Sterling by 44% against the US Dollar, and so the sterling price of copper immediately leapt up. Costs were almost all in sterling so were unaffected, and the result was a huge bounty for the mining industry. Rhokana's profits soared from £6.7m to £10.5m in a single year.[3]

The mines became hugely profitable. Between 1945 and 1953, £122m in dividends, interest payments and profits were remitted from Northern Rhodesia.[4] Huge sums were also spent on development work and expanding production. RST built a refinery in Mufulira in 1948 and then decided to double refining capacity in 1951, another refinery was constructed in Ndola in 1954, and work began on new underground mines at Bancroft and Chibuluma. Road, rail, and energy infrastructure was upgraded and expanded, financed by the US Government as part of efforts to build up its strategic stockpiles of copper.[5] Copper production soared from 183,000 tons in 1946 to 363,000 ton in 1953, when the bulk purchasing scheme ceased again.

White mineworkers did very well out of this boom. Their numbers swelled as the copper industry expanded and, with a bonus tied to the soaring price of copper, they became an extraordinarily affluent group. Southern Africa more broadly experienced a post-war economic boom in these years that brought increasing affluence to whites and shifting patterns of

[1] Tapson, *Old Timer*, 175.

[2] Butler, *Copper Empire*, 112.

[3] *Ibid.*, 117.

[4] Roberts, 'Financial History', 357.

[5] The US Government also loaned £5m to RST to develop Chibuluma. Roberts, 'Financial History', 356.

consumption.[6] Yet this was modest compared to what the Copperbelt's white mineworkers enjoyed in these years. "There can be few, if any, miners in the world with a higher standard of living," concluded the International Labour Organization.[7] One British journalist termed it "a paradise for the proletariat."[8] As Ian Phimister observed, the problem on the Copperbelt became "not so much the high cost of living as the cost of high living."[9]

The one spot on the horizon for white mineworkers was the challenge to the configuration of the racial hierarchy in the workplace. Three changes from the late 1940s brought about this challenge: an assertive African workforce newly organised into a union, a push from the mining companies to cut labour costs, and the greater dependence of white mineworkers on the colour bar to protect their increasingly lucrative position. This fed into what became known as the 'African advancement' debate, a series of lengthy and complex negotiations and official enquiries into altering the colour bar and the terms upon which jobs performed by white workers would be opened to Africans. Both mining companies thought that comprehensive wage increases for African workers could be forestalled by lifting the colour bar, white mineworkers insisted on the 'rate for the job' and betted that the companies had no intention of significantly raising African wages, while African trade unionists used the pay and conditions of white workers as arguments in support of their own demands.

African advancement has been discussed extensively by scholars and generally been regarded as the most important development in this period.[10] In this literature, white mineworkers have appeared primarily as the antagonists of African workers, and "the backbone of resistance to their demands."[11] What this perspective overlooks is that despite bluff and bluster from white mineworkers and their union, there was little struggle in defence of the colour bar. Protracted negotiations certainly, but no strikes or protests. As will be argued in the following chapter, the actual strikes that took place in these years were primarily about other aspects of the organisation of work.

In 1954, some NRMWU officials concluded that a new government enquiry into the colour bar heralded a "desperate struggle" and grimly reassured their members that:

> The union stands for the right of the European to remain in the country he has built up and is prepared to fight for it with no quarter given or asked. Our members must be prepared in

[6] Albert Grundlingh, '"Are We Afrikaners Getting too Rich?" Cornucopia and Change in Afrikanerdom in the 1960s', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 21, 203 (2008): 143-165.

[7] International Labour Organisation, 'Interracial Wage Structure in Certain Parts of Africa', *International Labour Review* LXXVIII, 1 (1958): 24.

[8] Cyril Dunn, *Central African Witness* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1959), 136.

[9] Phimister, 'Workers in Wonderland', 198.

[10] For an overview of this extensive literature, see Phimister, 'Workers in Wonderland', 188-95.

[11] Robert Molteno, 'Cleavage and conflict in Zambian politics: A study in sectionalism', in *Politics in Zambia*, eds. William Tordoff and Robert Molteno (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), 81.

> every possible way for that fight. Sacrifices will have to be made… and we will have to accept considerable hardship and discomfort.[12]

Such a fight never occurred. While most white mineworkers supported the colour bar, they had not come to the Copperbelt to make sacrifices, endure hardship, or fight existential struggles against Africans. They wanted to have a good time.

The High Cost of High Living

A survey of the white workforce commissioned by the Chamber of Mines in 1959 reached an unequivocal conclusion: 'The majority of mine employees come to the Copperbelt to satisfy one primary aim: to make money and this aim dominated all other considerations."[13] They certainly made money in this period. Earnings soared, based upon continual increases in basic wages and, more importantly, a bonus tied to the price of copper (see Table 4). The remarks of Evan Morgan, who had spent almost thirty years driving hoists at collieries in South Wales before joining Rhokana Mine, on his retirement were brief and telling: "Not one of [us] have ever been as well off as they are here."[14]

Table 4: Average Annual Earnings of African and White Mineworkers, 1946-61.[15]

	African	White		African	White
1946	£35	£462	**1954**	£123	£1734
1947	£38	£539	**1955**	£121	£1943
1948	£47	£562	**1956**	£159	£2295
1949	£52	£1056	**1957**	£177	£1910
1950	£57	£1068	**1958**	£193	£1699
1951	£78	£1275	**1959**	£217	£1868
1952	£86	£1500	**1960**	£257	£2160
1953	£124	£1782	**1961**	£258	£2083

The mines provided subsidised housing, electricity, water, healthcare, welfare, and leisure facilities. "Freed of any necessity to make provision for housing or health care," noted Ian Phimister,

[12] Quoted in Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, 272-73.

[13] Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mining Employees Part I*, 47.

[14] 'They retire this month', *Rhokana Review*, June 1955.

[15] Earnings for white mineworkers include the copper bonus. Earnings for African mineworkers exclude food rations. Phimister, 'Workers in Wonderland', 198, 212.

"white miners spent extravagantly on cars, consumer goods and club memberships."[16] Mine publications are replete with examples of this, such as the Nchanga carpenter described as having "bought himself a brand new car with the money he *didn't spend* overseas."[17] Overseas travel became commonplace as by the early 1950s, every white worker received at least 36 days paid leave per year, and some got even more. One rockbreaker casually remarked "the wife and I knocked about Europe for a few months, cost us close on two-thousand quid, so you can reckon we had a pretty good holiday."[18] At the height of the boom, one white miner at Nkana told a visiting journalist that he didn't know what he would do with all his money: "Maybe I'll buy a new Jaguar every year and hit the bottle with what's left over – like some of the others."[19]

Many of the white men who arrived on the Copperbelt in the late 1940s and 1950s were war veterans and feelings of entitlement to high wages were influenced by post-war claims for social justice and a better life. As one white mineworker and war veteran informed a government commission in 1948, "People fought for a decent living, and a life in which they will not be trodden on and trodden down."[20] These claims, however, were highly racialised, as Neil Roos has shown in relation to the demands for social justice made by white war veterans returning to South Africa.[21]

Many accounts of whites in colonial societies emphasise anxieties, doubts, and self-deception among whites. "White anxiety in the colonies is an old story," notes Janet McIntosh.[22] Indeed, the American anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker, who conducted fieldwork in Luanshya in 1954, argued that "fears and anxieties" about Africans and African advancement prevented whites "from enjoying their many advantages."[23] This is at odds with contemporary accounts of the raucous social life, or recollections by former residents about how much they enjoyed themselves. "You could do anything there" recalled Pam van Heerden, who lived in Kitwe and Bancroft during the 1950s. "If I today were given the opportunity to go back to what I left, I wouldn't even take a toothbrush, I would go."[24] Lexie Bray spent four years in Luanshya, where her father worked as an underground electrician, and recalled that her father and his workmates, "spent

[16] Phimister, 'Workers in Wonderland', 198.

[17] 'Nchanga mine affairs', *Nchanga Magazine*, November 1956. Emphasis in original.

[18] Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mine Employees Part I*, 33.

[19] Peter Fraenkel, *Wayaleshi* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1959), 90.

[20] Evidence of Rupbert Rudolph Braggs, Closed Townships Commission, 30 March 1948, ZNA ZP 1/18.

[21] Neil Roos, *Ordinary Springboks: White Servicemen and Social Justice in South Africa, 1939-1961* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

[22] Janet McIntosh, *Unsettled: Denial and Belonging Among White Kenyans* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 7-8.

[23] Hortense Powdermaker, *Copper Town: Changing Africa. The human situation on the Rhodesian Copperbelt* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 80.

[24] Interview with Pam van Heerden, 17 October 2013.

their money as soon as they got it... We had a really good lifestyle. We had two cars, a motor-boat and a caravan and went on two six-week holidays every year to Cape Town."[25]

The array of available leisure activities was astounding. Any white mine employee and their family members could play almost any sport they wanted. Nchanga Mine Club, for instance, offered rugby, football, cricket, baseball, tennis, hockey, squash, jukskei or athletics.[26] Whites could pursue new forms of leisure and cultivate the tastes and recreational pastimes restricted to social elites elsewhere in the world. As one mine official commented on the Kitwe Polo Club, "it used to be called the 'sport of millionaires', but you may now find the captain of the local team to be a plumber."[27] Others sailed yachts or water-skied in the lakes created by the mines from water pumped from underground workings. Even more extravagantly, in 1952 the Flying Club of Northern Rhodesia had five branches – all on the Copperbelt – with some 450 members.[28]

[PLACE FIGURE 6 HERE]

White mineworkers had a standard of living far above what they had experienced in their societies of origin, even those coming from South Africa. Contemporary commentary often dwelt on how white mineworkers' high wages upset or inverted the conventional social order. One anonymous mine official at Mufulira penned a bitter complaint about the "almost barbaric" life created by white mineworkers with "no conception of what first-class cooking and service is" and who "sneer at good tweeds and well-cut suits." Their "fantastically high wages" had little value "unless they can learn to live in a manner more becoming their financial standing."[29] Another anonymous writer complained that white women in Northern Rhodesia have "no manners. Their standard of living is higher than it was where they were born. They have houses, cars and servants but cannot match their manners with their improved station."[30]

Others believed such wealth to be actively harmful. Methodist minister Colin Morris warned that "the very effortlessness of life is a major cause of personal maladjustment" as "living quickly" in "the morally enervating social atmosphere of the Copperbelt" inevitably produced personal problems among the white residents. This echoed the claim of Harry Nkumbula, leader of the Northern Rhodesia African National Congress (ANC):

[25] Interview with Lexie Bray, 1 July 2013.

[26] Nchanga Mine Recreation Club, ZCCM 10.5.7F. Jukskei is a traditional South African game where players throw sticks to knock over wooden pegs placed a short distance away.

[27] Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mine Workers*, 37.

[28] Flying Club of Northern Rhodesia, Balance Sheet at 31 December 1952, NAZ NR 5/4.

[29] Letter from 'Mine Admin', *Northern News*, 18 July 1953.

[30] 'Northern Rhodesian Women', *Northern News*, 18 July 1953.

> Social life among them is so luxurious that they are rapidly becoming enfeebled by it. They live in gorgeous and lofty houses and bungalows. In their houses they don't even know how to make a cup of tea. All [. . .] they do is to sit in the soft chairs and shout "Boy! Tea!!"[31]

Yet not all social life was ostentatious, and much of the social life for white mineworkers involved a re-creation of British male working-class culture. The most popular sports – as players and spectators – were football and rugby. British football teams (including Newcastle United and Preston North End) toured the Copperbelt, while rugby league scouts signed up promising players from Copperbelt teams for sides in northern England. Vera Lynn – who had become famous performing for British servicemen during the Second World War – sang at Nkana Mine Club. The darts league at Nkana was formed by a painter from Northumberland while the boxing club was run by a South Wales miner who had arrived on the Copperbelt from the United States.[32] There was even a Copperbelt Pigeon Racing Federation – en route to Kitwe Doris Lessing met a new recruit for the mines from Johannesburg fretting about how to transport his pigeons.[33] Most whites took a weekly trip to the cinema or theatre, and there were active amateur dramatics societies in each of the mining towns.

All this was expensive, but the cost was largely borne by the mining companies. As a matter of company policy, substantial interest-free loans were provided to the mine clubs to upgrade and expand club facilities in the 1950s, and club staff were paid by the company.[34] When the Mufulira Mine Club committee decided to refurbish the club lounge, expand 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 a grant to match employee's club subscriptions. Another interest fee loan of £43,400 and a grant of £33,400 followed in 1955 when the club built a new bar, billiard rooms, badminton hall, athletics hall, and theatre.[35] Such lavish benefits measured "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.[36]

Social life was anglophone and recreated a kind of microcosm of social life from Britain and the British Empire. There was a Caledonian Society which organised a Burns' Supper, Hogmanay, and Highland games, a Cambrian Society which organised an annual St David's Day dinner and Eisteddfods, there were balls for St Patrick's Day, a Gaelic football league, and an annual ANZAC dinner, plus social clubs attached to the Anglican, Catholic, Free Church and Methodist churches. There is little evidence of tension between different national and regional groups among English-

[31] Giacomo Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa: A biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 60.

[32] 'Sporting world', *Rhokana Review*, April 1952, and November 1953. 'They retired in June', *Rhokana Review*, July 1956.

[33] Lessing, *Going Home*, 22-23.

[34] Matongo, 'Popular Culture', 185.

[35] M. McMonagle, Mufulira Mine Club to all Committee members, 30 March 1960, ZCCM 10.5.7F.

[36] 'A remarkable achievement', *Rhokana Review*, November 1954.

speaking whites, and Irish workers, who often faced prejudice and discrimination in Britain and its white settler colonies, encountered little hostility.[37]

The Copperbelt towns also had Italian and Polish Clubs with their own premises and the Dutch Reformed Church had its own social club. Non-British whites, however, did have to adjust to the dominant culture and social life in white society. Pam van Heerden, for instance, noted "I can't even recall speaking Afrikaans to anyone" in her 14 years on the Copperbelt, although Afrikaans was her first language.[38] Yet the tensions between British and non-British whites apparent on the Copperbelt in the 1930s had dissipated. Skatie Fourie, who came to Kitwe from South Africa in 1956, recalled working with other miners from South Africa along with "a lot of miners coming from Wales, Scotland, England from the coal mines, Germans, Russians, Italians, Yugoslavs, Polish. They got on like a house on fire."[39] According to Boet Liebenberg, who moved to Luanshya from South Africa 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.[40] "Jock and I are good friends, he doesn't have to praat die taal… all get along here in this bar," declared one Afrikaner miner of his drinking companions in a Luanshya bar in 1953.[41]

At the centre of social life was alcohol consumption. 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. Club patrons certainly intended to make full use of the new facilities. In 1952 the bar had sold an average of 1,808 beers, 38 bottles of brandy and 22 bottles of whisky every single day, and other bars in the town did a similarly roaring trade.[42] Each sports club had its own bar and Skatie Fourie recalled that some ostensible sports clubs "were basically just a pub."[43] The level of alcohol consumption was one of the first things that visitors to the Copperbelt noticed and was not discouraged by the companies, indeed the example above of the new Rhokana Club bar and how much business the bar did is from a company publication. Cheap and readily available alcohol made alcoholism a common affliction. Several people I interviewed thought that their parents had become alcoholics on the Copperbelt and there were Alcoholics Anonymous groups for whites in all the Copperbelt towns.[44]

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[37] Eamon Valkenberg, who came from Ireland in the mid-1950s, recalled "gosh, so many Irish [on the Copperbelt] … they were there from every county, north, south, west, east of Ireland." Interview with Eamon Valkenberg, 29 November 2013.

[38] Interview with Pam van Heerden, 17 October 2013.

[39] Interview with Skatie Fourie, 11 May 2014.

[40] Interview with Boet Liebenberg, 7 July 2014.

[41] Edwin S. Munger, *African Field Reports, 1952-61* (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1961), 350.

[42] 'Club's new bar is opened', *Rhokana Review*, February 1953.

[43] Interview with Skatie Fourie, 11 May 2014.

[44] 'Alcoholics Anonymous', *Rhokana Review*, May 1955.

Alcohol consumption kept the white male workforce happy and helped pay for the other leisure facilities offered, as bar profits funded the clubs. Frank Maybank noticed this and criticised "the inference that benevolent companies have provided" sports facilities, when actually "mainly out of the pockets of the employees came these amenities (profits of the club bars, club cinemas, etc.)."[45] This setup was remarkably similar to function of beerhalls established in African townships whereby profits from beer sales paid for the provision of basic amenities in these townships, itself based on the system established in Durban in the early twentieth century.[46]

Alcohol kept the white workforce occupied off the job. After a night out in Kitwe, Doris Lessing concluded:

> I imagined that Southern Rhodesia was talented for drinking; but I had seen nothing till I went to the Copperbelt…
>
> Never have I been anywhere where the feeling of boredom, of boredom crystallized into activity and alcohol for salvation's sake, is so strong as in the little mining towns of Northern Rhodesia.[47]

Alcohol was a distraction from the fact that routine mine work was often both tedious and dangerous. One 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."[48] Underground workers had the reputation for being the heaviest drinkers. In 1946, Brian Goodwin told an arbitration committee that he would quit mining as soon as he had paid off his debts, because his anxieties about being underground "will drive me out… When I am not underground it does not worry me, but when I go underground it becomes aggravated."[49] "Working underground is not healthy work" another miner explained to a government commission in 1950.[50] One man who worked at Mufulira recalled that "there was a danger in all the social events of the mining town, danger from hard, loud and strong men." Even though he himself worked underground and was a former boxer, he quickly learnt to avoid the Mufulira Hotel on a Saturday night where heavy drinking and fighting were the "favourite entertainment" of the white miners who frequented it.[51]

Heavy alcohol consumption fits the common image of mining towns but, as in previous years, there is little evidence of prostitution, another aspect of this common image. The presence of substantial numbers of white women and relatively permissive attitudes towards sex may have

[45] 'Mr Maybank on the New Pension Scheme', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 7 February 1947.

[46] Charles Ambler, 'Alcohol, Segregation and Popular Politics in Northern Rhodesia', *The Journal of African History* 31, 2 (1990): 296-97.

[47] Lessing, *Going Home*, 272, 281-82.

[48] 'August madness', *Rhokana Review*, November 1958.

[49] Verbatim Record of Arbitration Proceedings Vol. II, 3 October 1946, TNA CO 357/1515.

[50] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Proposed 40-Hour Week*, 19.

[51] Ivan Smith, *Mad Dog Killer. The Story of a Congo Mercenary* (Solihull: Helion, 2012), 18

reduced demand for commercial sex workers by providing opportunities for infidelity, especially as many white men were on shift work. The philosopher A.C. Grayling, who was born in Luanshya, recalled that "the two main entertainments… were adultery and golf."[52] Some white single men who arrived in the post-war years sought sexual relations with African women, who were present in the mining towns in substantial numbers, but interracial sex became less common than it had been in the early colonial period.[53] Indeed, in various colonial settings the arrival of white women led to the establishment of firmer racial and sexual boundaries.[54]

The wide variety entertainment and leisure options did not enable a complete escape from work for two main reasons: the hierarchy of the mines and the unavoidable proximity of industry. The hierarchy of the mines mapped directly onto social life. O.B. Bennett, general manager at Rhokana from 1951 to 1961, was chairman of Rhokana Sailing and Boating club, the golf club, Diggers Rugby Club, Nkana Soccer Club, the swimming club, the motorcycle club, Nkana Flying Club and Nkana Pigeon Racing Club, while his wife chaired the Women's Institute.[55] Bennett chaired meetings, judged competitions, handed out awards at club prize evenings and was an unavoidable presence.

Moreover, for all their attractions, the Copperbelt towns were still mining towns. Workers' housing was located immediately adjacent to the mine and surface plants in all the Copperbelt towns, as Figure 8 shows for Nkana.[56] At Mufulira, the mine hooter sounded whenever fumes from the smelter engulfed the town, warning residents to go inside. An otherwise rosy account of Copperbelt life in *Geographical Magazine* noted that at Nkana "a swirl of sulphur dioxide-laden smoke mixed unpleasantly with chlorine from the pool."[57]

[PLACE FIGURE 7 HERE]

Mining Work and Masculinity

The racialised and gendered structure of the mining workforce meant that soaring earnings in the post-war period accrued primarily to white men. White mineworkers, moreover, intended to keep it that way. In the 1940s and 1950s, both white trade unions consistently sought to limit the role of women in the workplace, something else the Copperbelt had in common with other mining regions. This gendered division of labour cut across the racial division of labour. Few women, white or

[52] Shurmer-Smith, *Remnants of Empire*, 76.

[53] Hansen, *Distant Companions*, 139.

[54] Milner-Thornton, *Shadow of Empire*, 66.

[55] 'Mr O.B. Bennett, OBE', *Rhokana Review*, July 1956.

[56] Chibamba Jennifer Chansa, 'State. Mining Companies and Communities: A History of Environmental Pollution in Zambia (1964-present)' (PhD thesis, University of the Free State, 2020), 5-6.

[57] Jeremy Jeffries, 'Conversations on the Copperbelt'. *Geographical Magazine*, September 1956, 235.

African, worked on the mines and the underground workplace was, as Patrick Harries termed the mines on South African's Rand, "a world without women."[58]

In the early industrial era, "men and mining became conflated to give rise to a masculine work culture," and on the Copperbelt mining work was consciously typified as a man's job.[59] On his retirement from Mufulira in 1953, Joe Adams was lionised as the "iron man" who "must have broken a few million tons of ore" as a miner in northern England, Arizona, New Zealand, and the Copperbelt.[60] Similarly, a white miner interviewed about his job at Roan Antelope emphasised the "physical demands" and denied it was a "cushy number."[61] Skatie Fourie, a South African who worked underground for nine years at Rhokana, recalled a "very skinny" friend who applied to be a miner was told by the underground training school "you must get some beef on you because you're not strong enough to be a miner."[62] These descriptions reflect the observation of Carolyn Brown that mining incorporates several attributes that characterise adult manhood in many societies, including strength, physical endurance, willingness to face risks and danger and capacity for work.[63]

White mineworkers' masculinity was defined against other men, both African and white. As in many colonial settings, African men were infantilised as 'boys', especially in the workplace where even job titles diminished their role in productive work: 'hammer boy', 'timber boy', 'boss boy'. White managers too did not do 'real' productive work. "The bosses are not doing proper work," one white miner had complained to the Governor in 1942.[64] This kind of masculinity could be utilised in workplace disputes. Maybank once reportedly antagonised a mine manager by telling him "to get his collar and tie off and do a bit of work."[65]

Yet the most obvious feature of mining work was the exclusion of women. "Miners worked in an all-male world," as Matthew Basso observed of Montana's copper miners who, he argued, defined their masculinity through the exclusion of women incapable of handling the difficulties posed by underground work.[66] This was evident on the Copperbelt mines. In 1955, for instance, Ida

[58] Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997), 208.

[59] Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, 'Digging Women: Towards a New Agenda for Feminist Critiques of Mining', *Gender, Place & Culture* 19, 2 (2012): 197.

[60] 'Mufulira Roundabout', *Mufulira Magazine*, July 1953.

[61] 'It's My Job – Alex Perelensy', *Horizon*, December 1959.

[62] Interview with Skatie Fourie, 11 May 2014.

[63] Carolyn Brown, 'Mining', in *General Labour History of Africa: Workers, Employers and Governments, 20th-21st Centuries*, eds. by Stefano Bellucci and Andreas Eckert (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2019), 154-55.

[64] Interview given by Governor to a Deputation from the Nkana Branch of the NRMWU, 19 January 1942, NAZ SEC1/1387.

[65] Secret report on the Copper Belt, Rhodesia, NASA BTS 9/77/6A.

[66] Matthew Basso, *Meet Joe Copper: Masculinity and Race on Montana's World War II Home Front* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 24.

Delaney was forced out of her job at Nkana's Central Shaft "because the office of shaft clerk has been reclassified as a man's job," a good example of how the gendered division of work had to be constantly reproduced. Delaney had been doing the job for 13 years, so evidently did not find it unduly difficult, but on other shafts the job was done by male clerks.[67]

As the codification of shaft clerk as a 'man's job' suggests, the gendered division of labour had to be monitored and reinforced and was not a natural situation. During the Second World War, shortages of white male labour had meant that some women had moved into production roles and disrupted workplace gender norms. The NRMWU opposed this and unions did the same in other mining regions. In Montana's copper industry, one Frank Ayer, former manager at Roan Antelope, faced wildcat strikes by white mineworkers for trying to employ women to alleviate labour shortages.[68] By 1942, around 80 white women were employed manufacturing munitions and tank parts in the surface plants in Roan Antelope. The NRMWU negotiated an agreement that "women will only do simple repetitive work" with wages no less than any white male worker and only be employed "until such time as men capable of doing the work are available."[69] One female artisan was employed at Roan Antelope on mine work, and the complications this created required industry-wide negotiations over her conditions of employment.[70] These women workers were removed after the end of the war, as was common elsewhere in the region. White trade unions in Southern Rhodesia, for instance, were insistent that women's employment "was a temporary patriotic measure, not a fundamental change in their natural roles in society."[71]

The result was that women continued to be largely excluded from the workplace and especially from well-paid skilled work.[72] Only 251 white women and 112 African women worked in the copper industry in 1951. White women were mostly employed as nurses in the mine hospitals or as clerks.[73] This had altered slightly by 1956, when white female employment reached 499, and there were handful of white women employed as chemists and draughtsmen.[74] Many women who did work on the mines had secured employment because they had a male relative working there, adding to the sense that it was primarily a man's workplace. For instance, all six of the women in the typing

[67] 'Around Nkana', *Rhokana Review*, August 1955.

[68] Basso, *Meet Joe Copper*, 202.

[69] Agreement between the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union and the Rhokana Corporation Limited, July 13, 1944, NAZ MM 1/10/2.

[70] Minutes of Conciliation Meeting held on the 29th to 31st December 1941. NAZ SEC1/1357.

[71] Ginsburgh, *Class, Race and Whiteness*, 136. See also Kufakurinani, *Elasticity in Domesticity*, 74-86.

[72] Karen Hansen, White Women in a Changing World. Employment, voluntary work, and sex, in post-World War II Northern Rhodesia'. in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, eds. Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (Bloomington, In.: Indiana University Press, 1992), 247-268.

[73] Northern Rhodesia Government, *Report on the Census of Population 1951* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1954), 19, 66.

[74] Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, *Census of Population 1956* (Salisbury: Central Statistical Office, 1960), 99-100.

pool at Rhokana had moved to the Copperbelt because their husband, father or brother got a job at the mine, and five of them were married to mine employees.[75]

Moreover, even as female employment increased, the mines paid white women lower wages and white trade unions negotiated different salaries for male and female members. For instance, a small number of white men and women performed the same job as Hollerith operators – a machine for processing information stored on punched cards – but wages for male operators were almost twice as high.[76] Complaints from women workers about this were ignored.

Housing and Households

Even as the workforce expanded with the boom, the companies continued to house their entire workforce and embarked on a large-scale programme of house building in the post-war period. Married white employees were usually housed in detached bungalows surrounded by gardens, for which they paid monthly rents of between £2 and £5. Electricity and water were provided for free.[77] In 1951, the mine townships contained 2,676 detached houses, along with 1,446 flats and 47 boarding houses for single employees who ate in canteens or at the mine club.[78]

This housing reproduced the hierarchy of the mines, most obviously in the racial divide. Africans and whites continued to be housed in separate townships and in greatly different standards of housing. When new townships were constructed for Kalulushi Mine in 1952, £1,586,000 allocated to construct 500 houses for white workers, while £682,000 was allocated to construct 3,000 houses for African workers. The locations of the new townships at Kalulushi were also carefully selected by RST to minimise contact between the African and white workforces outside work.[79]

Housing and households, however, also reflected the gendered division of labour on the mines and the companies' views on family life. There was only one model for family life and the household: a nuclear family headed by a male breadwinner with a wife and children. Mine housing was constructed with this in mind. Accommodation was provided for families or for single men and women who were expected either to get married, and thus move into family accommodation, or remain single with no provision for living with extended family or other dependents. This helped shape migration patterns for whites, who could arrive on their own or with nuclear families. There were few extended families among the white population. Viv Patterson, who grew up on the Copperbelt in the 1950s, recalled that friends often stepped in to fulfil traditional family roles in the absence of extended family. Her father, she commented, must have completed a marathon walking

[75] 'Typing Pool', *Rhokana Review*, February 1955.

[76] Revision of Hollerith Department Salaries, 11 August 1954, ZCCM 12.7.9B.

[77] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Proposed 40-Hour Week*, 11.

[78] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Census of Population 1951*, 57.

[79] Albert Matongo, 'Urban Housing within a Colonial Political Economy', in *Zambia Land and Labour Studies, Vol. IV*, ed. M. Shimwayi Muntemba (Lusaka: University of Zambia, 1983), 62.

brides down the aisle.[80] Occasionally aunts, uncles or siblings migrated as well, but the general transience of the population usually meant that this situation often did not last long. Peter Hills' family had moved from Britain to the Copperbelt in the early 1950s after his uncle, who was a mine captain, had encouraged them to migrate, but this same uncle left for New Zealand shortly after they arrived.[81]

The gendered structure of the labour market and company policy encouraged marriage and made it difficult for white women to live independently. Since white women were restricted from the most lucrative jobs on the mine, they had to depend upon their husband's job, and mine jobs meant access to housing as well as wages. As noted above, even if women did work, women's wages were lower, and the cost of living was high. Some white women, however, sought to take advantage of this situation and specifically came to the Copperbelt to find male partners who worked on the mines and thereby raise their own standard of living. Doris Lessing shared a hotel room in Kitwe with a young female typist from Southern Rhodesia who was single and wanted to get married. She confided in Lessing that "some of these men here earn more than £200 a month. You don't catch me working after I am married."[82]

Almost all white households employed African men to cook, clean, maintain the garden and provide childcare. In 1951, the 4,785 white households in the Copperbelt towns employed 9,299 African domestic workers, an average of almost two per household.[83] Again, this was encouraged by the mining companies who constructed housing for white married employees with servants' quarters. This was all very affordable for white mineworkers. Average monthly wages for African domestic workers totalled only £2 8s in 1950, while average monthly earnings for white mine employees were £106 5s.[84] Access to cheap domestic labour had consequences for the social life of whites on the Copperbelt: freed of the need to perform many domestic tasks, they had more time. Money bought them time for leisure.

Little domestic work was performed by either white women or white men and only a small minority of whites went without servants. The family of Heather Walker, whose father was an artisan at Roan Antelope, could not afford domestic workers because they had nine children, and she noted that they knew several other white families without servants.[85] Alan Chattaway recalled that his mother felt uncomfortable employing African domestic workers as she herself had been a domestic worker in Britain, so she did the cooking and cleaning in the house.[86]

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[80] Interview with Viv Patterson, 13 April 2018.

[81] Interview with Peter Hills, 1 September 2014

[82] Lessing, *Going Home*, 271.

[83] Northern Rhodesia Government, *Census of Population 1951*, 25, 67.

[84] Northern Rhodesia Government, *Census of Population 1951*, 67.

[85] Interview with Heather Walker, 13 July 2013.

[86] Interview with Alan Chattaway,4 November 2013.

Despite the comforts offered to white workers with subsidised housing and African domestic workers, the mining towns were still company towns. The companies owned the houses and almost everything in them. Houses was comfortable and subsidised, but white employees lived in them with permission from their employers. In 1954, the NRMWU and MOSSA Mufulira branches protested after three employees were moved out of their flats to make way for more senior employees. Mine management refused to even discuss the matter and "reminded the Staff Association and the Union that this matter was really none of their business. We were the landlords" and therefore could "transfer an employee's place of residence at any time."[87]

Company control did not go uncontested. Many white mineworkers added to their household goods by stealing tools and supplies from the mines, as was common at mines elsewhere, and by appropriating company resources for their own use.[88] Robin Cumming recalled that whenever he broke his bike as a child, his father would take the bike into work and fix it with parts and tools from the mine.[89] In 1946, an artisan at Roan Antelope had upbraided his colleagues for their ungratefulness:

> Has the Mine ever moaned about that wheelbarrow 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?[90]

Stabilising the White Workforce

Household formation was shaped and encouraged by company policy. It has long been recognised that this was the case for the African workforce. The companies' labour 'stabilisation' policy whereby the mines sought to replace a migrant labour system with a semi-permanent urban workforce who would remain on the mine for longer and acquire a greater level of skill has been discussed in detail in the existing literature.[91] The mines concentrated on recruiting married African men and encouraging the formation of families on the assumption that married workers would remain at the mine for longer, and this policy was successful. The proportion of married African workers rose on all mines during the 1930s and 1940s and annual African labour turnover declined markedly from 70.9% in 1949 to 9.3% in 1963.[92]

A similar policy was adopted towards the white workforce. This was underpinned by the same assumptions that married employees would remain at the mine for longer and it would reduce costs of recruitment and calm industrial unrest. In 1946, RST suggested focusing their white labour

[87] Notes on a meeting with the Mufulira branches of the Mine Workers Union and Staff Association, 6 January 1954. ZCCM 13.3.4C.

[88] For an example of this practice in Butte, Montana, see Finn, *Tracing the Veins*, 124.

[89] Interview with Neville Searle and Robin Cumming, 24 September 2013.

[90] Letter from A.B. Hayward, 17 August 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[91] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 34-7, 53, 88-94, 117-21. Butler, *Copper Empire*, 47-51, 78-82, 227.

[92] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 78, 97; Daniel, *Africanization, Nationalization and Inequality*, 72.

recruitment on married men, who "having invested a considerable amount of money in establishing their families there… will therefore be interested in establishing stability" and remain at the mine for longer.[93] The companies hoped that a white workforce composed of married men who would be more stable, in the sense of remaining at the mine for longer and being less willing to strike. Roan Antelope's general manager concluded that the problem with industrial relations was "the bulk of [white] employees look on their sojourn here as a 'temporary' stay… there is almost a complete lack of what might be called civic pride, community interest and of public spiritedness."[94] New training schemes were also brought in for white male school leavers, often the sons of employees, and these, the Chamber of Mines claimed, "played a part in stabilising the European population of the area."[95] The high proportion of married white workers suggest that stabilisation measures were implemented. Rhokana's 1,891-strong white workforce in 1954 comprised of 1,408 married men and 60 married women, and only 353 single men and 70 single women.[96]

However, stabilisation efforts were unsuccessful. Annual turnover of white labour at Roan Antelope, for instance, fell from 28.4% in 1950 to 12.2% in 1955, but thereafter rose again sharply. In 1955, only 263 of the 1,612 white workers at Roan Antelope had been working at the mine ten years earlier.[97] Statistics from Roan Antelope's underground training school show that 778 white men were trained there between 1950 and 1958 but by 1958 only 226 were still working at the mine.[98] Figures on the other mines were similar.

One incident in the Mufulira smelter provides a good illustration of the continued transience of the white workforce. In March 1954, the shop steward in the smelter, J.H. Goodspeed, was placed on what he considered a hazardous job driving a crane only a few weeks after he had recovered from an industrial accident, and the NRMWU claimed their shop stewards were being victimised. Mine manager Frank Buch, who had been at the mine since the late 1930s, declared he was sick of such unsubstantiated statements and produced a revealing list of all the shop stewards in the smelter since 1940 and what had happened to them. The first shop steward worked for two years before resigning, the second lasted a year before doing the same, the third had two stints in the smelter before being sacked for striking, the fourth was also employed twice with an 18-month interval before he resigned to join a local bricklaying firm, the fifth had been employed on the mine on three separate occasions and spent 16 months as a shop steward before leaving for Canada and the sixth was Goodspeed.[99] As if to underscore the point, Goodspeed was himself sacked two

[93] H.R. Finn to General Manager, Roan Antelope, 19 December 1946, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[94] J. Thomson to Secretary, Selection Trust London, 28 August 1948, ZCCM 13.3.4C

[95] Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, *Year Book 1956*, 30.

[96] 'Around Nkana', *Rhokana Review*, November 1954.

[97] Roan Antelope Copper Mines, Employees' Length of Service Return, 8 January 1957, ZCCM 16.2.7E.

[98] Statistical Survey of Underground Trainees 1950-1958, ZCCM 12.7.9B.

[99] Notes on a meeting with the Mufulira NRMWU branch, 9 March 1954, ZCCM 13.3.4C.

months later for disobeying direct orders and threatening the smelter foreman, an incident especially serious in Buch's eyes because African workers witnessed Goodspeed's actions.[100]

As the above illustrates, the transience of the white workforce was rooted in the agency of white workers, who did not want to remain at the mines for a long period, and in corporate policies that made most white workers relatively easy to get rid of. Indeed, many white workers left the mines because they got sacked for insubordination and they could be sacked with 24 hours' notice. Yet, most white workers favoured these contracts. It is notable that, despite their power on the mines, white workers never pushed for more stable contracts because they did not intend to stay on the Copperbelt and wanted to leave whenever they decided to. Only ten of the fifty men Edwin Munger, an American geographer, interviewed at the height of the boom intended to stay. As Nick van Niekirk, a rockbreaker and union official, put it, "I'll always be a South African and I don't mind saying I'm not staying in this bloody country longer than I can help."[101]

The mine's white employees generally rejected any push to stabilise them on the Copperbelt. In 1958, white employees were given the option to purchase their comfortable houses at a below-cost price. The mining companies sought to divest from non-mining activities, following a wider trend in the mining industry of companies selling off company towns. Kennecott Copper sold all their towns in 1955 and the American Metal Company, parent company of RST, sold Climax, Colorado in 1960.[102] The problem for RAA and RST is that their white employees displayed almost zero interest in home ownership. Only around 250 took advantage of the scheme.[103] At Roan Antelope, the stated reason why most refused was that "in the not too far future Roan will either be worked out or become uneconomical to run."[104] In other words, once the mine was gone, there would be nothing for them on the Copperbelt and no reason to stay. Renting rather than owning houses assisted mobility. As one artisan foreman, who had been at the mines for ten years, explained: "Packing up is the easiest thing on earth. Except for a few things which you can sell in half an hour, not a scrap of furniture belongs to you."[105]

High wages also encouraged international mobility, rather than provided an incentive to stay. Some whites sought to stay at the mines only long enough to save money to buy a small business like a pub, a hotel, or a farm, usually in Britain or South Africa. In a sense, the mines represented a kind of safety net for white workers, who could resign from the mines to try their hand at other occupations safe in the knowledge that they could likely get another well-paying job on the mines in future if it did not go well. Albert Van Rensburg, for instance, spent nine years working as a timberman before resigning to establish a farm in 1952. When the farm failed in 1957, he returned

[100] Notes on a meeting held with the Mufulira NRMWU branch executive, 27 May 1954, ZCCM 13.3.4C.

[101] Munger, *African Field Notes*, 350-53.

[102] James B. Allen, *The Company Town in the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 42, 74.

[103] Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mine Employees Part I*, 52

[104] Report on meeting between Roan branch secretary and Mr C.I. Lewis, 21 February 1959, NAZ MLSS1/26/170.

[105] Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mining Employees Part I*, 48.

to his old occupation on the Copperbelt.[106] Similarly, Neil Glyn's father worked as an electrician at Roan Antelope for five years in the 1940s, returned to Britain for a short time, then moved back to Northern Rhodesia to establish a farm, and when this failed he resumed work as an electrician at Mufulira in the early 1950s.[107]

The gendered division of labour played an important role in mobility. The fact that housing was tied to employment, and that the mines largely employed men, usually gave white men a decisive say in decisions about moving or staying. Heather Hart's husband arrived home one day and announced that he was fed-up with shift work, so he had quit. She recalled she was "absolutely horrified" as she had been "dragged half-way round the world" to get to Chingola, but the decision had been made for her and they packed up and left.[108] When Frank Maybank and his family left Northern Rhodesia, on which more below, he made the decision about when they would leave and where they would go. Although his wife was South African, they had family in South Africa and South Africa was much closer, he wanted to move to Australia, and that is where the family went.[109]

There was much about Copperbelt life that made it attractive for whites and, intuitively, it might be thought that this would encourage people to stay. Yet many of the factors that encouraged whites to move to the Copperbelt – access to well-paying jobs and housing – also made it easy to leave by limiting the amount of fixed property whites owned and giving them the financial resources to move. The structure of the white workforce in terms of employment contracts and the gendered division of labour also facilitated this mobility. Most white men were on the Copperbelt to work, and once they had made enough money, or had enough of the mines, or got sacked, they left.

Recruitment and Training

Despite the failure of stabilisation efforts, the active recruitment of white workers had ceased by the 1950s. High wages, bonuses and general affluence were their own advert to potential recruits. As one contemporary company publication put it, "a mere list of the amenities must read like a guide-book or even an advertisement" for the mining towns.[110] Articles on the high earnings and lavish lifestyle of white Copperbelt residents also appeared periodically in the South Africa press.[111]

Most whites who arrived in this period heard about job opportunities and the fabulous conditions through word of mouth, via friends and relatives or from previous employees. Consistently high rates of turnover among the white workforce meant that there were lots of widely

[106] 'Personality – miner for 25 years', *Nchanga Weekly*, 5 October 1962.

[107] Interview with Neil Glynn, 10 July 2013.

[108] Heather Mary Hart, *Gran's Story*, 3.

[109] Interview with Cheryl Mather and Trevor Maybank, 9 September 2017.

[110] Kenneth Bradley, *Copper Venture: The Discovery and Development of Roan Antelope and Mufulira* (London: Mufulira Copper Mines, 1952), 22.

[111] 'Copper bonus sets the pace', *Cape Argus*, 19 November 1955.

dispersed former Copperbelt employees. John Butler, who came to Kalulushi as a chemist in 1957, first heard about life on the Copperbelt while working at a nuclear power station in England from his boss, who had previously been a chemist at Mufulira, then had the message reiterated in his next job in a metallurgical plant, where one of his colleagues had worked underground at Roan Antelope.[112]

Both companies did engage in advertising of a sort though. In 1950, Rhokana's assistant manager O.B. Bennett 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 copper mines he visited.[113] Bennett was evidently impressed by the publications he collected, as the following year he established a publication for white employees: the *Rhokana Review*. The other Copperbelt mines soon followed suit with their own publications. These publications were largely about social life in the mining towns, with lots of photographs, and were distributed widely. Copies of the *Rhokana Review* were sent to Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States, and turned up in all sorts of unlikely places. One ex-miner came across a copy in a farmhouse while traveling across Ireland, while another man applied for a job at Rhokana after picking up a copy at a truck-stop on the Alaska Highway.[114]

Many new arrivals in the post-war period had some industrial experience but little or no mining experience. Jimmy Jamieson, for instance, had been in the army then worked as a firefighter in Scotland until he moved to Mufulira in 1952, where he became a miner, while Bertrum Clifton had been a wood machinist for South Africa Railways before moving to Kitwe in 1954. Both men accumulated mining experience entirely on the Copperbelt and eventually became mine captains.[115] White underground workers who arrived in the 1930s and 1940s were given no training, as their employers assumed their "valuable experience" in "the older mining centres of the world" was sufficient. Some miners did bring their sons to work to train them and paid them from their own wages, as was common practice elsewhere, but there were no official training schemes. Rapid growth in the mining industry caused a shortage of experienced miners by the late 1940s, and the mines consequently had to create training programmes for white workers. Roan Antelope established one in 1950 "to teach inexperienced men the fundamentals of safe efficient underground work" and have them "do the jobs themselves which one day they will supervise Africans doing," as they did not already know how to do these jobs.[116] Similarly, Rhokana began its own apprenticeship scheme in 1946 to train white artisans.

[112] 'Profile – John Butler', *Horizon*, February 1960.

[113] Report by O.B. Bennett on his visit to Mining Properties in Canada and the United States, 1 May-10 June 1950, ZCCM 3.8.1C.

[114] 'Dublin to Nkana by Bicycle', *Rhokana Review*, March 1954. 'Editorial', *Rhokana Review*, December 1962.

[115] Interview with Viv Patterson, 14 April 2018. Interview with John Clifton, 4 October 2013.

[116] History of the underground training school, 2 January 1954, ZCCM 12.7.9B.

Accident reports from this period suggest that white workers with less underground experience were being employed.[117] In 1953, a white miner at Roan Antelope was severely injured when he lit a charge and, mistaking another nearby blast for his own, returned to the site just as his charge exploded.[118] A few months later at the same mine, a white miner fell into a chute above the haulage level and was buried alive. The man shouted to his African crew to get him out by opening the chute, but a shift boss arrived in time to overrule him and ordered the crew to dig him out instead. Opening the chute would have caused the miner to fall into the haulage level below along with the loose rock, almost certainly killing him.[119]

Some new arrivals had little skill and occupied their jobs because they were regarded as white and the companies therefore thought they could be relied upon to control African workers. A case that arose at Mufulira in 1951 is a good illustration of this, and of the elastic boundaries of whiteness discussed in the previous chapter. Here, Cecil Cartsens – a shop steward and miner who had worked in South Africa and Australia – was called upon to defend a handyman, Lagnado, who had been sacked by Mufulira for being almost comically bad at his job. The mine manager Frank Buch explained that Lagnado had been sacked because he had disconnected the entire mine township from the telephone system by accidentally damaging an underground cable that he had been instructed to find. Prior to this, he had told African workers to dig a trench through a tarmac road instead of under it, as he was supposed to. The mine, noted Buch, had no use for Lagnado unless he could 'handle' African workers. Carstens defended Lagnado by claiming he "tried hard but he was just incompetent and completely unable to handle Africans and had a poor grasp of English."[120] Despite his incompetence and non-Anglophone origins, the NRMWU's belief in racialised collective action meant that the union supported him and successfully pressed for him to be rehired. Lagnado was then trained to be an underground pumpman, a job which did not involve supervising Africans.

Increasingly, the white mineworkers arriving on the Copperbelt did not have specialised mining or industrial skills. In a reversal of what happened in the 1930s, many of these white workers were trained on the Copperbelt mines and then took these skills elsewhere. An analysis of all the places listed for arriving and departing white employees in the monthly *Mufulira Magazine* during 1953 reveals that the most common destination for white workers leaving was Canada (26% of all departures) and that people also left for South Africa, Britain, Southern Rhodesia, Australia, New Zealand, and Sierra Leone.[121] White mineworkers therefore relied more on the colour bar to protect

[117] However, care is needed with these reports as mine officials generally blamed the injured party in accidents to detract blame from the companies.

[118] Secretary, Roan Antelope to Secretary, Chamber of Mines, 26 December 1953, ZCCM 4.4.5G.

[119] Secretary, Roan Antelope to Secretary, Chamber of Mines, 9 March 1954, ZCCM 4.4.5G.

[120] Notes of a meeting with Mufulira NRMWU branch executive, 25 June 1951, ZCCM 13.3.4C.

[121] South Africa was the most common place whites arrived from. *Mufulira Magazine*, January – December 1953.

their position, as well as to access training. This position was soon contested and disrupted by the emergence of the AMWU.

Formation of the African Mine Workers Union

Collective action and efforts at collective organisation by African mineworkers began almost as soon as the first drill holes were sunk. The first recorded first on the Copperbelt appears to have taken place in September 1927 when several hundred African workers at Roan Antelope struck over working conditions.[122] Among the African workforce were men with experience of mass organisations and industrial disputes elsewhere in Southern Africa. Henry Chibangwa, a miner at Mufulira, had been involved in the 1927 strike at Shamva Mine in Southern Rhodesia and attempted to organise a strike at Mufulira in 1933, while Joseph Kazembe, a clerk at Roan Antelope, had been involved in the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union in South Africa and had attempted to form a branch of that union in Livingstone.[123] Kazembe was a leader in the 1935 strike by African miners and was among the crowd on the football field in Luanshya when police opened fire on strikers.[124]

High labour turnover among the African workforce and violent repression of strikes in 1935 and 1940 inhibited the formation of collective organisations among the African workforce. The only formal structures of representation were councils of tribal elders formed by mine management and these did little to voice grievances and instead largely sought to bolster their own authority among different ethnic groups on the mine.[125] In any case, tribal representatives could only meet with the compound manager, not the mine management.

Greater state intervention into the copper industry during the Second World War and changing colonial policy towards African development took the decision on collective representation for African workers out of the hands of the mining companies. The 1940 strike and agitation by boss boys' committees convinced the British Government that existing forms of representation were insufficient. In 1947, the Colonial Office sent a Scottish trade union official William Comrie to Northern Rhodesia to help establish African trade unions. Comrie was tasked with establishing 'responsible' trade unions that would operate as non-political bodies negotiating over wages and conditions without taking industrial action.[126] Both companies tried to form works' committees to forestall the emergence of African trade unions, as they had tried to do for white workers ten years earlier, but Comrie was welcomed by African mineworkers. Within a few months, a union had been formed by African mineworkers at Nkana. The colonial state gave this union a

[122] John Garber Phillips, 'Roan Antelope: Big Business in Central Africa 1890-1953' (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2000), 170-71.

[123] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 70; Meeblo, *African Proletarians*, 52-53.

[124] Ian Henderson, 'Labour and Politics in Northern Rhodesia, 1900-53: A study in the limits of colonial power' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1972), 150.

[125] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 46.

[126] Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, 33.

legal basis by passing legislation that granted African and white trade unions equal bargaining rights, in stark contrast to other states in Southern Africa.[127]

Assistance to form African trade unions became official policy across Britain's African colonies, but local factors on the Copperbelt made it more urgent there, namely threats by the NRMWU that it would form branches for African mineworkers.[128] Both companies regarded this with dread, and on this the colonial state was in complete agreement. When a union representative first outlined a scheme to form an African branch of the NRMWU in 1943, he was immediately informed by the Secretary of Native Affairs that anyone attempting to do so would be excluded from the African township, and that the union members could only proceed with permission from government.[129] Both colonial officials and the mine management subsequently warned African mineworkers to distrust entreaties from white mineworkers.[130]

Some white mineworkers thought they could bolster their own position on the mines by organising African branches that would be under the control of the NRMWU. Others were influenced by communist ideas. Yet the suggestion to organise African unions was controversial within the NRMWU. Dave Welensky, union vice-president and Roy Welensky's brother, stated openly in 1945 that he had "no desire to work side by side with him [Africans] as an equal, nor live next to him" because "his civilization is a thousand years behind my own."[131] Brian Goodwin responded by stressing that unity "was essential in the Working Class struggle" and offered a pointed analogy to explain why integration at work did not 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 not have to associate with him any more than is absolutely necessary.[132]

Goodwin was at the forefront of efforts to organise African branches. Jane Parpart highlights Goodwin's role and argued that there was a brief moment when it was possible that a union encompassing black and white mineworkers could have emerged, but "government and company officials blocked a multi-racial union."[133] The issue arose again in 1947 when several NRMWU

[127] Andrew Roberts, 'Northern Rhodesia: The Post-War Background, 1945-53', in *Living at the End of Empire: politics and society in late colonial Zambia*, eds. Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacoma Macola (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 21-22.

[128] Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, 87,

[129] Notes on an Interview with the Secretary for Native Affairs, 13 September 1943, SEC1/1351, NAZ.

[130] Colonial officials were instructed to inform African workers that "their interests and those of European Mineworkers are different." Acting Governor to Colonial Secretary, 28 November 1947, TNA CO 795/145/2.

[131] 'Report of a meeting at Broken Hill', *Northern News*, 10 May 1945.

[132] Letter from Brian Goodwin, *Northern News*, 10 May 1945.

[133] Jane Parpart, 'Class Consciousness among the Zambian Copper Miners, 1950-1968', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 21, 1 (1987): 58.

branches passed motions calling for the formation of African branches "immediately."[134] Some NRMWU members distributed leaflets on trade unionism that invited African workers who wanted to join the NRMWU to either come to the union offices or to speak to Brian Goodwin.[135] Some African workers were open to these ideas and nascent branches were formed by boss boys and clerks at Nkana and Roan Antelope.[136]

Goodwin was relatively progressive and influenced by the communist trade unionists he met through the WFTU. The renewed push to form African trade unions occurred after Goodwin had attended the WFTU meeting in Prague in June 1947. However, his vision for a multi-racial union was that African branches would remain subordinate to a white leadership. African mineworkers were aware of this and rejected it. This, rather than opposition from the companies or colonial state, sank the initiative. In January 1948, Goodwin delivered an extraordinary and incendiary speech to African mineworkers in Kitwe. He denounced William Comrie for forming a 'yellow' union and urged African workers to fight "against the Government and the Chamber of Mines," as well as against compound managers, mine captains and shift bosses, all of whom "work against the Africans." He ended by inviting audience members to his home to learn about trade unions and the WFTU. His audience, however, was unconvinced, and some accused Goodwin of lying to them.[137]

White mineworkers exhibited a profound naivety about the agency of Africans and did not appreciate that African workers followed their debates. In 1945, Goodwin had tried to sell the idea of an African union to white workers by pointing out that "everybody knows the African can take some of our jobs," so the NRMWU should push for equal pay for Africans and then employers would "hire the most efficient of the two who obviously is the European."[138] Following the meeting in Kitwe in 1948, these remarks were quoted back to Goodwin by African mineworkers. Godwin Lewanika, a clerk at Nkana and later a prominent African trade unionist, wrote to the *Northern News* using these quotes to explain why African mineworkers "are not prepared to federate or amalgamate with the NRMWU."[139] Later that year, when delegates from Chingola brought a motion to the African Provincial Council in support of Goodwin and his comments on equal pay, Ashton Kabalika, who appears to have been the only delegate who worked on the mines, referenced the same quote from Goodwin. Kabalika concluded the slogan was "only a trick" and the motion failed.[140]

African mineworkers at Nkana encouraged workers at other mines to form independent unions and in March 1949 the unions at Mufulira, Nchanga, Nkana and Roan Antelope united to

[134] 'Africans' trade union in N. Rhodesia', *Rhodesia Herald*, 20 November 1947.

[135] The leaflet gave details on where Goodwin worked. Leaflet: To become a member of the trade union, NAZ SEC1/1417.

[136] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 110-11, 199.

[137] Report on a meeting of Africans addressed by Mr Goodwin in the Wusakili Welfare Centre, Kitwe, 31 January 1948, NAZ SEC1/1417.

[138] Letter from Brian Goodwin, *Northern News*, 10 May 1945.

[139] Letter from Godwin Lewanika, *Northern News*, 10 March 1948.

[140] Minutes of the African Provincial Council, 8-9 October 1945, NAZ SEC1/1351.

form the AMWU, a body with around 19,000 members that from the outset was much larger than the NRMWU and MOSSA combined.[141] The size and organisational reach of the AMWU meant it could not be ignored. In 1948, Maybank could inform a government commission that "we [the NRMWU] represent the majority of the population," but the view that it was only whites who counted on the Copperbelt was rendered untenable by the collective organisation of African mineworkers.[142] Subsequent commissions included representatives of African labour.

Henry Meebelo concluded that the NRMWU's efforts to organise African workers were "half-hearted and not-so-well-meaning."[143] It is difficult not to concur with this, but the real factors preventing collaboration between the two unions was the racist structure of the mining industry rather than individual attitudes of white trade unionists. Almost all white mineworkers had direct authority over African mineworkers. Grievances of African mineworkers often arose from everyday events in the workplace and were aimed at contesting this authority and the abuses of white mineworkers. In March 1954, for instance, African mineworkers went on strike at Roan Antelope demanding the dismissal of an abusive white miner. Hortense Powdermaker recorded conversations between a group of strikers, one of whom, Peter Mwenda, argued that:

> there cannot be proper relations between the European and African trade unions, because those people who ill-treat us are in the European Trade Union. There can be no good relations when the Europeans who are our bosses maltreat us at work.[144]

However, one aspect worth highlighting is the subdued reaction by the Copperbelt's white mineworkers to the emergence of African trade unions and strikes by African workers. Comparison here is instructive. During a railway workers' strike in September 1945, armed white residents in Douala, Cameroon massacred African demonstrators and attempted to assassinate trade union leaders.[145] In South Africa, the leadership of the white labour movement supported the violent repression of the 1946 African mineworkers' strike, repression that left 12 strikers dead, over 1,000 injured and lead to the collapse of the newly established African union.[146] On the Copperbelt, African unions and strikes were quickly accepted as a normal and unavoidable part of industrial relations. The lack of reaction in white society to Goodwin's speech encouraging Africans to fight against the mining companies is also telling. If Goodwin, who was South African, had delivered that

[141] Berger, *Labour, Race and Colonial Rule,* 92.

[142] Testimony of Frank Maybank, Closed Township Commission, 1 April 1948, NAZ ZP 18/1.

[143] Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, 217.

[144] Powdermaker, *Copper Town*, 144.

[145] Richard Joseph, 'Settlers, Strikers and Sans-Travail: The Douala Riots of September 1945', *The Journal of African History* 15 (1974): 681.

[146] Jack Simons and Ray Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 578.

same speech in South Africa urging Africans to fight the government there would have been uproar in white society, and he would almost certainly have been prosecuted.[147]

The Central African Federation

Multi-racial co-operation, even the kind envisaged by Goodwin where whites retained the upper hand, was ruled out by a firm shift to the right in white society. The kind of radicalism that animated politics among whites on the Copperbelt in the 1940s dissipated quickly towards the end of that decade, as it ebbed away across Southern Africa's white societies. The onset of Cold War rivalries meant that sympathy among with the Soviet Union disappeared and, in the aftermath of the devastating conflict, Britain's control over its empire seemed less secure. The prevailing political issue became the need to secure firmer white political control over the region and symptomatic of this was the defeat of Goodwin in the 1948 territorial elections by Rex L'Ange, a mine official who advocated "segregation for all time of Africans and Europeans."[148] Elected alongside L'Ange was Albert Davies, a former Rand miner who was chair of the Roan NRMWU branch. Davies was clear about his political priorities: "The European community should be allowed to exert a greater influence in shaping their own destiny," which was ultimately a "Federation of British States in South Africa."[149]

White politicians from Northern and Southern Rhodesia had pressed consistently for amalgamation and had been consistently rebuffed by the British Government. Welensky emerged as the key figure in this campaign. Even though the party he had led, the Northern Rhodesia Labour Party, had disintegrated, his wartime-stint as Director for Manpower had made him a prominent figure in local white politics. By 1948, Welensky had realised that the British Government would not accept amalgamation and switched to advocating for a federation of British colonies, in the hope that this would be more palatable. His timing was astute. The surprise electoral victory of the National Party in South Africa in May 1948 caused great anxieties in the British Government about the threat that South Africa now posed to British control over the region. Settler politicians exploited this and openly hinted at rebellion unless concessions were made to the region's white population and the perceived need to appease white settlers became an important motivation for British policy.[150]

The idea of federating Britain's territories in the region was now rhetorically posed as a kind of 'middle way' between apartheid and African-majority rule. Roy Welensky deliberately played upon this, portraying Federation as a multi-racial partnership whose opponents were "The African extremist [who] sees in it the death of his prospects of settling up a purely African state, and his

[147] White activists who supported that 1946 African mineworkers strike on the Rand were prosecuted.

[148] 'Segregation Policy Advocated', *Northern News*, 5 August 1948.

[149] 'Davies States His Aims', *Northern News*, 29 July 1948.

[150] Philip Murphy, "Government by Blackmail': The Origins of the Central African Federation Reconsidered', in *The British Empire in the 1950s: Retreat or Revival?* ed. Martin Lynn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 53-76.

European counterpart… since it rules out apartheid."[151] Supporters in Britain, which included many in the Labour Party, believed that the Federation would develop into a Dominion based on racial partnership, which became the official ideology of the Federation. [152] Dominion status would have placed the Federation on an equal footing within the Commonwealth with Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa. Settler politicians too saw Federation as a stepping-stone towards Dominion status and independence under white minority rule but had a different conception of 'partnership'.[153] This was best expressed in the infamous public statement by Southern Rhodesia's Prime Minister Geoffrey Huggins defining partnership as being between a horse and a rider.[154] Indeed, partnership meant little in practice. The colour bar continued on the copper mines and in the mining towns.

Most white mineworkers welcomed the formation of the Central African Federation in 1953, though a correspondent for *The Times* noted that most whites were "not interested in constitutional niceties… [and] are influenced most by such considerations as whether their income tax will go up."[155] Many thought that the Federation would help secure their dominance over the numerically much larger African population, especially as they detected signs that the British Government's resolve in this regard was wavering. In 1951, NRMWU officials at Roan Antelope had called for the union to collaborate with other organisations to "establish mutual support in protecting European interests in Northern Rhodesia." This was necessary because 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 likely reference to the victory of Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party in Gold Coast (Ghana) earlier that month.[156]

The political expression of class politics largely disappeared. Welensky formed a Federal Party – later the United Federal Party (UFP) – to represent general white interests and won a resounding victory at the first Federal elections.[157] In many parts of the world, the organised labour movement has been a conduit into politics and the same was true in Northern Rhodesia. Roy Welensky, who became Prime Minister of the Federation in 1956, established his political career through his position in the RRWU and chaired the union's Broken Hill branch for 20 years. White trade unionists on the mines conspicuously failed to follow his example, though in theory the Copperbelt's bloc of unionised white mineworkers could have provided a similar powerbase for an ambitious would-be politician. The fact that this did not occur is telling and illustrates that few

[151] Roy Welensky, 'Towards Federation in Central Africa', *Foreign Affairs* 31, 1 (1952): 143.

[152] Bill Schwarz, *Memories of Empire, Volume I: The White Man's World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 344.

[153] Andrew Cohen, *The Politics and Economics and Decolonization in Africa: The Failed Experiment of the Central African Federation* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 5.

[154] Enoch Dumbutshena, *Zimbabwe Tragedy* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975), 51.

[155] 'Labour on the Copperbelt', *The Times*, 11 February 1953.

[156] Proposal that an executive council meeting be called of all unions and associations, 19 February 1951, ZCCM 12.2.1B.

[157] 'Seven out of Eight Seats in Territory Won by Federals', *Northern News*, 17 December 1953.

white mineworkers and their leaders had ambitions within the territory. Even if they had, it is not clear that other white workers would support them. The one collective foray of the white labour movement into politics was a total failure. In the 1954 territorial elections, the NRMWU and MOSSA jointly sponsored candidates in the five Copperbelt constituencies, including MOSSA President George Crane, and concentrated their campaign on opposition to African advancement. All five candidates were defeated on a low turnout.[158]

The clearest indication of the changing times came in July 1953 when the NRMWU leadership unanimously agreed to remove Frank Maybank as general secretary.[159] Large majorities at NRMWU meetings across the Copperbelt subsequently endorsed this decision. Maybank was by far the longest-serving general secretary of the NRMWU (see Table 1.2) but he was increasingly out of step with the politics and priorities of union members. In 1948, Maybank could confidently assert to a government commission that his views "are the views of the Mine Workers' Union whom I represent."[160] By 1953, he was so at odds with white public opinion that rumours swirled that he had been offered a job with the AMWU, which he strenuously denied. Turnover and the number of new arrivals meant that relatively few union members had personal memories of Maybank's role in the struggles of the 1940s, and he was better known for stunts like returning the Coronation Medal sent to him because "Australian union and labour representatives do not accept such things."[161] In contrast, most whites on the Copperbelt greeted Elizabeth II's coronation with enthusiasm, and the NRMWU president Alec Stevens presided over the coronation celebrations in Mufulira.[162]

Infighting in the NRMWU meant that it took almost two years to appoint Maybank's replacement. 42 people applied for the job – reportedly including exiled South African trade unionist Solly Sachs – and, eventually, Ben Petersen was confirmed by a vote of the union's branches.[163] Petersen was an odd choice in many ways. He had been a restaurant manager in Port Elizabeth, South Africa before he arrived in Chingola around 1953, which gave him the kind of administrative experience that many of his counterparts in the NRMWU lacked. There is no record of his involvement in the labour movement in South Africa, but the Copperbelt mines were a closed shop so he had to join the NRMWU when he started at Nchanga Mine in 1954. Since he had no prior experience in the mining industry, he was put in charge of a maintenance gang of African workers who carried out repairs in the township, a job at the bottom of the hierarchy of the white workforce and one of the lowest paid. This stint on the lower rungs of the white workforce may help explain why he took a harder line on African advancement, on which more below.

[158] 'Legislative Council election results', *Livingstone Mail,* 23 February 1954.

[159] 'Mines' Union Executive Decision on Maybank, *Northern News*, 25 July 1953.

[160] Testimony of Frank Maybank, 1 April 1948. Verbatim Record of Evidence, Closed Township Commission, NAZ ZP 18/1.

[161] Frank Maybank, *The Story of the Life of a Man*. Unpublished notes in author's possession.

[162] 'Mufulira rejoices as Elizabeth is crowned', *Mufulira Magazine*, July 1953.

[163] 'Petersen elected new general secretary', *Northern News*, 14 May 1955.

Relations between the unions

The rightward shift in white society shaped relations between the African and white mineworkers' unions, which were at best uneasy. Sporadic instances of collaboration between the two unions gave way to hostility over the 1950s. In 1950, for instance, the two unions held a joint meeting over a proposed shorter working week after the AMWU announced that it would "support any steps taken by the European Union to achieve this principle."[164] The NRMWU had begun pressing for a 40-hour because, as one representative explained, "a forty-hour week was being introduced throughout the world," so the Copperbelt should follow suit.[165] Evidence was duly presented by NRMWU officials on the introduction of a 40-hour week for miners in Britain, the United States and New Zealand, and for all industrial workers in Australia.[166] There were, however, no joint actions taken by the African and white mineworkers' unions to achieve a 40-hour week. Agitation for a shorter working week resulted in an enquiry headed by the British economist D.T. Jack, who regularly acted as an arbiter in industrial disputes in Britain, which rejected the case for a shorter working week.[167]

More significantly, the NRMWU offered "to render all necessary assistance" to the AMWU at the arbitration proceedings following a three-week strike by African workers in October 1952.[168] The outcome of these proceedings – the Guillebaud Award – was a major pay increase for African mineworkers.[169] The NRMWU also indirectly inspired the African workforce, both in its militant strategy and with what they had achieved for white workers. One of the first demands of the AMWU was a bonus scheme identical to the copper bonus that white workers got.[170] This not only applied to wage demands. When Mufulira management refused to allow the new AMWU branch an office on mine property, AMWU branch officials pointedly noted the NRMWU had one.[171]

However, relations soured as African trade unionists disrupted the position that the NRMWU had established for itself as the de-facto representative of the region's working class in the eyes of trade unionists elsewhere. Britain's NUM sent a delegation to the Copperbelt in 1950 at the invitation of the NRMWU, who took them on a tour of union branches and picked up their substantial bar bill. The NUM returned the favour in 1951 and invited Dave Welensky to Britain, where he attended NUM rallies, met leading Labour Party politicians including Clement Attlee, and spent time investigating "the homes and working conditions of my fellow miners."[172] White trade

[164] Selection Trust London to Chamber of Mines, 10 January 1950, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[165] A.W. Goodbody to Chamber of Mines, 23 June 1949, ZCCM 16.2.5B.

[166] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Proposed 40-hour Week*, 16.

[167] *Ibid.*

[168] 'African miners' demands', *The Times*, 8 January 1953.

[169] Robert Baldwin, *Economic Development*, 98.

[170] A.L. Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), 93.

[171] Labour Officer, Mufulira to Commissioner for Labour & Mines, 18 February 1949, WP1/1/14, NAZ.

[172] Dave Welensky to Roy Welensky, 29 November 1951, WP 681/1.

unionists held Britain's labour movement in high esteem and greatly valued their links to Britain. Dave Welensky – born in South Africa to an Afrikaner mother and a Lithuanian Jewish father – referred to Britain as "the old country" when he visited, even though he was visiting there for the first time.[173]

That same year, however, the NUM resolved to offer wide-ranging assistance to the new AMWU and to invite two of its members to Britain.[174] Simon Kaluwa and Lawrence Katilungu duly visited in early 1952 and established good links with the NUM and the British TUC. The TUC subsequently donated office equipment and publications to the AMWU.[175] When Godwin Lewanika visited Britain in 1950, he met with the TUC General Secretary Vincent Tewson, who thought highly of Lewanika, and the two corresponded afterwards. Katilungu too became a correspondent of British trade unionists and also met Tewson on least two occasions. British trade unions now had alternative sources of information about the Copperbelt.

The labour movement in Britain and internationally had become increasingly opposed to racial discrimination, and the NRMWU was aware that this placed them in a difficult position. The problem, Maybank explained, was that the colour bar "immediately catches the eye of overseas organisations" but some part of the colour bar had to be retained because "it is the mining companies' intention to push out Europeans."[176] This stance disrupted previously convivial relations with trade unions in Europe. The NRMWU disaffiliated from the WFTU in 1951, following the example of most trade unions in Britain, and joined the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, but played a marginal role in the organisation. In 1951, a delegation from the new Confederation, headed by a British trade unionist, visited the Copperbelt and met several times with the AMWU leadership, and subsequently issued a statement that "the existence of racial discrimination in employment is contrary to the ideals and principles of international trade unionism."[177]

Relations between the African and white workforce reached a nadir in January 1955 when the AMWU embarked on a massive strike over wages. The AMWU leadership had demanded a 10s 8d wage increase for all its members, a demand with political implications as it meant that many African mineworkers would then qualify for the vote under Northern Rhodesia's income-based franchise laws.[178] The NRMWU's General Council, perhaps unaware of this political implication, had

[173] *Ibid.*

[174] National Executive Committee Meeting, 26 July 1951, NUM.

[175] Vincent Tewson to J.H. Oldenbrook, ICFTU, 21 January 1952, MRC MSS. 292/968.1/2.

[176] 'NR European Miners 'are safeguarded'', *Rhodesia Herald*, 31 October 1947.

[177] Matthew Mwendapole, *A History of the Trade Union Movement in Zambia up to 1968* (Lusaka: Institute for African Studies, 1977), 10-11.

[178] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 144.

agreed to support the AMWU after meeting with them and resolved that during the strike no NRMWM member would perform any work normally done by African mineworkers.

No-one had consulted the NRMWU membership about this. Stormy meetings at Nchanga and Nkana overturned the General Council decision and large majorities offered to do any work required of them by the mine management during the strike.[179] Most white mineworkers then did exactly that and by the end of February they, along with newly recruited Africans, had raised production to two-thirds of normal output. This was break-even level, so the companies ceased losing money, and the strike subsequently collapsed in March.[180]

Lawrence Katilungu and Matthew Nkoloma denounced this as a "betrayal" that showed "their professed trade unionism is nothing but a cloak for their battle for racial preservation."[181] This condemnation largely fell on deaf ears. Only a few white workers were ashamed. NRMWU branch officials at Roan Antelope berated their members for helping the companies "smash the African Union," while one white miner claimed it "will go down in the history of the working class" how they "have betrayed their fellow worker."[182] Yet most white mineworkers thought they had done nothing wrong, and any lingering feelings of guilt were overcome with a fat cheque. Africans and whites who worked during the strike were rewarded with a bonus of 12.5% of their monthly earnings.

Trade unionists in Britain were appalled. Ronald Williams, a Labour MP and legal adviser to the NUM, publicly declared the NRMWU's actions were "black-legging and there is no other word for it."[183] Relations with British trade unions consequently frayed. When Ben Petersen wrote to the NUM asking for funds to send a representative to the NUM conference because "we would be lost without the sympathy, the help, the moral support of the trade union movement in Great Britain" no reply was forthcoming, and no money.[184] Instead, the NRMWU turned to South Africa.

African Advancement and the Racial Division of Labour

Negotiations over the racial division of labour were protracted and complicated. Beginning in 1947, they involved two official enquiries (the 1948 Dalgleish Commission and the 1954 Forster Commission), countless rounds of failed talks, precipitated an uncharacteristic split between the two companies and only reached a kind of temporary resolution in 1955, when an agreement was signed between both companies and the NRMWU. The boundaries of the colour bar were mostly

[179] 'Miners Defy Executive Order', *Northern News*, 3 January 1955.

[180] Berger, *Race, Labour and Colonial Rule*, 144.

[181] 'European Miners Have "Sold Their Souls"', *Northern News*, 5 January 1955.

[182] '"Do Africans' Jobs" Decision Slur on Good Name of Union', *Northern News*, 11 January 1955; Letter from 'Stoper, Kitwe', *Northern News*, 6 January 1955.

[183] Ronald Williams, 'Trade Unions in Africa', *African Affairs* 54, 217 (1955): 271.

[184] Ben Petersen to William Lawther, 17 May 1955, IISH, MIF Box 359.

negotiated in the workplace itself, however, where the division of labour was carefully monitored by white shop stewards.

Changing technology and the absence of legislation enforcing a colour bar meant that white union officials had to continually push to reproduce it. In the main, this consisted of regular and pedantic arguments about the precise definitions of work tasks. In 1953, for instance, white shop stewards at Mufulira complained that a new mobile crane in the smelter was being driven by an African, which was a breach of the colour bar because previously crane drivers were white. In response, the general manager denied the colour bar had been breached as he insisted that this "contrivance" was "not really a crane but was more of a lifting device." A lengthy debate ensued on whether, by definition, a lifting device was a crane. This was further complicated because one white shop steward strenuously avoided any reference to race and instead referred to "the higher paid employee" and "the lower paid employee."[185]

Racial division was the basic and obvious feature of the Copperbelt mines and towns in these years. In most shops, African customers were refused entry and had to buy their goods through a hatch.[186] When Ronald Williams came to Kitwe to advise the AMWU, even his status as a British MP could not prevail upon the hotel management to allow Africans into his hotel.[187] Yet, as the above insistence on references to 'higher' and 'lower' paid employees indicates, white union officials took pains to obfuscate this and defend the colour bar in ostensibly non-racial terms. They carefully avoided explicit racial appeals or racist language and even adopted seemingly anti-racist arguments to defend the colour bar.

Key to this defence of the colour bar was the ostensibly non-racial slogan of 'equal pay for equal work', i.e. that Africans performing the same work as whites should receive the same pay. The slogan had considerable currency at the time. Equal renumeration was adopted as a convention by the International Labour Organization in 1951 and African workers in Dakar had raised the slogan during a general strike in 1946.[188] White mineworkers, however, were banking on the fact that the companies had no intention of raising Africans wages. This was a safe bet. As Ronald Prain explained in 1954 "the fault in the set-up on the Copperbelt… is not due to the African being underpaid but to the European being overpaid."[189]

Changes in international politics after the Second World War made open racial segregation less acceptable and forced, as Bill Schwarz noted, the formulation of "a defence of racial whiteness which purported to be entirely non-racial." There was a noticeable difference between the political climate of the 1920s and that of the 1950s:

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[185] Notes on a meeting with the NRMWU Mufulira branch, 25 March 1953, ZCCM 13.3.4C.

[186] Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community*, 4-5.

[187] Instead, he met with union officials in a van parked outside. Williams, 'Trade Unions in Africa', 276.

[188] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 208.

[189] Phimister, 'Workers in Wonderland', 217.

> [Jan] Smuts spoke about race and white supremacy with relatively little embarrassment or qualification, as if he were merely addressing a fact of life, a matter beyond human intervention. [Roy] Welensky, for his part, was required to formulate the settler case in more guarded term.[190]

NRMWU officials were well-aware of this, in part due to their connections with the wider labour movement, and sought to impress this upon their members. "It is wrong to say that such a job can only be done by a person of a particular nationality," one union publication declared, "and the pigmentation of the person is no indication of a man's ability."[191] In 1954, the union's acting General Secretary Guy Spires, a South African miner, stressed "that all jobs should be available on an equal basis to all workers, irrespective of race, colour or creed."[192] African workers, other NRMWU representatives demanded, "must not be discriminated against by being paid an inferior wage."[193] The NWMWU's own role in demanding a colour bar in the early 1940s went carefully unmentioned.

More localised circumstances also meant that the NRMWU had to attempt a non-racial defence of the colour bar. In negotiations over the colour bar, white trade unionists had to sit alongside their African counterparts, who, unlike in the 1940s, could not be ignored. Consequently, NRMWU representatives had to defend racist working practices while making strenuous efforts to avoid angering African trade unionists, a tacit admission of the power of the AMWU. The results were almost comical, as epitomised in an exchange at a meeting in 1954 when Guy Spires queried what Lawrence Katilungu meant by Africans 'impinging' on jobs done by whites. "Do you think we don't understand the language?" Katilungu shot back. "We certainly don't mean that," Spires replied hurriedly, "we do not mean in any way to suggest that the African Union does not understand the word impinge."[194]

African mineworkers became more assertive in this period and challenged both the racial division of labour and the claim by white workers to have a monopoly on skill. When a strike by white miners at Nkana in 1948 shut the mine, African miners reacted angrily and representatives of their new union stated they "were willing to go down and work under the supervision of the Mine Captains and Shift Bosses and they were confident that they could get the ore out."[195] Many African mineworkers openly complained that whites were paid higher wages for doing less work. Reports

[190] Schwarz, *White Man's World*, 366-67.

[191] 'From the Minutes', *The NR Mineworkers' Review*, September 1952, TNA CO 1015/338.

[192] Quoted in Meebelo, *African Proletarians*, 267.

[193] Notes on a meeting of representatives of the copper mining companies, the NRMWU, MOSSA and NRAMTU, 1 February 1954, IISH MIF Box 538.

[194] Notes on a meeting of representatives of the copper mining companies, the NRMWU, MOSSA and NRAMTU, 23 February 1954, IISH, MIF Box 538.

[195] Summary of meeting held at Wusukili on Saturday 29 May 1948, NAZ SEC1/1443.

of AMWU meetings contain frequent remarks like this one from Mufulira: "Reference was made to Europeans whom the meeting considered were not fully occupied."[196]

This challenge to the racial division of labour was partly motivated by the lengthening working lives of Africans on the mines and the post-war arrival of inexperienced white workers. This meant that many African workers were more familiar with the mines than the whites who supervised them. African mineworkers at a meeting at Mufulira in 1949 complained they had been issued with free blankets from 1929 to 1933 and wanted the policy reinstated.[197] A minor complaint, but one that indicates some were well-aware of what conditions on the mine had been like 20 years earlier. Many white mineworkers freely admitted that African workers could do the job without the skills or input of whites. As one diamond driller, who had come to Nkana from the United States, told a visiting journalist in 1955, "When I'm out on the job the boys can do a lot without my saying a word."[198] Left unsaid was the unintentional implication of this, why he was 'on the job' at all if African workers could do it without him.

As has been noted in previous chapters, both companies had sought to make greater use of African labour since the mid-1930s, though they had been blocked from doing so by their white workforce. However, in the 1950s RST and RAA diverged over the colour bar. Harry Oppenheimer, deputy chairman of Anglo American, gave Anglo's position in 1950: "We should not worry about the existence of a colour bar. What we should worry about is its rigidity."[199] The problem was not the existence of the colour bar per se, but that the white union, not the company, controlled it. RST, backed by their main shareholder the American Metal Company, had a much more strident criticism of the colour bar, with Ronald Prain declaring the colour bar to be "untenable both in principle and in practice."[200] From late 1952, Prain had pressed for the companies to act over African advancement and informed RAA that his shareholders "would support a shutdown now even if it was a shutdown for six months or one year." In response, Anglo American director Marshall Clark "generally agreed that something should be done," but he did not regard the matter as an urgent one.[201]

Contemporary opinion, and some subsequent literature, stressed the ethical dimension of RST's actions, praising a willingness to take a principled stand against the colour bar.[202] This view

[196] Minutes of the Northern Rhodesia African Mineworkers' Trade Union meeting, 7 June 1950, NAZ WP1/1/14.

[197] Minutes of the Northern Rhodesia African Mineworkers' Trade Union meeting, 9 December 1949, NAZ WP1/1/14.

[198] Jeffries, 'Conversations on the Copperbelt', 240.

[199] Quoted in Luchembe, 'Finance Capital and Mining Labour', 380.

[200] Quoted in Ian Phimister, 'Corporate Profit and Race in Central African Copper Mining, 1946-1958', *Business History Review* 85 (2011): 762.

[201] Notes of discussion with Mr R.L. Prain, 5 November 1952, ZCCM 12.2.2C.

[202] Cunningham, *Copper Industry in Zambia*, 84; Larry Butler, 'Business and British Decolonization: Sir Ronald Prain, the Mining Industry and the Central African Federation', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 35, 3 (2007): 459-484. Mhone, *Dual Labour Market*, 141

has been sharply criticised by Ian Phimister, who argued that "corporate attitudes toward white workers and African advancement were largely driven by costs." RST's operations were smaller, less profitable, and more vulnerable to rising costs, while RAA were less willing to countenance disruption to their profitable mines.[203] As one RST executive later explained:

> the fundamental duties of the mine official are the improvement of long-term profits and the safeguarding of the investment. Even those parts of our policies which we term 'enlightened self-interest' are eventually directed towards these aims.[204]

Despite making relatively statements on the colour bar, RST acted to enforce racial segregation in the mining industry, as did RAA. Both companies sought to ensure that, as far as possible, their white and African employees had minimal interaction beyond what was required by their work tasks and reinforced racist ideas through company material. Roan Antelope's rules for white employees listed "undue familiarity" with Africans as a dismissible offence, as serious as fighting or being drunk at work, and prohibited whites from having "any dealings whatsoever with Non-European women."[205] New white employees at Nkana were explicitly warned by the company not to trust Africans as "An African will lie without hesitation in order to save himself and furthermore he will think nothing of incriminating a perfectly innocent person."[206]

The real divergence between the companies came in 1954 when the NRMWU rejected the findings of the Forster Commission, which concluded that the principle of 'equal pay for equal work' would "bar the African's advancement for ever."[207] Consequently, in November 1954, RST unilaterally gave the NRMWU six months' notice that it was withdrawing from the union's recognition agreement. Anglo American executives were aghast, and unsuccessfully tried to dissuade RST from this course of action. Anglo American's more cautious approach was informed by fears that, as Ernest Oppenheimer explained, "there would be an intense reaction all over South Africa and large sums of money would be contributed to the support of the Mine Workers."[208] In particular, Anglo worried about how white trade unions on their gold mines in South Africa would respond.

For a time, it appeared Ernest Oppenheimer's fears were correct. In late 1954, the NRMWU reached out the SAMWU, the white miners' union that had helped set up the NRMWU in 1936. NRMWU officials travelled to South Africa to meet with white trade unionists there and received a warm welcome. "The members of the NRMWU realise that their destiny is linked up with those of

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[203] Phimister, 'Corporate Profit and Race', 765.

[204] E.C. Bromwich, 'Problems of Arresting Cost Increases on Our Mines', Record of Papers Presented at Week-End Symposium Number 1 Held at the Ridgeway Hotel, Lusaka on 25 September 1959, ZCCM Library.

[205] Rules and Penalties, Roan Antelope Copper Mines, 8 May 1951, ZCCM 13.3.4C.

[206] Relationships between the European employees and the African employees, ZCCM 13.3.4C.

[207] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Board of Inquiry appointed to inquire into the Advancement of Africans in the Copper Mining Industry in Northern Rhodesia* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1954), 28.

[208] Notes on discussion between the Governor and Mr Oppenheimer, 27 October 1954, TNA CO 1015/925.

Europeans throughout Southern Africa," declared Ben Petersen after this meeting.[209] This was followed by the offer of a £5,000 loan from SAMWU to assist "the struggle to maintain European standards" and a promise from SAMWU general secretary Daan Ellis to form a federation of white mining unions in the Rhodesias and South Africa.[210] However, this planned intervention caused an outcry in the Federation, and the NRMWU's international outreach was swiftly curtailed. Roy Welensky issued a stern rebuke to Ellis "to mind his own business" and even Hugh Handford chipped in to condemn Ellis as "a fiery-eyed negrophobe" on behalf of MOSSA.[211] Consequently, the loan was never paid. A subsequent offer of support from Ellis a few months later elicited no response.

Rising copper prices from late 1954 focused the minds of white mineworkers more intently on making money, rather than the offer of a region-wide struggle to defend the colour bar. It also gave RST a strong incentive to be more conciliatory.[212] In January 1955, the NRMWU held a vote over whether to make concessions over African advancement or adhere to its stance of 'equal pay for equal work', and 60% of its members voted abandon this stance and to transfer some jobs to African workers.[213] This was confirmed by a second vote in March and RST abandoned plans to cancel the NRMWU's recognition agreement. Consequently, the NRMWU reached an agreement to transfer 24 jobs performed by whites to African workers, first with RAA in July 1955 and then with RST in September.[214] These 24 jobs became known as 'Schedule B' jobs ('Schedule A' jobs were those performed by white workers). The agreement also specified that no further jobs would be transferred from Schedule A to Schedule B for four years, until a firm of industrial consultants had completed a survey of all jobs on the mines.[215]

The two votes in 1955 indicate that most white mineworkers held relatively pragmatic views about African advancement. They did not like it, but thought it was inevitable and were not willing to seriously oppose it. This pragmatism was rooted in their mobility; most were not willing to seriously defend the colour bar in a place they did not intend to stay. Conversations transcribed by Edwin Munger in Luanshya in 1953 give a flavour of this. At a workshop in Roan Antelope, he spoke to one engineer who had done nine years on the mines and was preparing to head back to Britain. "The African has got to get a chance," he told Munger, "but I'm glad I won't be here." Off shift and at

[209] Letter from B.J. Petersen, *Northern News*, 26 January 1955.

[210] '£5,000 from SA to NR miners', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 15 April 1955.

[211] 'Ellis should mind his own business', *Northern News*, 22 April 1955. 'Mine official's sharp comment on Ellis', *Northern News*, 21 April 1955.

[212] Phimister, 'Corporate Profit', 764.

[213] 'Advancement Vote' *Northern News*, 31 January 1955. Even some of the NRMWU leadership wanted to take a softer line over African advancement. Arthur Clarke quit as NRMWU president in 1955 because he thought the union should have agreed to open more jobs to African workers.

[214] For more detail on these agreements, see Hyden Munene 'History of Rhokana', 83-85.

[215] Joint Statement of Policy, 11 September 1955, IISH MIF, Box 319.

a nearby bar was Jock McLaren, a miner from Scotland who reckoned he made about 20 times as much as "a working man in Glasgow or Edinburgh." He was not planning to stay either and would leave once he had saved enough to buy a newsagent, preferably in Durban. McLaren was convinced that "there has got to be this African advancement… I don't say much at union meetings because some of the men feel pretty sore about the natives, but it'll come." He may have had in mind his drinking partner, Piet de Kock. De Kock had left South Africa when the National Party took power and declared to Munger "I'm not going back." Of the men Munger spoke to, de Kock was the only one who planned to stay and the only one who openly opposed African advancement: "hell man, let the munt advance… as long as you make it in a thousand *** years, no bloody kaffir is going to take this man's job."[216] Many of his workmates in the bar may have raised their glasses to this and used the same racist language, but they would much quicker pack their bags than fight it out.

Conclusion

White trade unionists fretted about African advancement and how to keep the colour bar intact and most white mineworkers agreed with them, up to a point. The post-war boom in the copper industry made this group of workers extraordinarily affluent. Most white workers on the Copperbelt wanted to have a good time, make money, and then get out of there. New-found wealth and, increasingly, the kind of training they received on the Copperbelt added to the advantages that their race and gender conferred upon them to move internationally. Despite the high wages and generous benefits, the whole set-up of the Copperbelt for white workers discouraged permanent settlement. Lack of property, very short-term contracts, and a gendered division of labour that marginalised white women made it easy for white mineworkers to move.

Mobility strongly influenced the mild reaction to the emergence of a powerful African mineworkers' union and the push to amend the colour bar. It was money that motivated white mineworkers to work to break the African mineworkers strike in 1955 rather than opposition to African trade unionism. Days after the strike ended, a majority voted to accept African advancement proposals and drop the stance of 'equal pay for equal work'. Moreover, there was no compunction about performing work normally associated with African workers in a colonial context. White workers willingly drilled the rockface, shovelled ore, and unloaded coal trucks. It added to the masculine self-image of white workers of their capacity for hard work, and their belief that they were the real productive workers on the mines. "There are numerous yarns 'How hard I worked' since the African's strike end. It was truly a case of blood, tears and toil," reported one white worker from the Nkana refinery, "anyhow lads, all did a good job of work."[217]

However, actions like this drove a wedge between the Copperbelt's white mineworkers and their erstwhile allies in the labour movement elsewhere, especially in Britain. There was a notable change in the post-war years that reflected both the rightward shift in Northern Rhodesia and growing opposition to racial segregation and discrimination in the British labour movement. In 1945, the territory's main newspaper called those relying on the slogan of 'equal pay for equal work'

[216] Munger, *African Field Reports*, 350.

[217] 'Around Nkana', *Rhokana Review*, April 1955.

fools since it was clearly intended to bolster the colour bar and "we cannot believe that experienced Trade Unionists in Great Britain will be bluffed by this phrase."[218] There was no need for bluffing. Some British trade unionists clearly supported it. A government-backed investigation into altering the colour bar in 1947 foundered when the workers' representative, who was from the Durham Miners' Association in Britain, announced that he backed the NRMWU's call for equal pay for equal work.[219] By the mid-1950s, this automatic support was no longer apparent.

The emergence of the AMWU challenged the position of white mineworkers' as the de facto working class on the mines with whom trade unionists elsewhere should instinctively sympathise. Quickly, African trade unionists adopted the kind of language that appealed to the international labour movement and simultaneously held up the actions of the NRMWU as a betrayal of that movement, which white mineworkers considered to be their own. Carefully worded statements from Lawrence Katilungu and others are reminiscent of what John and Jean Comaroff referred to as the ability of Africans to adopt aspects of European modernity to "speak back to whites" in a way that whites would understand.[220]

In 1952, Jim Griffiths, a former miner and union official in South Wales, reflected ruefully on his failure to end the colour bar on the Copperbelt mines during his time as Colonial Secretary and emphasised the absence of a commonality he had expected:

> I have spoken most frankly to those to whom I thought I was entitled to speak – people of the same colour of skin as myself, working in the mines of Rhodesia, to whom I thought I could speak as one miner to another.[221]

He found that he could not. A change in the attitudes of white mineworkers only came when it seemed their privileged position would come crashing down.

[218] 'Editorial', *Northern News*, 14 May 1945.

[219] Henderson, 'Labour and Politics', 184.

[220] John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution. Volume 2, The dialectics of modernity on a South African frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 235.

[221] House of Commons Debate 16 December 1952, vol509, cc1224.

Chapter 5

Trouble in Paradise, 1956-62

Eric Hobsbawm made a curiously specific remark when warning against "careless generalisation" in the introduction to his 1959 landmark book *Primitive Rebels*: "the labour sects of Northern Rhodesian copper-miners have something in common with those of Durham coal miners. But it must never be forgotten that the differences may also be great."[1] The previous year, one former Durham miner Jack Joyce had made precisely that claim that Durham coal miners and Rhodesian copper miners had much in common. Joyce, a leading figure in the Miners' International Federation, was in Kitwe to chair a joint meeting between the African and white mineworkers' unions, and explained to his audience that "today you are travelling the road we travelled thirty years ago… We were at one time in a similar position to what you are today." The road was unity between trade unions, industrial struggle and at the end of the road was nationalisation of the mines. By fighting together, Joyce proclaimed, coal miners in Britain "took the mines off the Chamber of Mines" and copper miners could do the same in Northern Rhodesia.[2]

This episode is surely what Hobsbawm was referring to and an indication that the Copperbelt's white mineworkers were still then in the purview of the British labour movement and its chroniclers. Renewed industrial unrest in these years and a new union leadership restored relations between the NRMWU and the British labour movement and Britain's trade unions did their best to assist white mineworkers in a series of bitter and protracted disputes. Wildcat strikes began in late 1956, culminating in a shutdown on all the mines in June 1957, followed the next year by an eight-week strike across the Copperbelt that ended in near-total defeat of white mineworkers.

Both what these strikes were about and what they were not about is significant. The immediate trigger was the fall in copper prices that brought the post-war boom to a sudden halt. From a high of £437 per ton in March 1956, prices dropped to £264 in July and remained low until 1959. The Copperbelt mines had survived the previous precipitous price drop during the Great Depression because they were low-cost producers. This was no longer the case. In 1954, Ronald Prain estimated that 50-60% of world copper supply was being produced more cheaply than in Northern Rhodesia.[3] Underground mines necessarily grow larger and more complex as extractive operations continue and the costs of power, ventilation and pumping water all rose as the mines sank deeper

[1] Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in archaic forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), 5.

[2] Britain's coal industry was nationalised in 1947. Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 12 March 1958, IISH MIF Box 359.

[3] Phimister, 'Workers in Wonderland', 216.

into the earth.[4] What really raised costs during the 1950s, however, was labour. The total wage bill for the African workforce increased from £2.11m in 1950 to £9.32m in 1960, while total wages for the white workforce soared from £4.75m to £16.12m over the same period.[5] Co-ordinated attempts by the mining companies to cut labour costs and re-structure the workforce triggered a wave of strikes.

Scholars of Southern Africa have argued that the interwar period marked the incorporation of the white working-class into the state. The argument runs that after a period of often violent upheaval in the 1910s and 1920s, the white working-class reached a compromise with capital and the state by exchanging industrial peace and political support for racially preferential labour legislation and wages. Industrial relations were conducted through state-backed bargaining councils and white workers gave up the right to strike.[6] The extent of this incorporation has been questioned, especially for Southern Rhodesia, and it was not made on terms decided by white labour, but strikes and other forms of collective action by white workers did decline.[7] Not so on the Copperbelt, and the events in this period indicate that white mineworkers had an uneasy relationship with the colonial state, over which they exercised less control than did their counterparts in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. The NRMWU leadership resisted greater involvement by the colonial state in industrial relations and feared in 1958 that the government would declare a state of emergency to suppress their strike.[8]

In some ways, this marked a return to the wildcat strikes of the 1940s, but the dynamic of the disputes in the 1950s were different. The establishment of more white households and families on the Copperbelt meant that the strikes had a marked impact on gender relations, and both reinforced and challenged the gendered status of white mineworkers. White women were also involved in the 1958 strike. The assertive trade union culture on the Copperbelt was closely associated with masculinity, securing high wages that enabled male mineworkers to act as providers for households and depicting white mineworkers as combatants in a justified struggle against their bosses. The same was apparent in other mining centres. As Matthew Basso observed, the fight by Montana copper miners, members of one of America's most radical unions, to assert their control over the workplace was an important way of establishing masculine status.[9] Similarly, at El Teniente Mine in Chile, miners' work culture located masculine dignity in independence and self-assertion, and the "sense that to be a miner was also to stand up to the company."[10]

[4] By 1962, the deepest point on the Copperbelt, Roan Antelope's MacLaren Shaft, reached 4,054 feet. Coleman, *Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt*, 156.

[5] Phimister, 'Workers in Wonderland?', 198, 212.

[6] Van Zyl-Hermann, *Privileged Precariat*, 33-75.

[7] Ginsburgh, *Class, Work, and Whiteness*. See also Lunn *Capital and Labour*, 10-11, 77-78.

[8] Circumstances leading up to the present Copperbelt strike, HPA AH 1426 Ea6.

[9] Basso, *Joe Copper*, 90.

[10] Klubock, *Contested Communities*, 128, 281.

There were, somewhat surprisingly, no major disputes about the colour bar. In this sense it is significant what these strikes were not about. For one, strikes to enforce a colour bar on the mines would likely have had serious consequences as colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia became increasingly shaky from the late 1950s. White mineworkers were unreliable allies in the fight to defend white minority rule conducted by settler politicians in these years. Major developments like the collapse of Belgian colonial rule in Congo and the formation of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) – which would soon become Zambia's ruling party – provoked at best a brief reaction. This, it will be argued, was rooted in their mobility. White mineworkers did not intend to stay in Northern Rhodesia and, besides, they had more important things to fight about.

The Mining Workforce in the 1950s

We have a much more detailed picture of the mining workforce in these years as efforts by the mining companies to cut costs and reduce their labour requirements necessitated gathering knowledge about their workforce. As a result, there is considerable information available on the kind of jobs white mineworkers performed, what they got for it and what they thought about it. Most useful, for the purposes of this book, is the report commissioned by the Chamber of Mines in 1959 to assess the stability of the white workforce. This was carried out by the University of Natal's National Institute of Personnel Research and the authors, ethnologist and legal scholar J.F. Holleman and psychologist Simon Biesheuvel, carried out a detailed survey of life and work in the mining industry for white workers. What they found, Holleman subsequently noted, was "a cockeyed society" that was "maybe the most affluent society on the face of the earth."[11]

Their report consisted of two parts: interviews conducted by a team of industrial psychologists and a statistical survey of a sample of 468 male mineworkers and 227 wives of employees. Only married employees and married women were surveyed so the resulting statistics were not representative of the white workforce, but they give us a good idea. The average married employee was a 39-year old English-speaking South African with 10 years of formal education. 88% of men were satisfied with their job and 81% of men had improved their financial position since coming to the Copperbelt, which was the most common motivation for coming there. Most, however, did not intend to stay. Only 16% of men claimed to have settled permanently. Survey respondents indicated that there was definite room for improvement. 77% thought that basic pay could be increased (with the stated reason because the companies could afford it) and 48% of daily-paid workers and 30% of staff reported they had problems saving money. However, when asked what any additional income would be spent on, the most common answer was "improve standard of living."[12]

Contemporary accounts stressed that Afrikaners constituted a large proportion, even a majority, of the white workforce, but the available evidence suggests that white mineworkers were overwhelmingly English-speaking. Only 9% of the men in Holleman and Biesheuvel's sample spoke Afrikaans as a first language, while 80.5% spoke English as a first language and 9% reported they

[11] Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology*, 311.

[12] Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mine Employees Part II*, iii, viii, 41, 54.

were bilingual. This corresponds with a follow-up study of 143 white teenage students, also commissioned by the Chamber of Mines and headed by Holleman. This found that although 45% of the teenagers surveyed had been born in South Africa only 8% spoke Afrikaans at home. 86% spoke English and the remaining 6% spoke a variety of other European languages.[13]

A substantial portion of the white workforce were relatively new arrivals. In December 1956, 44% had been working on the mines less than three years, and the average length of service was 5.2 years.[14] The figures were almost the same in 1961: the average length of service for white mineworkers was 5.5 years. Yet, over the same period the African workforce had changed significantly as annual labour turnover declined. By 1961, the average length of service for African employees equalled the average for white employees, and thereafter surpassed it.[15] From the early 1960s, the average African worker had been working on the mines for longer than the average white worker.

We know more in this period about the structure of the mining workforce. Table 5.1 shows a breakdown of the workforce at Rhokana, reproduced from a paper given by the mine's manager O.B. Bennett boasting about the great successes that Rhokana had achieved with labour-saving strategies. White mineworkers constituted 18% of Rhokana's total workforce but were not employed evenly across the various departments. Less than one-third of white workers were employed in mining, whereas over half the African workforce were employed in mining or mining services. Supervisory work therefore constituted a large part of the duties of white miners and the average rockbreaker supervised 18 African miners in 1957.[16] Processing copper ore in the various surface plants employed around a fifth of the white workforce. The largest employer of white labour was the engineering division and white workers constituted 36% of the total engineering workforce. Artisans usually supervised only two or three African workers. Administrative departments and the mine hospital also employed comparatively few African workers.

Table 5.1: Distribution of the Workforce at Rhokana, 1958[17]

Department	Whites	Africans
Mining	499	3564
Mining services – survey, geology, etc.	81	755
Concentrator	54	232
Smelter	117	621
Refinery	143	730

[13] J.F. Holleman, J.W. Mann and Pierre L. van den Berghe, 'A Rhodesian White Minority Under Threat', *The Journal of Social Psychology* 57, 2 (1962), 318.

[14] Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, *Year Book 1956*, 73.

[15] Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, *Year Book 1961* (Kitwe: Chamber of Mines, 1962), 31, 37.

[16] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Honeyman Report*, 25.

[17] O.B. Bennett, 'Improvements in Plant Practice and Labour Utilization at Rhokana Corporation Limited', *Journal of the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy* 58, 10 (1958), 458.

Cobalt plant	40	184
Uranium plant	31	80
Metallurgical services – laboratories, study, etc.	47	18
Engineering (including apprentices)	581	1036
African administration and township	55	579
European township	16	44
Medical	85	198
Administration and general	148	262
Total	1897	8303

Wages for white workers were very high. In 1958, whites constituted 17% of the total mining workforce and absorbed 63.7% of the total wage bill. African workers, 83% of the total workforce, received only 36.3% of total wages.[18] This kind of stark difference between the wages paid to white labour and those paid to African labour was common across Southern Africa. Yet the Copperbelt's white mineworkers were in a privileged position even compared to other white workers in the region. For one, there were proportionately more of them on the mines, a testament to technological changes and to how scrupulously the NRMWU maintained the racial division of labour, as will be discussed below. In 1958, white workers constituted less than 5% of the total workforce on mines in Southern Rhodesia and only 12.2% of the workforce in South Africa's gold industry.[19] Second, the Copperbelt's white mineworkers were much better paid. Anglo American calculated that basic wages for white mineworkers working on their Copperbelt mines were substantially higher than white mineworkers doing the same jobs at their gold mines in the Orange Free State. Basic wages for artisans, handymen, cagetenders and winding engine drivers were 80% higher on the Copperbelt. Taking the copper bonus into account, these white mineworkers were paid more than double their counterparts in South Africa.[20]

Partly, this indicates the success of the NRMWU in driving up wages. However, until 1956, the companies had been willing to accept wage increases because rising copper prices had outpaced wages. Between 1946 and 1956, average earnings of mine employees (both African and white) had increased by 291%, but the price of copper had rocketed 567% over the same period.[21] The slump in copper prices forced a reassessment. The companies now concluded that rising labour costs were unsustainable and that the copper bonus had resulted in increased earnings which were

[18] Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, *Year Book 1960* (Kitwe: Chamber of Mines, 1961), 31.

[19] The Chamber of Mines of Rhodesia, *Twenty-First Annual Report for the Year 1959* (Salisbury: Chamber of Mines, 1960), 32. Chamber of Mines of South Africa, *Annual Report 1970*, 72.

[20] The European Wage Structure on the Copperbelt, 26 February 1958, ZCCM 17.4.4C.

[21] 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), 192-93.

"unaccompanied by an increase in labour productivity."[22] Moreover, there were now other, pressing, demands on copper revenues. Both companies had embarked on major expansion programmes during the boom years and intended to finance expansion through retained profits and issuing debt. Profits were now cut by the falling price of copper, but some of the debts had to be repaid by 1960.[23] White mineworkers, however, were in no mood to compromise as the sharp reduction in the copper bonus caused average white earnings to fall from £2,295 in 1956 to £1,699 in 1958.[24]

Wildcat strikes and the rockbreakers' dispute

Industrial action intensified following the fall in copper prices. The Honeyman Commission, established to investigate white industrial unrest, counted eighteen wildcat strikes by white mineworkers between January 1956 and July 1957. Strikes were so routine that as one Chamber of Mines employee put it, when discussing the date of his son's birth, "We automatically gauge all time and events by industrial disputes up here!"[25]

The first wave of industrial unrest over restructuring came from African mineworkers. By 1956, the African workforce was increasingly stratified, and the companies formalised this by introducing monthly-paid staff status for Africans in supervisory positions, thereby replicating the division within the white workforce.[26] Initially, moving to this new status was voluntary, but it involved a pay rise and, importantly, those in staff positions were ineligible for AMWU membership. Instead, new African staff employees formed the Mines African Staff Association (MASA), a move spearheaded by Godwin Lewanika.[27]

The AMWU leadership concluded this was an attempt to decapitate their union by removing more skilled and educated members from their ranks and so embarked on "a struggle for our very existence."[28] When the companies made the transfer to monthly-paid status compulsory for eligible employees, the AMWU began a series of rolling strikes that hit every mine on the Copperbelt. Each mine would be on strike for three days before a strike began at the next mine. This aimed to cause maximum disruption while avoiding an indefinite strike, which would be financially punishing for its members. On 10 September, the colonial state declared a state of emergency and arrested 87 AMWU officials, virtually the entire leadership, and banished them to rural areas, where

[22] Report by Joint committee on Revision of European Bonus Scheme, January 1956, ZCCM 10.1.4C.

[23] Cunningham, *Copper Industry in Zambia*, 106-11, 119.

[24] Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, *Year Book 1960*, 31.

[25] Tony Lawman to Roy Welensky, 9 May 1956, WP 636/5.

[26] The gap between the lowest and highest African wage was wider than the gap between African and white wages by this time. African wages ranged from £8 10d for 30 shifts to a maximum of £40 15s for monthly paid workers, while the lowest paid white worker received £69 11s. Berger, *Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule*, 205.

[27] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 149.

[28] Quoted in Luchembe, 'Finance Capital and Mine Labour', 405. Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, 36.

some remained for two years.[29] Defeat caused almost total collapse of the union. AMWU membership fell to around 6,500 and the union's finances were in a parlous state, leaving it unable to resist the reduction of the African workforce by almost 6,000 during 1957.[30]

Alan Paton, the South African author, identified the key power of the Copperbelt's white mineworkers in the workplace: "They are able to bring the industry to a standstill in a way the African workers are unable to do."[31] As the above example indicates, it was partly state repression that prevented African workers from doing the same, but Paton hit on something important. White workers performed jobs in strategic parts of the mine, and some were not easily replaced, like winding engine drivers who controlled the movement of people and ore from the underground workings. Another important reason is that white mineworkers had a strong sense of collective interests and were willing to back each other up, even over seemingly trivial issues.

Less than three months after the rolling strikes by African mineworkers, a wildcat strike by white mineworkers shut down Bancroft Mine for a month in December 1956. The trigger was when the underground engineer reprimanded a group of fitters for allegedly slacking, and they responded by walking off the job. Other white workers at the mine struck in support and shut the mine, while, as the dispute lengthened, NRMWU members at other mines donated money to provide strike pay. The strike was a lengthy one because the NRMWU and MOSSA delegations refused to meet with each other.[32] Many of the wildcat strikes in this period were provoked by arguments between daily-paid mineworkers and mine officials. Bradon Ellem describes how militant unionism on Australia's iron mines involved a macho ethos where aggressive personal confrontations were a normal part of the culture of industrial relations and the same is evident on the Copperbelt.[33] Underscoring this point, three months later Bancroft was back on strike after the mine manager ordered an unqualified white operator to do blasting work, and then swore at the white miners who protested about this.[34]

As the second strike at Bancroft suggests, many of these strikes were about control over the organisation of work. This was sometimes about the racial division of labour, though less often than the literature suggests. In January 1957, white stopers at Roan Antelope refused to remove broken rock from areas outside the stopes because "this was now an African job." The task had been transferred to African workers in the 1955 African advancement agreement and "it was a matter of principle that this was an African job and must be done by an African."[35] The principle was that

[29] Parpart, *Labour and Capital*, 148-50.

[30] Berger, *Race, Labour and Colonial Rule*, 161.

[31] Alan Paton, 'African Advancement: A Problem for the Copperbelt and Federation', *Optima* 5, 4 (1955): 105.

[32] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Honeyman Report*, 13-16.

[33] Bradon Ellem, *The Pilbara. From the Desert Profits Come* (Crawley, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 2017), 48-49.

[34] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Honeyman Report*, 14-15.

[35] Notes on a Meeting Held in Storke Shaft Conference Room, 24 January 1957, ZCCM 11.5.7C.

whites would not perform the same work as Africans, even though until recently they had done this work. Performing the same tasks as African workers undercut their status as white.

There was, however, only one strike directly about African advancement in the 1950s. On 7 April 1956, six white pipefitters at Mufulira refused to work after three Africans were employed as pipelayers (a 'Schedule B' job). The pipefitters claimed this constituted job fragmentation as the job of pipefitter was supposed to be opened to Africans as a single job and not divided into several different jobs. Most other daily-paid mineworkers agreed and walked out, only returning four days later when the mine management transferred the African pipelayers onto other work until industry-wide discussions could be held.[36]

More common were disputes about the division of labour within the white workforce and the demarcation between different jobs performed by whites. One month after the strike over African advancement, white daily-paid workers at Mufulira struck again for four days over whether maintaining certain electrical equipment in the power plant was the responsibility of daily-paid electricians or the responsibility of the shift engineer, a staff position.[37] Similarly, all artisans at Chibuluma went on strike in April 1957 after a plumber fitted a pipe in the acid plant, which was considered to be a fitter's job, the precise demarcation of work between artisans being a matter of great importance. White mineworkers engaged in nine wildcat strikes in the first half of 1957, plus a series of dispute where strike action was narrowly averted, such as in June when Mufulira's NRMWU branch chair, Dan Swart, was briefly sacked for refusing to work overtime.[38]

Unrest culminated in a Copperbelt-wide strike by rockbreakers in July 1957. The Copperbelt's 277 rockbreakers were mostly on contract work and were among the best-paid white workers, with average earnings of £235 a month in 1956-57 compared with £141 for the rest of the daily-paid workforce.[39] Rockbreakers were aggrieved because they had not been included in new shift patterns that reduced the working day on Saturday by two hours by slightly increasing weekday shifts. This grievance was rooted in the fact that they were being treated differently from the rest of the white workforce and that working hours for miners in other parts of the world had been reduced. A Rockbreakers' Central Committee was formed to make their case and after presenting evidence to the companies that miners elsewhere worked fewer hours, they unilaterally resolved that from 20 July they would only work six hours on Saturday.[40]

This decision was a direct challenge to the authority of the mine management. The mining companies could not accept this and announced that any rockbreaker who refused to work the full eight-hour shift would be laid off. Every rockbreaker coming on shift on 20 July was instructed to work a full shift and, in a demonstration of their sense of solidarity, every single one refused. The

[36] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Honeyman Report*, 13.

[37] Selection Trust, Salisbury to American Metal Company, 16 May 1957, ZCCM 10.3.9B.

[38] Extract from *Union News*, June 1956, NAZ MLSS1/26/108.

[39] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Honeyman Report*, 25.

[40] Memorandum of the Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers' Union, July 1957, NAZ MLSS1/10/22.

companies were not bluffing and immediately began closing down the mines. Within three days, underground operations ceased and all surface plants were ready to be closed.[41] This was the second time the companies had shut the mines to defeat a strike by white mineworkers and, as in 1946, the white workforce was again caught off guard. Shocked, the NRMWU called an indefinite strike. The Copperbelt ground to a halt and within hours around half of the 46,000-strong workforce had been laid off.[42]

The NRMWU, however, buckled in the face of mass redundancies. White mineworkers returned to work on 1 August after the colonial administration offered a commission of enquiry into the working week. This enquiry, headed by George Honeyman, chair of Britain's Industrial Court, roundly criticised the NRMWU and recommended tighter legislation to prevent wildcat strikes. Infighting followed the strike. Ben Petersen left shortly afterwards for the United States and resigned as general secretary from abroad, sending a telegram that read, in its entirety: "Tendering herewith resignation to take effect immediately."[43] He subsequently opted for the line of work least likely to endear him to his former comrades: he joined Anglo American's personnel department on the Rand.[44]

In the aftermath of these strikes, the NRMWU sought to strengthen their connections with the British trade union movement and emphasised their imperial connection as British trade unions had supported the rockbreakers strike. The union's delegate at the 1957 Miners' International Federation congress, for instance, praised "the originators of our very own movement, the British miners."[45] Two British trade unionists were appointed to key positions in the NRMWU: Albert Lewis, a TUC official who had previously advised trade unions in Aden, as general secretary, and a South Yorkshire miner Fred Ackroyd as organising secretary.[46] Ackroyd was a longstanding NUM and Labour Party activist and one colonial official complained that he had a Yorkshire accent "so broad that he can hardly be understood."[47] Lewis' appointment, however, was unexpectedly blocked when he was refused entry to the Federation. No official reason was given, but it soon leaked out that the Federal Government believed Lewis was a member of the Communist Party.[48]

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[41] Selection Trust, Salisbury to American Metal Company, New York, 23 July 1957, ZCCM 10.3.9B.

[42] 'Operations cease on the Copperbelt', *Financial Times*, 27 June 1957.

[43] 'Petersen quits', *Northern News*, 12 December 1957.

[44] John Oxley, *Down Where No Lion Walked: The Story of Western Deep Levels* (Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1989), 121.

[45] Miners' International Federation, *Report of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh International Congress* (London: n.p, 1957), 171.

[46] Some NRMWU members tried to persuade Frank Maybank – then living in Western Australia – to return as general secretary. He declined. Frank Maybank to Roy Welensky, 5 February 1958, WP 644/10.

[47] Record from Acting Assistant Labour Commissioner, 22 April 1959. NAZ MLSS1/26/170.

[48] 'Rhodesian Union Will Fight', *The Manchester Guardian*, 21 June 1958.

Notions of skill and the re-organisation of work

Efforts by white rockbreakers to reduce the length of the working day were part of wider struggles over the organisation of work in the late 1950s. Post-war mechanisation had placed white workers in a strengthened position as the mines had become more dependent on artisan labour which, under the colour bar, had to be white labour. Mechanisation meant that less labour was required in production and more labour was required for repair and maintenance operations. The number of white mineworkers had therefore risen steadily. By the late 1950s, this had prompted some serious thinking among mine managers and company executives about the organisation of work and labour costs and efforts to contest notions of 'skill'.

There was a surge in technological change, concentrated in mining, following the interruption in the adoption of new technology caused by the Second World War.[49] In 1950, new tungsten-carbide drills were introduced with a lifespan of 35 feet, ten times longer than the forged steel drills they replaced. Along with the introduction of electronic blasting, which allowed the coordinated blasting of many holes, this significantly increased labour productivity and reduced the number of African miners.[50] At Nkana, the average monthly tonnage produced by a stoping crew doubled from 6,000 tons in 1944 to 12,000 tons in 1952.[51] Furthermore, manual removal of blasted ore was eliminated underground by the introduction of mechanical loaders, and Rhokana estimated that this alone reduced its underground African workforce by between 700 and 900.[52]

The most significant change was the introduction of open-pit mining in 1955. These operations were highly mechanised and required much less labour than underground mining. Removal of rock and soil above the orebody (the overburden) was initially done by electric shovels and large trucks. In 1958 Nchanga imported a huge bucket-wheel excavator capable of removing approximately half a ton of overburden a second, with the earth deposited onto a conveyor belt and removed from the pit. The excavator could be operated by one white and four African mineworkers, with white artisans responsible for maintenance.[53]

New technology altered the labour requirement of the mines. Between 1949 and 1959, the size of the African workforce remained static (varying between 33,000 and 38,000) while the number of white mineworkers increased from 4,293 to 7,259.[54] Moreover, technological changes meant that the mines became more dependent on the most expensive section of the white workforce: artisans and rockbreakers. It was therefore these white workers that the companies

[49] Baldwin, *Economic Development*, 95.

[50] Phimister, 'Corporate Profit', 759-60.

[51] Bennett, 'Mining Methods', 24.

[52] Bennett, 'Plant Practice and Labour Utilisation', 664-67.

[53] Coleman, *Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt*, 162.

[54] Appendix I.

directed restructuring efforts towards, not semi-skilled workers most liable to be displaced by African workers.

Each of the major divisions on the mines (underground mining, smelter, etc.) had a study or research department to test and evaluate new equipment and new production techniques, and some mines established a central efficiency department. These departments now directed attention to the perceived necessity of "streamlining the [white] workforce."[55] Proposed changes focused on the division of labour underground and the role of artisans. The control that artisans exercised over their work had long been a sore spot for the companies. As one manager put it, "once an artisan touches a job, it thereafter becomes sacred to the artisans."[56]

White mineworkers were insistent they performed skilled tasks that were difficult to reproduce. One winding engine driver, for instance, while noting that much of his job was routine, emphasised that he needed to be able to detect a "change of tone in the motors" that could indicate something unexpected or dangerous was happening in the shaft deep beneath his feet.[57] White artisans were particularly insistent that their work was skilled and could only be properly done by those who had completed an apprenticeship, and they were very conscious about the precise division of work. Many artisans expressed considerable pride in their work, and their importance to the running of the mines. As one artisan interviewed by Holleman and Biesheuvel boasted, "once I have finished the day's work I'm as good a man as anyone else, including the General Manager," though it is doubtful the general manager thought the same.[58] In discussions over efficiency measures, one manager railed against the "extreme and obvious simplicity" of many artisan's tasks.[59]

Artisan's jobs were vulnerable to restructuring as they performed both complex and simple tasks as part of their work. Fitters, for instance, had to be able to undertake repair and maintenance work on almost all equipment on the mines, from hospital equipment to hoists on the main shafts. Some of this work was challenging and complex, but much of their time was spent on relatively simple repair work that the union agreement stipulated only an artisan could do. Now, the companies intended to fragment artisans' jobs and have white operators undertake some of their tasks. A dispute that, on the surface, revolved around who could use a certain tool or work on a particular piece of machinery overlaid a struggle about authority and dignity of labour. At stake, was whom decides who does what in the workplace. RST, for instance, asserted that the dispute was fundamentally about t he "rights of the Companies to conduct their operations in the way which seems to them most efficient."[60]

[55] Quarterly report on industrial relations, 31 December 1957, ZCCM 13.3.4C

[56] Memorandum from Personnel Manager to General Manager, Mufulira, 19 August 1955, ZCCM 10.5.8D.

[57] 'It's My Job: Jack Brooklyn, winding engine driver', *Horizon*, April 1961.

[58] Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mine Employees Part I*, 29.

[59] Chamber of Mines to Anmercosa Salisbury, 11 September 1958, ZCCM 11.1.2A.

[60] Roan Antelope to London Agency, 29 August 1958. ZCCM 10.3.9B.

Negotiations over what the Chamber of Mines termed 'efficiency measures' began in January 1958 and largely consisted of transferring 106 tasks performed by artisans to white operators. These proposals divided the white workforce. MOSSA "assured the Companies that they would support the Companies in implementing the measures" after brief negotiations.[61] The major changes concentrated on underground work and in 1957 only 622 mine officials worked underground, compared to 1,968 daily-paid workers.[62] The NRMWU, predictably, rejected them and concluded that the proposals amounted to job fragmentation and the removal of artisans from the mines. Instead, "artisans will be given alternative employment as operators at a very much reduced rate of pay."[63]

The two white unions had frequently been at odds. MOSSA had a self-image of moderate, respectable trade unionism that reflected the professional background of much of its membership. The NRMWU, as should be abundantly clear by this point, did not. In 1951, for instance, the unions had jointly pressed for additional day's holiday, then fallen out over the selection of the day. The NRMWU staged a one-day strike on May Day to demand that it be made a paid holiday.[64] MOSSA followed this with their own strike, their first ever, to demand a holiday on Easter Sunday, the union's leadership having rejected a holiday on May Day because of the association with communism. MOSSA representatives at the Honeyman Commission had accused their counterparts in the NRMWU of failing to uphold the colonial order by setting "a very bad example to that section of employees who have as yet little industrial or trade union tradition" (a reference to African workers) and had called for the closed shop to the abolished.[65]

It was then clear that there would be no support from MOSSA in this dispute, and this left the NRMWU looking for allies. Under pressure from seemingly wide-ranging changes to the organisation of work, they turned to an unexpected source.

Inter-racial solidarity and the Liaison Committee

Jack Purvis, the son of Jim Purvis, occupied a central role in the union in this period. Like his father, Jack Purvis worked as an electrician at Roan Antelope Mine and the trade union movement was his life. It was no coincidence that he came to the fore in these years, as his belligerent, intransigent approach to negotiation corresponded with a period when white mineworkers found themselves under greater pressure. Purvis explained his approach to industrial relations to the Honeyman Commission: "a Union should strike quickly and embarrass the Companies financially in every way it can."[66]

[61] Quarterly report on industrial relations, 31 March 1958. ZCCM 13.3.4C.

[62] Calculated from Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, *Year Book 1961*, 30.

[63] Circumstances Leading up to the Present Copperbelt Strike, 17 October 1958, HPA, AH 1426 Ea6.

[64] Chamber of Mines to Selection Trust London, 7 May 1951, TNA CO 795/168/8.

[65] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Honeyman Report*, 23, 30.

[66] Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Honeyman Report*, 24.

> Edwin Munger met the younger Purvis in 1955 and offers a vivid portrait of the man:
>
> Jack Purvis is thirty-four. He looks forty-four. He's a big shaggy bear of a man with broad round shoulders, straggly iron-grey hair, steel-rim glasses, a voice that can send friendship humming over the telephone when a miner is in trouble or crack like a whip when one of his four children disobey him.[67]

Purvis had been born in South Africa and went to school in Southern Rhodesia but despite this background was more sympathetic towards African mineworkers than other whites on the Copperbelt. He had been friendly with Simon Zukas, who was deported from Northern Rhodesia for involvement in African nationalist politics, and cherished meeting the Indian anti-colonial nationalist and trade unionist Kanti Mehta. Despite his progressive attitudes, Purvis enjoyed widespread support within the union, even from those with openly racist views. Piet de Kock – encountered in the previous chapter ranting about 'kaffirs' in a Luanshya bar – advised Munger "be sure you see Jack Purvis – he's a good man the company don't fool none."[68]

Purvis consistently pushed for closer relations between the African and white mineworkers' unions. There was common ground for this collaboration. For one, both unions were regarded in a similar way by mine managers as unwelcome and unnatural intrusions that disrupted the proper order of things. Discussing the white trade unions, one manager at Nchanga opined that good managers should run their departments like a "small family business" and know "everything about every man working for him and is regarded by them as their 'patron'." Sadly, he continued "the intervention of Unions… has made the continued existence of such a relationship very difficult."[69] Similarly, the Chamber of Mines saw African Personnel Managers ideally as having "a parental role" over African mineworkers, but unfortunately "this role of parent has been largely usurped by the Union."[70] The Director of the Chamber of Mines publicly opined that his "earlier experience as a Backward Classes Officer in the province of Bombay" was useful for negotiating with both African and white unions on the mines.[71]

The late 1950s was an opportune moment for Purvis to push again for collaboration with the AMWU. The NRMWU was facing a major dispute and other potential allies had recently been found wanting. Aside from Purvis, the NRMWU leadership were not enthusiastic about collaboration with the AMWU, but the union was under pressure from the companies and had few other options. The union leadership was estranged from the Federal Government, who had prohibited the appointment of Albert Lewis as general secretary, and white allies had conspicuously failed to support white mineworkers' during the wildcat strikes. NRMWU had long maintained convivial relations with their counterparts in the RRWU (which had a branch on the Copperbelt) and

[67] Munger, *African Field Reports*, 357.

[68] *Ibid.*, 351.

[69] Notes on existing practice at Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines, 6 April 1951, ZCCM 13.3.4C

[70] Statement on African Trade Unionism in the Northern Rhodesian Mining Industry, 25 April 1954, ZCCM 13.3.4C.

[71] 'Men of Business', *Central African Examiner*, 12 October 1957.

regularly attended the union's annual conference in Bulawayo. Yet RRWU officials had baulked when asked not to handle copper exports during the rockbreakers' dispute in 1957.[72] It had, however, been clear for some time that the NRMWU and RRWU did not see eye-to-eye. In 1954, the NRMWU had supported a wildcat strike by white workers on Rhodesia Railways, and denounced the deportation of the strike's leader, while the RRWU leadership had condemned the strike.[73]

The AMWU had always been open to closer collaboration. Despite the organisation's name (that it was an African mineworkers' union), the union's rules stipulated that membership "is open to all workers employed in the mining industry regardless of race or sex," whereas the NRMWU had specifically prohibited African membership at its foundation.[74] Lawrence Katilungu, the dominant figure in the AMWU since its foundation, was sympathetic to closer collaboration with whites in the political sphere and was estranged from the African nationalist movement. In 1957, he had been chairman of the Copperbelt branch of the short-lived liberal Constitution Party, which advocated multi-racial partnership in Northern Rhodesia and an expanded franchise for Africans, though not universal suffrage.[75] Ties with the British trade union movement had made a great impression on Katilungu, as he later reflected, "the British tradition of trade unionism… [was] the tradition in which, you might say, I was brought up."[76] More broadly, the AMWU itself was in need of allies at this point after being repressed during the state of emergency, and more radical AMWU leaders who might have objected to co-operation with the NRMWU were still in internal exile, leaving Katilungu firmly in control of the AMWU's strategy.

The real barrier to closer collaboration was the hostility of white mineworkers and the attitude of some that, as Ben Petersen put it, the wages and working conditions of African mineworkers had "nothing to do with us."[77] These attitudes began to shift during the wave of industrial unrest. As discussed in the previous chapter, white mineworkers had usually worked during African strikes, even helping to break the 1955 strike, but they did not during the rolling strikes initiated by the AMWU in mid-1956. When a group of white employees at Nkana issued a statement that they would work during the next African strike and "demand to work one shaft at the mine with entirely European labour," NRMWU branch officials issued a blunt threat that they

[72] Governor Benson to Colonial Secretary, 23 July 1957, TNA CO 1015/1455.

[73] W.G. Spires to General Secretary, TUC, 21 June 1954, MRC MSS. 292/968.1/2. Nicola Ginsburgh, 'Labour and Mobility on Rhodesia's Railways: The 1954 Firemen's Strike', in *Rethinking White Societies in Southern Africa, 1930s-1990s*, eds. Duncan Money and Danelle van Zyl-Hermann (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 134-53.

[74] Rules, Northern Rhodesia African Mineworkers' Trade Union, ZCCM 14.1.5A.

[75] Bizeck 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): 76.

[76] 'A union and its architect', *Horizon*, February 1962.

[77] Notes on a meeting of representatives of the copper mining companies, the NRMWU, MOSSA and NRAMTU, 1 March 1954. IISH, MIF Box 538.

would "break" the man who made this demand.[78] A mass meeting of 1,000 NRMWU members subsequently passed a unanimous resolution repudiating any demand to work during the African strike.

Shifting attitudes meant that even blatantly racist measures had to be dressed up in seemingly non-racial language, even when this frustrated the intention of these measures. In December 1957, members of Mufulira Mine Club tried to pass a resolution banning African guests from the premises after three African men attended a cocktail party held for the Federal Governor-General. The resolution was proposed by Fred Holtmann, a shop steward at the mine, but a subsequent meeting found this resolution was unworkably vague as "for some reason they [the proposers] declined to mention the word 'African' in it."[79] A revised motion stating explicitly that African guests were barred failed to attract enough support from club members.[80]

Remarkably, six months later, the proposer of this motion, Holtmann, joined the Liaison Committee! There is no doubt that Holtmann held racist views, but desperate times called for desperate measures. The Liaison Committee was established in February 1958 shortly after the 'efficiency measures' were announced by the Chamber of Mines. It had been proposed at a meeting between the African and white mineworkers' unions brokered by Jack Joyce, the one discussed in the opening of this chapter. The transnational context here is important, as British trade unionists had spent a decade of attempting to cajole the NRMWU into co-operation with the African men they worked alongside each day.

The first task for the Liaison Committee was one of common interest: to obstruct new industrial relations legislation recommended by the Honeyman Commission. A bill implementing these recommendations had been announced in February 1958. "We should stand in unity through this suppression by the Government," argued one AMWU member, and, for once, they did.[81] The committee prepared a joint programme of action to halt the bill which included forming joint delegations to lobby the Chamber of Mines and the Colonial Office. In March, Katilungu and Purvis travelled to London to assemble a delegation of British trade unionists to lobby the Colonial Office. These efforts were successful, and the Colonial Office requested that the Northern Rhodesia Government redraft the bill and postpone its introduction.

The leadership of both unions were wary of the state. Any new industrial legislation, the two unions argued, should be "closely modelled" on British legislation and, significantly, "no attempt should be made to emulate the example set by other countries in Southern Africa."[82] This was a clear

[78] This demand was a neat inversion of the demands made by African mineworkers in 1940 to work a shaft with African labour only. 'Europeans discuss Nkana shutdown rumours', *Northern News*, 12 July 1956. 'Union 'will break man who said Europeans would work shaft'', *Northern News*, 13 July 1956.

[79] 'Mufulira Mine Club's screening plan is unworkable', *Northern News*, 28 December 1957.

[80] 'Majority of Mufulira miners lose their demand for 'screen' visitors', *Northern News*, 14 January 1958.

[81] Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 12 March 1958, IISH MIF Box 359.

[82] Joint statement of representatives, 28 April 1958, ZCCM 13.3.4C.

reference to the Industrial Conciliation Acts in force in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa that restricted the right to strike in favour of bargaining in centralised, state-backed industrial councils and barred African trade unions. This was a consistent stance of the NRMWU, who in 1957 had argued that the "fundamental difference in approach to industrial legislation between Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia" should be maintained.[83]

Buoyed by this success, members of the Liaison Committee sought to tackle everyday problems that arose on the mine, and to find things in common. In April, the NRMWU's Nkana branch chairman proposed extending collaboration by exchanging the names of shop stewards on the mines, so joint meetings could be arranged. At Bancroft, both unions submitted a joint complaint over non-cash incentive payments offered to employees – in the form of meat for African workers and alcohol for white workers – as an insult to their dignity.[84] At Roan Antelope, it was agreed that a dispute over underground working practices "could be best dealt with by the two Unions and that neither Union should discuss the matter with the Management." The union's leaderships bonded over their mutual antipathy to the staff associations and passed a resolution stating that MASA and MOSSA "could hardly be described as Trade Unions" and should be taught "orthodox trade union practice."[85] NRMWU officials offered to help the AMWU obtain a closed shop and, in return, the AMWU leadership agreed to oppose the companies' 'efficiency proposals'. The committee even aimed to formulate a joint approach to 'African advancement' and released a statement calling for the abolition of the Apprenticeship Ordinance, which prohibited Africans from undertaking apprenticeships, and therefore becoming artisans.[86]

Efforts were made to present a united front to the mining companies through joint delegations. At Mufulira, the AMWU and NRMWU attempted to force the contractor sinking new shafts to allow their African and white employees to be "represented jointly by the two Unions."[87] This was followed by a joint meeting with the Chamber of Mines to discuss establishing a new procedure for handling disputes modelled on that of the British coal industry. Following this meeting, both companies agreed that "ideally we should like to refuse to meet the Unions jointly at all" and agreed "to use every influence" to prevent the two unions from working together.[88] Despite the racial division in the workforce, both companies feared the latent possibilities that their workforce would embark on joint action and worked to prevent this.

Defeat in the 1958 Strike

[83] Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers Union, *Annual General Council* (Kitwe: n.p., 1957), 30

[84] Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 28 April 1958, IISH MIF Box 359.

[85] Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 24 May 1958, IISH MIF Box 359.

[86] Quarterly report on industrial relations, 30 June 1958, ZCCM 13.3.4C.

[87] Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercosa Salisbury, 10 June 1958, ZCCM 11.1.2A.

[88] Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercosa, 18 June 1958, ZCCM 10.5.8D.

A year after the dispute with white rockbreakers had shut down the Copperbelt, the copper industry was again hit with major unrest by the white workforce, leading to an eight-week strike. The immediate trigger was the attempt by the Chamber of Mines to implement new job arrangements for white workers – the proposed efficiency measures – on 1 August 1958. The work done by white artisans was the issue over which there could be no compromise or negotiated solution.

The NRMWU had been preparing for a strike for months while negotiations were still underway. On May Day 1958, the union organised a 'Rally for Solidarity' with a march of 4,000 white residents in Kitwe and raised £1000 for strike funds.[89] On 3 August, a 160-strong meeting of shop stewards in Kitwe vowed that "the Union should resist with every means in its power" any changes to the jobs of white artisans.[90] Consequently, notices were posted around the mines on 12 August stating "that no artisan's work shall be done by anyone who is not an artisan" and instructing any NRMWU member asked to perform work considered to be an artisan's job to refuse. Anyone contravening this order would be expelled from the NRMWU, which meant that they would also lose their job under the closed shop agreement.[91]

The first man – a timberman, Cliff West, who had arrived 18 months earlier from Johannesburg – was fired from Mufulira the very next day for disobeying a direct order from a manager. 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."[92] Plenty of his workmates were prepared to defy the companies. Over the following days, 60 other white mineworkers were sacked for refusing to obey orders from managers. Anger over these dismissals quickly spread. At Nchanga, 700 white mineworkers gathered around the shafts and threatened to block them if another man was sacked, while pictures of tortoises were posted around Chibuluma to quickly and surreptitiously organise a go-slow after the union's branch chair Jimmy Ryan was sacked.[93]

Matters rapidly came to a head. On 11 September, mass meetings were held at every mine and over 90% of white daily-paid mineworkers voted to strike.[94] These meetings were volatile. When a photographer from the *Northern News* tried to slip quietly into the Luanshya meeting, he was seized and beaten by union members angry at the newspapers' coverage of the dispute.[95] The NRMWU leadership had previously distributed a leaflet warning that "Never at any time in the past

[89] 'May Day Tradition at Nkana', *Rhokana Review*, June 1956.

[90] Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercosa Salisbury, 4 August 1958, ZCCM 11.1.2A.

[91] Notice, Mufulira Branch, 12 August 1958, ZCCM 11.1.2A.

[92] 'He may be test case', *Northern News*, 15 August 1958.

[93] Chamber of Mines to Roselite and Anmercosa Salisbury, 4 September 1958, ZCCM 11.1.2A.

[94] 'Mineworkers' Union to strike tomorrow night', *Northern News*, 12 September 1958.

[95] '600 camera-shy miners', *Northern News*, 10 September 1958.

has the Press of this country been on your side."[96] This was a remarkable comment given that the territory's press – though it opposed the strike – was run largely by and for white residents.[97] It points to a sense of alienation of white workers from the Federation, and the strike itself as a statement of this alienation. The crucial importance of the copper industry to the Federal economy meant that any Copperbelt-wide strike threatened serious economic damage. Yet there is no evidence that white mineworkers ever discussed or considered this aspect.

The strike exacerbated class divisions and disrupted gender relations in white society. One possible reason why white mineworkers were so angry at *Northern News* was that the paper had printed articles by a "Woman Reporter" about artisans' work claiming "in three minutes today – without a spanner – I did the job," with the obvious implication that no job a woman could perform was especially skilled.[98] In general, industrial disputes could have an unsettling impact on gender relations. Strikes could reinforce a strong, masculine image of men taking on a powerful foe in support of a just cause but could also undermine the masculine ideal of men as hard-working breadwinners providing for their family. Moreover, as Carolyn Brown has argued in relation to disputes by Nigerian coal miners, demands for good wages and "respectful working conditions" could be closely linked to "the material and ritual requirements of male status."[99] As Jack Purvis put it: "Our dignity and pride are at stake today, and no employer has the right to flout or belittle that pride."[100] White mineworkers on the Copperbelt were adamant they were not going to be ordered around by their white bosses, who themselves were outraged when their orders were not obeyed.

Economic recession had already destabilised gender relations. Foster Sakala has argued that 'black peril' scares – periodic panics among whites in Southern Africa about the sexual assault of white women by African men – were rare on the Copperbelt because white households were generally prosperous, drawing on Charles van Onselen's argument that black peril scares on the Rand were more common during periods of economic problems in white households.[101] It is therefore telling that there was an unusual spate of 'black peril' cases in the Nkana mine township during February 1958, when copper prices were at their lowest. Six white women reported that African men had broken into their houses at night and three claimed to have been assaulted. Significantly, four of these cases occurred when the women's husbands were on night shift at the

[96] The Facts About the Present Dispute, MRC MSS. 292/968.1/11.

[97] Francis Kasoma, *The Press in Zambia: The Development, Role and Control of National Newspapers in Zambia, 1906-1983* (Lusaka: Multimedia Publications, 1986), 41.

[98] 'The job that shuts a mine', *Northern News*, 8 September 1958.

[99] Carolyn Brown, 'Race and the Construction of Working-Class Masculinity in the Nigerian Coal Industry: The Initial Phase, 1914-1930', *International Labour and Working-Class History* 69 (2006): 37.

[100] 'Message to members', *Northern News*, 11 October 1958.

[101] Foster Sakala, 'A social history of women in the mine compounds of the Zambian Copperbelt during the colonial period' (PhD thesis, Essex University, 2011), 48-49. Charles van Onselen, *New Babylon, New Nineveh: Everyday life on the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2001), 263-66.

mine, the demands of work meaning they were unable to adhere to their expected gendered role of protecting the household.[102]

The increased number of white women and married male workers on the Copperbelt meant that white women played a more prominent role in this strike than in disputes during the 1940s. Most white women, at the outset, backed the strike. "I think it is the only way. If we don't stick together now we have had our chips" argued C.A. van Sladden, one of twelve women asked about the strike in Kitwe. The other eleven agreed. Another woman, whose husband was an artisan at Roan Antelope, thought "to stand firm was the only answer, despite hardship for most families. If we let them down now it will break the union."[103]

Jane Parpart argued that strikes by African mineworkers during the 1950s were community efforts, and that wives of male African workers intervened in strikes by publicly berating opponents of the strike and pressuring vacillating husbands into backing the AMWU.[104] White women played a similar role in the 1958 strike. For instance, one white woman – who adopted the moniker 'Can take it' – penned a letter to the press dripping with bitterness and directed at white workers who opposed the strike. She was ready, she promised, for hardship and struggle, and familiar with both as her father had been jailed following the Rand Revolt. She had a few choice words for those who crossed picket lines:

> I've seen my father land in Marshall Square in 1922… but he was no scab; today his grandchildren are respected – 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.[105]

The memory of the Rand Revolt was not far from the minds of others. Jim Purvis threw himself into the dispute, telling a crowd of shop stewards "I am right in this fight – swinging like I used to down under" and warning "this strike is the final showdown between the men and the mine companies… identical to the one they had in South Africa in the 1920s."[106]

This kind of militancy was commonplace and shocked advisors sent by Britain's TUC and the Miners' International Federation to assist the NRMWU. Walter Hood reported that leaflets and speeches by NRMWU officials "give the impression that we were living in 1926" – the year of Britain's General Strike, in which Hood had participated as a striking miner – with "talk of 'Grass growing

[102] J.B. Attenborough to Assistant Commissioner, CID, 4 March 1958, NAZ MHA 1/3/1.

[103] 'Copperbelt wives back striking mineworkers', *Northern News*, 18 September 1958.

[104] 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): 49-51.

[105] Marshall Square was a notorious prison in Johannesburg. 'Letter from 'Can take it'', *Northern News*, 27 September 1958.

[106] "Lightning Jimmy' is in There', *Northern News*, 29 October 1958.

over the pulley wheels' and 'We'll beat the bosses to their knees'."[107] The TUC advisors were concerned with the orderly conduct of industrial disputes and reaching a negotiated settlement, and had to talk white mineworkers out of taking wildcat strike action. Hood, a keen observer of working-class life in Britain and Australia, reported that it was difficult to persuade white workers "not to take direct action themselves" because:

> we are not dealing with British workers, but they are somewhat similar to Australians, all the forcefulness, brashness of a new country and all the 'Jacks as good as his master', 'everyone a leader' attitudes.[108]

[PLACE FIGURE 8 HERE]

Other international support came from South Africa and NRMWU officials travelled to Johannesburg to mobilise the labour movement there. The South African TUC – a nominally multi-racial federation with white leadership – sent donations to support the strike and lobbied Anglo American in South Africa.[109] Donations were also allegedly offered by trade union federations in East Germany and the Soviet Union, but were rejected.[110] Privately, however, some white trade unionists in the region did not think the NRMWU could win. "The North Union, will go down," concluded the president of Southern Rhodesia's white miners' union, a month into the strike.[111]

The dispute came to be seen in increasingly hyperbolic terms as the strike progressed. The NRMWU accused the mining companies of having an "attitude of mind prevalent in the Fascist Governments of the last war. We sought to suppress it then, we fight it now."[112] Another white miner compared the strike to a war and publicly called for "traitors to the mineworkers' union" to be shot.[113] Not everyone thought about the dispute in such existential terms, however. A few weeks into the strike, two miners allegedly called up the union's head office to urge them not to halt the strike because they were in the middle of a fishing trip on the Zambezi![114]

Divisions within the white workforce were exacerbated and hostility between daily-paid workers and mine officials increased. All the mines closed after the strike began, and during the shutdown, officials had to regularly inspect the underground workings for signs of flooding or damage and then assign white mineworkers on essential service duty to do repair work. Shop

[107] Walter Hood to George Woodcock, 6 October 1958, MRC MSS. 292/968.1/11.

[108] Hood had participated in the Mass Observation project in Britain in the 1930s and later worked in Australia. Walter Hood to Vincent Tewson, 8 September 1958, MRC MSS. 292/968.1/11.

[109] Dulcie Hartwell to NRMWU, 17 October 1958, HPA AH 1426 Ea6.

[110] 'Reds offer to aid strikers, says union member', *Northern News*, 18 October 1958.

[111] Howard Bloomfield to William Lawther, 14 October 1958, IISH, MIF Box 359.

[112] *Union News Special*, 27 October 1958, ZCCM 11.1.2A.

[113] Letter from T.J. Brown, *Northern News*, 1 October 1958.

[114] 'Strikers Like Fishing Best', *Rand Daily Mail*, 6 October 1958.

stewards suspected that mine officials were trying to restart production and demanded the right to decide what constituted essential work and began questioning officials entering the mines. Mine officials bitterly resented this; exactly the desired response. A shop steward at Roan Antelope explained that the officials had been scabbing so "they were deliberately trying to get their own back by antagonising them as much as possible." The mine's superintendent was incandescent: "We, and not the Union, ran the Mine."[115]

A minority opposed industrial action. One artisan's wife condemned white workers who "have had it too easy for too long" and who had "back-stabbed other trade unionists (Africans)" during previous strikes.[116] Conversely, one union member called for a 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."[117] The NRMWU leadership had a different conception of how to defend the interests of white workers. Jack Ryan, who had been laid off from Chibuluma, had gone to South Africa and there penned an angry letter to the *Rand Daily Mail*, contesting an editorial that the strike was about African advancement. "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."[118] Indeed, the NRMWU leadership surreptitiously helped the AMWU prepare a legal claim for African mineworkers laid off without notice or pay during the strike, which would have imposed a heavy financial cost on the companies.[119]

As the strike lengthened, some white women formed a committee to collect and distribute fruit and vegetables from gardens. Other women formed a Women's Action League to support the strike and collected food and cash to make food parcels for striking families as the NRMWU could not afford strike pay, so strikers had no income. The Women's Action League also lobbied the colonial administration in support of strikers' demands. [120] This echoes the experience of strikes in other parts of the copper industry. Janet Finn recounted the telling response given by a labour leader in Butte, Montana to the question of how he had survived day-to-day during the lengthy strike on the copper mines in 1967: "After a moment of silence, he said, 'Well, I guess you'd have to ask my wife.'"[121]

Even though the strike caused copper output to fall noticeably – from 417,000 tons in 1957 to 375,000 in 1958 – lower copper prices meant that both companies were willing to sit out even a

[115] Minutes of a meeting with representatives of the Mine Workers Union, 18 September 1958, ZCCM 11.1.2A.

[116] Letter from 'Unskilled Artisaness', *Northern News*, 3 October 1958.

[117] Letter from 'Corrupt', *Northern News*, 21 October 1958.

[118] J.A. Ryan to the Editor, Rand Daily Mail, 24 October 1958, HPA AH 1426 Ea6

[119] Northern Rhodesian Intelligence Report, September 1958, TNA CO 1015/2035.

[120] 'The miners' wives form a Women's Action League', *Northern News*, 3 October 1958.

[121] Finn, *Tracing the Veins*, 190.

lengthy strike to restore managerial authority. The NRMWU could not afford strike pay and its members could not afford to strike indefinitely. Instead, the union bulk-bought meat to distribute to members and negotiated discounts on basic foodstuffs at shops. Cheap meat and food coupons were not the lifestyle that whites had come to the Copperbelt for. "I, for one, cannot go on indefinitely – heading for ruination as every day passed" exclaimed one Mufulira mineworker.[122] Resolve to maintain the strike ebbed away and the NRMWU scrambled to find any concession to avoid total defeat. The companies agreed to re-hire all the men sacked and to review the procedure for handling industrial disputes, but the union had to agree to the efficiency measures. At meetings across the Copperbelt, union officials "pleaded desperately with their members" to accept the deal and, by a show of hands, a large majority did.[123] After 53 days, the strike was over. "Victory for Copperbelt Mine-owners" declared one British newspaper.[124]

International Mobility of the White Workforce

One immediate consequence of the industrial upheaval was something of an exodus from the Copperbelt. Turnover of the white workforce reached 36% in 1958 and the departures were predominantly daily-paid workers.[125] When the re-structuring went ahead, it took place with a white workforce that had been substantially reconstituted.

This exodus underscores the mobility of the white mineworkers and their position in a transnational white working class. The world remained open to people like them and mobility around what was increasingly becoming Britain's former settler colonies was secured by their race and industrial skills. Those that left were confident that their skills could secure them industrial jobs wherever they went, and they were correct. One man who left Mufulira shortly after completing an apprenticeship went to California and "presented his papers to the local union for a job" and quickly secured one.[126] The number of people leaving Roan Antelope for New Zealand in 1958 prompted the mine's magazine to ponder "Wonder what's going on over there?"[127] Three years later, a photograph was published in the *Rhokana Review* showing six former artisans from the mine all working at the same dockyard in New Zealand.[128]

[122] Letter from 'Mineworker', *Northern News*, 31 October 1958.

[123] 2,616 voted to return to work, over 1,000 abstained and only 333 voted to continue striking. 'Decisive vote ends strike', *Northern News*, 3 November 1958.

[124] 'Victory for Copperbelt Mine-owners', *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 November 1958.

[125] Data obtained Holleman and Biesheuvel shows that turnover for daily-paid occupations, especially underground workers, was significantly higher than for clerical and administrative staff or shift bosses and foreman. Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mining Employees Part I*, 54.

[126] 'Round the Group', *Horizon*, February 1962.

[127] 'Departmental News', *Roan Antelope Magazine*, August 1958.

[128] 'Nkana lads in New Zealand', *Rhokana Review*, October 1961.

The frequency with which former Copperbelt residents encountered each other at workplaces around the world is a good indication of the spread and mobility of the white workforce. In 1958, a former shift boss at Chibuluma Mine, Alan Bragg, then working as a copper miner in Canada, was offered a job as a shift boss at a newly opened uranium mine. Bragg accepted and on starting the new job found that the mine's manager was Alex McNeil, who had also been his boss at Chibuluma. This was possibly an unwelcome reunion as, not long after, Bragg was back on the Copperbelt.[129]

Around the same time, a former underground official at Nchanga, Alan Heppenstal, wrote to *Nchanga News* about his new job at another uranium mine in Canada and mentioned that he had encountered a rockbreaker who he had known at Nchanga working on the same mine. The rockbreaker, Dave Blair, was doing the same job in Canada but, Heppenstal claimed, "the work was too much for him" as he operated drilling machines "entirely on his own," the implication being that Blair could not do the job without Africans performing the manual work.[130] This article was then retracted a few months later, after *Nchanga News* received a letter from a solicitor engaged by Blair specifically to contest the claim that he could not do drilling work unassisted.[131]

This incident is illuminating for several reasons. It offers a window into very long-distance migration of white workers between mine sites and indicates that there was a flow of information (as Blair had evidently read *Nchanga News*). This migration pattern was not unusual, nor was the traffic one way. A few years earlier, Rhokana had noted 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." This comment had been prompted by news from two young apprentices, who had left Rhokana for Canada after seeing a job advert in the *Toronto Star*.[132] The incident with Dave Blair also reflects the masculine self-image of miners – his capacity for strenuous manual work was attacked – and tells us something about the nature of work on the Copperbelt mines.

Contemporaries often complained that white mineworkers did little or no actual work themselves. Thomas Franck, a prominent American legal scholar, concluded after a visit in 1957 that "nowhere in the Copperbelt can one find Europeans wielding drills, shovels, picks or pipes." While African workers sweated away in the dust and heat, Franck claimed, their white supervisors sat "comfortably watching, or reading, or filling out a workbook."[133] Yet, when white mineworkers moved to other parts of the world, they did not find it difficult to secure skilled mine work of the kind that they had been doing, or ostensibly not doing, on the Copperbelt.

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[129] 'Back from Canada', *Horizon*, August 1959.

[130] 'It's tough on rockbreakers in Canada', *Nchanga News*, 28 February 1958.

[131] 'Mr Dave Blair – an apology', *Nchanga News*, 28 July 1958.

[132] 'News from Abroad', *Rhokana Review*, February 1953.

[133] Thomas M. Franck, *Race and Nationalism: The Struggle for Power in Rhodesia-Nyasaland* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960), 283.

While Africans performed the hardest manual work, it is an exaggeration to say that whites did no work, and it is an exaggeration that was made with an evident purpose. Elaine Katz argued that in South Africa mining companies deliberately encouraged the public perception that white miners were "supervisors [so] did virtually no work; and… received inappropriately high wages" to undermine their position.[134] Similarly, on the Copperbelt, the companies sought to contest the claims of their white workforce and erode the support of the white public, and overseas trade unions, by arguing that white mineworkers did little real work. As one mine manager who contested wage claims on the Copperbelt through a comparison with wages of miners on Britain's coalfields concluded acidly: "It should perhaps be mentioned that the mine employees in Great Britain have to do the work themselves."[135] NRMWU leaders were well-aware of this tactic, and worried that "we are pictured as the aristocrats of labour resting on the backs of the African working at slave-rates."[136]

The Copperbelt mines also continued to recruit men from other mining centres, and departing white mineworkers were quickly replaced either with new arrivals or white workers who had previously worked on the Copperbelt. In 1960, for instance, Nchanga Mine calculated that 14% of their white workforce had resigned at some point in the 1950s and then subsequently re-joined the mine, and 16 people had resigned three times![137] 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 England.[138] Moreover, 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.[139]

[PLACE FIGURE 9 HERE]

The End of Interracial Collaboration

There were more internal ructions in the NRMWU following defeat in the 1958 strike. Fred Holtmann emerged as a central figure in the new leadership. Holtmann, described as "one of the strong men" of the union, was appointed union president and had a similar profile to his predecessors and to the workers he represented.[140] Born in Johannesburg, Holtmann had worked underground on the Rand from age 16 and spent six years there before coming to Mufulira in 1938 for the first of three separate stints at the mine. The first ended in 1941 when he refused to work and joined the army, despite being in a reserved occupation as a driller. He fought in East Africa and

[134] Katz, *White Death*, 64, 70.

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

[136] Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers Union, *Annual General Council*, 29.

[137] Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mine Workers*, 51.

[138] 'Round the Group', *Horizon*, September 1960.

[139] Closed shop ballot results, NAZ MLSS1/26/170.

[140] 'Union Official Quits', *Northern News*, 22 July 1961.

South-East Asia before returning to Mufulira in 1946. He became a shop steward on his return but left again in 1952 and spent three years in Canada working in mining and construction, then came back to Mufulira.[141] He was a firm believer in the efficacy of strikes, which he described as "really our only weapon. Without the right to strike, the union might just as well close down."[142]

Holtmann, however, was politically more conservative than his predecessors and under his leadership, the NRMWU moved closer to the United Federal Party. By contrast, his predecessor as union president privately expressed hope that the Labour Party would win Britain's 1959 general election, then break-up the Federation and nationalise the copper mines.[143] Holtmann's appointment marked the end of the brief period of radicalism and the curtailing of the prospects of co-operation with the AMWU. The NRMWU had been defeated and it would be several years before white workers tried again to contest the position of their employers. Although Holtmann had been a member of the Liaison Committee, he made no effort to revive it and distanced the NRMWU from collaboration with African trade unions.

There had been a brief flurry of radicalism among the white workforce in the aftermath of the 1958 strike. As one optimistic white worker opined, "Something has been learnt from this strike, and that is the complete solidarity of all the workers," and this collective solidarity meant that the mines could easily be nationalised "through a Socialist Government." The same writer emphasised class divisions on the Copperbelt:

> For whom did we fight during the war years of 1939-1945? The picture becomes a little obscure through the years that have passed…The few look after the few but we, the fighters of yesterday, and the workers of today have gained literally nothing.[144]

A flurry of letters to the press followed demanding nationalisation of the mines and a self-declared "progressive group" in the NRMWU prepared a plan to nationalise the mining industry.[145]

This radicalism reached its zenith with the stillborn attempt to create a federation of unions representing white and African mineworkers across Northern and Southern Rhodesia. Twelve delegates from the AMWU, NRMWU and the Associated Mine Workers' of Rhodesia met in Victoria Falls on 1 May – a day with obvious intentional symbolism – and agreed to form a liaison committee. Resolutions were passed demanding the removal of the colour bar and calling on unions "to do all in their power to establish a single wage structure which would not be based on racial differences."[146] Also in attendance was a Canadian trade unionist Charles Millard, who subsequently sent material on the classification of jobs and organisation of work on Canadian iron ore mines to help the

[141] 'Profile', *Horizon*, September 1960.

[142] 'A Dynamic Union with a Turbulent Career', *Horizon*, April 1961.

[143] Record note, Senior Labour Office, 24 August 1959, NAZ MLSS1/26/170.

[144] Letter from 'United We Stand, Divided We Fall', *Northern News*, 5 November 1958.

[145] 'Demand for State Ownership of the Copper Mines', *The Guardian*, 17 September 1959.

[146] 'End colour-bar bid by mine unions', *Northern News*, 2 May 1959.

NRMWU in continued post-strike talks with the mining companies.[147] Progressive gestures like this liaison committee helped keep supporters in the international trade union movement onside.

Nothing came of the proposed liaison. Jack Purvis was the main instigator and shortly afterwards he was forced out of the NRMWU (and consequently sacked from the mine) following allegations of financial impropriety against the union leadership and anger from members that there was so little to show from repeated industrial action. Purvis was a genuine advocate of collaboration with African trade unionists. After being removed from the NRMWU, he was appointed a representative for the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and spent the next few years closely the advising the AMWU over strategy and negotiations, along with assisting African trade unions in Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa, where he even met Albert Luthuli.[148] This was the second time that a Copperbelt white mineworker had been selected as a representative of a major international trade union federation (Brian Goodwin being the first), a testament how highly white trade unionists were regarded by their counterparts elsewhere in the world.

Possibilities for co-operation between the African and white mineworkers' union were further diminished by the death of Lawrence Katilungu, an ally of Purvis and the other driving force behind the short-lived Liaison Committee in 1958. Katilungu was removed as AMWU president in December 1960 in acrimonious circumstances for joining the Monckton Commission established to review the Federal Constitution, which African trade unions had resolved to boycott.[149] He turned to politics and became acting president of the ANC from April 1961 after party leader Harry Nkumbula was imprisoned for hitting and killing a police officer in a road accident. Katilungu was still in this position in November when he was killed in a car crash on the Congo Pedicle road.[150]

Following Katilungu's death, the NRMWU leadership established a fund to provide for his widow and the education of his six children. Donations were solicited widely as "he was well known in Trade Union and political circles overseas."[151] It might seem extraordinary that officials of a whites-only union were soliciting donations for the family of the ANC president. However, alongside admiration for his role in the trade union movement, what was attractive about Katilungu to white trade unionists was his supposedly moderate politics and hostility towards more radical African nationalists.

The moment for even a rhetorical commitment to co-operation between African and white mineworkers had passed. African trade unionists continued to press for this, with little response. The United Trade Union Congress – "the labour wing of UNIP"[152] – invited the NRMWU to affiliate

[147] William Mahoney, United Steelworkers of America to Jack Purvis, 19 May 1959, IISH, ICFTU, Box 4736.

[148] Jack Purvis to Dulcie Hartwell, 19 February 1960, HPA, AH1426, Ef1.

[149] Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, 37.

[150] Macola, *Liberal Nationalism*, 75, 85.

[151] Andrew Leslie to Ernest Jones, Miners' International Federation, 15 November 1961, IISH, MIF, Box 361.

[152] Bates, *Unions, Parties and Political Development*, 128.

in 1961 and 1963, though the NRMWU demurred both times.[153] At a conference in Accra in May 1961, Gabriel Mushikwa, then AMWU 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." While it is notable that the NRMWU even attended the conference, the union's representative replied 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."[154]

The Fleeting Defence of Colonialism

Defeats suffered by both African and white mineworkers in the late 1950s resulted in a period of calmer industrial relations, even though this was a period of dramatic political changes. African nationalist forces offered an increasingly powerful challenge to colonial rule and, somewhat surprisingly, white mineworkers offered at best a half-hearted and fleeting resistance to this. Most had little abiding interest in Northern Rhodesia and while most undoubtedly preferred colonial rule they were not prepared to make sacrifices to defend it. The reaction of whites on the Copperbelt to political changes was subdued compared to the magnitude of those changes.

Political unrest in Northern Rhodesia intensified in the late 1950s in response to the British Government's decision to hold a review of the Federation constitution in 1960. The Federation, as John Darwin noted, had been established as "a new 'dominion' in the making" but its "constitutional future had been left unresolved."[155] Settler politicians began pushing again for Dominion status, and the prospect of strengthened white political control revived African opposition to Federation. In 1958, the ANC's radical wing split from the party and formed the Zambian African National Congress. Nationalist movements in Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland sought to co-ordinate anti-Federation campaigns and, in response, the Federal Government engineered the declaration of a state of emergency in all three territories in early 1959.[156] Nationalist parties were banned, several hundred nationalists were imprisoned without trial and, most seriously, soldiers shot dead 20 demonstrators at Nkata Bay in Nyasaland on the first day of the emergency. [157]

This proved enormously damaging to the ambitions of settler politicians. The immediate result was a damning official enquiry – the Devlin Commission – that concluded Nyasaland was "a police state" in which opposition to Federation was repressed and that such opposition was near-

[153] 'It's wait and see', *The Rhokana Copper Miner*, 12 January 1963.

[154] Report of Proceedings of African Regional Miners' Conference, IISH MIF Box 792

[155] John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-system, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 619.

[156] Zoë Groves, 'Transnational Networks and Regional Solidarity: The Case of the Central African Federation, 1953–1963', *African Studies* 72, 2 (2013): 165.

[157] 31 more people were killed in the colony in the following days. John Darwin, 'The Central African Emergency, 1959', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 21, 3 (1993): 217-234.

universal among Africans.[158] A broader enquiry in 1960 into the future of Federation – the Monckton Commission – reached the same conclusion about the extent African opposition to Federation and argued that the Federation could only be maintained through force. Moreover, the state of emergency did little to stem the rise of African nationalism. Activists of the banned Zambian African National Congress soon reconstituted the party as UNIP which demanded independence by October 1960.[159] Far from an amicable accession to Dominion status, settler politicians soon realised that the Federation faced a fight for survival against rising African opposition and ebbing imperial enthusiasm in Britain.

This was a fight for survival largely conducted at negotiations in London and constitutional conferences. At these, Welensky spoke as the representative of whites in the Federation and in Northern Rhodesia white residents were prepared to back him. White voters had overwhelmingly supported the UFP in Northern Rhodesia's territorial elections in 1959, which the UFP had fought over the issue of Dominion status.[160] White voters, however, were unwilling to go further than this, and there is little evidence of a campaigns to defend Federation and colonial rule.

The new NRMWU leadership were close to the UFP and keen to help. Fred Holtmann promised that "We intend to play a much bigger part in the future of the Federation than we have in the past."[161] In 1961, the union's leadership suggested a one-day protest strike against any concessions by the British Government to African nationalists and a public demonstration.[162] The union also sent a delegation to the UK to give what they termed "the workers' case" for the Federation to Labour MPs and British trade unions. This delegation, however, was politely but firmly rebuffed by the British labour movement. The NUM bluntly informed them that their union's policy "was one of support for the rights of self-determination for the peoples of Africa."[163]

In this push to support settler politicians, however, the new NRMWU leadership was out of step with their members and were unable to mobilise their membership. Neither the promised protest strike nor the demonstration took place. A few weeks after this abortive protest, the union's general secretary instructed all branches to hold meetings to discuss the proposals by the British Government for a new constitution for Northern Rhodesia. Few attended these meetings and some branches refused to hold the meeting on the grounds that members were not interested.[164] Most white Copperbelt residents simply did not engage in the formal political process. The NRMWU's 1958 annual congress reported that "only a small percentage of the Union's members are presently

[158] *Ibid*, 230.

[159] Bizeck Jube Phiri, *A Political History of Zambia From the Colonial Period to the 3rd Republic* (Trenton, NJ.: Africa World Press, 2006), 102-4.

[160] Northern Rhodesia Elections', *East Africa and Rhodesia*, 26 March 1959.

[161] 'A Dynamic Union with a Turbulent Career', *Horizon*, April 1961.

[162] D.A. Etheredge to Roy Welensky, 12 October 1961, WP 255/8.

[163] NEC Meeting minutes, 9 February 1961, NUM.

[164] N.D. Hunt to Under-Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Mines, 12 December 1961, NAZ MLSS1/26/170.

registered as voters," and the evidence suggests this was the case.[165] There were only 6,329 (overwhelmingly white) registered voters in Bancroft, Chingola, Luanshya, Kitwe and Mufulira in 1957, but the combined white population of these towns in 1956 was 30,256.[166]

Many white mineworkers' first thoughts were about mobility, not defending colonial rule. While NRMWU officials were assuring Welensky that "our aspirations… are identical with those of the UFP," their members were clamouring to withdraw their money "en bloc" from the company savings scheme so they could leave the territory when they wanted to.[167] This financial outflow would have been a major blow to the Federal economy and the Minister of Finance had to threaten to block it.

White mineworkers proved unreliable allies in the defence of white minority rule, and resistance to decolonisation was fleeting. Two events during 1960 show this. The first was the killing of Lillian Burton in Ndola in May 1960, who died after her car was stoned and then burnt by UNIP activists. This provoked an outpouring of anger. 2,000 whites joined a rally in Kitwe where settler politicians denounced the UNIP activists as rats who should be exterminated. Walima Kalusa argued that demand by whites in the Federation for self -government "reached its crescendo in the aftermath of her killing."[168] The second event was the chaotic end of Belgian colonial rule in Congo and the secession of Katanga in July 1960. 6,000 whites from Katanga fled abruptly across the border into Northern Rhodesia after an army mutiny and were housed for several days in the mine clubs and the homes of white residents. The flight of these whites left a lasting impression on many. In the aftermath, the NRMWU and MOSSA proposed forming "a Home Guard or similar type of military unit" because they did not trust the colonial government "to act quickly and firmly in dealing with serious trouble" so needed to arm themselves.[169]

Resolve was short-lived. The Home Guards were more like "a bit of a Dad's army," according to Robin Cumming, whose father was a member of the Mufulira unit and whose only military action was being accidentally shot in the arm by another recruit during training.[170] About the closest most white mineworkers came to armed opposition to decolonisation was when an NRMWU official from Bancroft, who had come to the border with crisps and drinks for whites fleeing Katanga, tried to

[165] NRMWU, Annual General Council Meeting, 29 September 1958, MRC, MSS. 292/968.1/11.

[166] The voters' roll contained a small number of Indian voters and a handful of African voters. Certified Register of Voters, 1957, Appendix I, TNA CO 1015/2002. Roughly one-third of the white population was below 21, the minimum age to vote.

[167] E. Clayton, Bancroft to Roy Welensky, 2 January 1961; Draft Minutes, 2 February 1961, WP 255/8.

[168] Walima 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): 68-70.

[169] Record of a meeting held in the residence of the Federal Prime Minister, 18 July 1960, WP 255/8.

[170] Interview with Neville Searle and Robin Cumming, 24 September 2013.

persuade the District Commissioner to let him take a party of armed miners into Katanga to "beat up" mutinying soldiers.[171]

Only a few months after the death of Lillian Burton and the sudden arrival of several thousand white refugees, public facilities were desegrated in the Federation by law and white mineworkers voted to accept new African advancement proposals. These proposals involved transfering some semi-skilled jobs performed by whites to African workers and creating new training schemes for 'Schedule A' jobs that would be open to African and white recruits, who would be employed in the same jobs on the same rate of pay.[172] This was a major dent in the industrial colour bar and provoked little controversy. The *Northern News* reported that "only a fraction of the… European mine workers have bothered to attend meetings called by their Union to discuss" the African advancement proposals.[173]

Desegregation of public facilities similarly attracted little opposition. The impetus for this legislation was an event that had occurred on the Copperbelt. In 1959, Sir Francis Ibiam, a lay elder of the Presbyterian Church and president of University College of Ibadan, was refused service in a cafe while passing through Chingola because, as the proprietor informed him, "we do not serve Africans."[174] The subsequent international outcry and embarrassment for the Federal Government prompted the passage of the Race Relations Ordinance, which became law in September 1960. According to Colin Morris, there were "ugly incidents outside cafes and cinemas on the Copperbelt for a week or so" then few further reactions.[175]

One other good indication about the subdued reaction to growing African nationalism is the person of Colin Morris himself. Morris, a Methodist minister in Chingola, experienced a damascene conversion in 1957 to anti-colonialism. He ended segregated congregations in his church, defying the sensibilities of his white congregants, and later stood as a candidate for UNIP. Morris' sermons and politics were unpopular with local whites, but expressions of anger did not extend beyond expletive-ridden letters that the *Northern News* refused to print, and his church being vandalised on one occasion.[176] This certainly made life for Morris unpleasant and difficult, but it is a world away from the bannings, explusions and imprisonment faced by whites who supported African nationalism in other parts of Southern Africa.[177]

Conclusion

[171] The Battle of Kasumbalesa, NAZ WP1/14/58.

[172] African Advancement Proposals in the sphere of the NRMWU, 4 October 1960, TNA CO 1015/2198.

[173] 'African Advancement Vote', *Northern News*, 17 October 1959.

[174] 'Rhodesia apologies to Nigeria', *The Times*, 5 September 1959.

[175] Morris, *Hour After Midnight*, 162.

[176] *Ibid*., 50, 130-31.

[177] See Ruth First's account of how "as the struggle grew sharper, the privileges of membership in the white group were overwhelmed by the penalties of political participation." Ruth First, *117 Days* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 1965), 116.

In 1958, Northern Rhodesia's Governor Arthur Benson wearily complained:

> During the past four-and-a-half years as Governor here I doubt if a single day has passed when I have not been personally involved in consideration of some aspect of the relationship between master and man, and the inter-play between various Unions and the Management, on the Copperbelt.

Benson sympathised entirely, he emphasised, with those who "would like nothing better than to see the Union shattered and dead."[178]

These attitudes were no real secret. The NRMWU leadership were well-aware that they had few friends in the colony and it was in this context that white trade unionists finally turned to their African counterparts for support. For a brief moment it was possible for two African trade unionists, A.F. Chisunka and G.C. Chindeli, to propose that Dan Swart, an Afrikaner mineworker, chair a meeting "to bring about a complete organisation of labour" with joint union representation for African and white workers, and for Swart to accept the invitation.[179]

The moment did not last, and defeat in the 1958 strike prompted many of the white trade unionists who supported such collaboration to leave the mines. It is one good indication, however, that the most serious disputes in this period were not about the colour bar, as has often been assumed. What is notable is that, despite heated rhetoric, the dispute over the colour bar and African advancement fizzled but did not ignite, as detailed in Chapter 4. It is telling then that these same workers were willing to shut every mine on the Copperbelt to reduce the rockbreakers' working week by two hours and in 1958 took their stand over the demarcation of white artisan's work.

White mineworkers were under no illusions that they were irreplaceable. In 1957, the NRMWU leadership had forecast a possible 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."[180] Yet, when the crash in copper prices jolted white mineworkers out of their cosy position, most identified the threat to their position as coming from mine management, not African mineworkers. Seemingly straightforward proposals from mine management about the use of particular tools had far-reaching implications for perceptions of skill, authority, masculine status, and the dignity of labour.

Many white mineworkers, at least privately, had little faith in their own supposed racial superiority. As one NRMWU official put it in 1959:

> 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

[178] Benson was referring specifically to the NRMWU. Arthur Benson to Keith Acutt and Ronald Prain, 11 November 1958, TNA CO 1015/2035.

[179] Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting, 24 May 1958, IISH MIF Box 359.

[180] Northern Rhodesia Mine Workers Union, *Annual General Council*, 28.

> man. But, damn it man, they're white and they're decent people, and they can't just be left behind![181]

'Left behind' could mean social mobility or physical mobility. Continued mobility meant that those whites who wanted could leave the Copperbelt and would not be 'left behind'. Industrial unrest in these years caused a sharp increase in the turnover of the white workforce from a post-war low of 13% in 1956 to 25% in 1957 and 36% in 1958.[182] As noted above, those departing were soon replaced, and this had important consequences. The increasingly powerful and determined African nationalist movement was encountered by whites who had not been in Northern Rhodesia for long, and who would not be there for long.

[181] Holleman and Biesheuvel, *White Mine Workers*, 19.

[182] Appendix I.

Chapter 6

Surviving Independence, 1963-74

Mieczysław Rzechorzek was always called 'Frank' on the Copperbelt, even in official correspondence. It is one indication of the resolutely anglophone culture in white society that the modest numbers of Polish workers, among whom Frank Rzechorzek was one, others from continental Europe and Afrikaners had to accommodate themselves to. Rzechorzek himself was no stranger to anglophone culture. He had left Poland as a teenager at the outbreak of the Second World War, served in the British RAF and then came to the Copperbelt a few years after demobilisation, the latter part of which was a common enough story for those white men who arrived in the 1950s.[1] Rzechorzek became a stalwart of the NRMWU at Mufulira and was a central figure in industrial disputes during the 1960s.

This kind of profile – the union militant – became less common in the 1960s. White society on the Copperbelt became more homogenous and conflict dissipated. The last strikes by white workers took place in 1969. An occupational psychologist engaged by Mufulira Mine in 1970 to investigate grievances among white employees was puzzled to find that "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."[2] By the early 1970s class divisions between whites were much less distinct. There were still plenty of white men employed on the mines, but the kind of jobs they performed had changed and there was little sense of collective interests in the workplace. Where a collective identity did exist, it was a racial one.

The persistence of racial segregation after Zambian independence in 1964, with whites continuing to live, as far as possible, a separate existence from Africans, requires explanation. Previous chapters have emphasised the role of the white workforce in enforcing and shaping racial division. In the 1960s, the mining companies played a crucial role in reproducing racial divisions on the mine. This role has been overlooked in the scholarly literature. Both companies restructured their workforce in this period and all white workers were placed in the newly created category of 'expatriate', a racial category with pay and benefits unavailable to African mineworkers regardless of experience or skill level. The racial division of labour was used by the companies to sever any link between African and white earnings, and in doing so to restrain African wages. Both companies also initiated training programmes to promote white workers to staff an expanded supervisory hierarchy, thus smoothing the divisions within the white workforce.

[1] Anna Krzystek and Tadeusz Krzystek, *Polskie Siły Powietrzne w Wielkiej Brytanii w latach 1940-1947 łącznie z Pomocniczą Lotniczą Służbą Kobiet* (*PLSK –WAAF*), 3rd edition, (Sandomierz: Stratus, 2013), 471.

[2] A Study of the Causes of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Amongst Fixed Period Contract Expatriate Employees at Mufulira Copper Mines Limited, Part I, March 1970, ZCCM 3.3.1F.

Even the continued presence of white mineworkers in substantial numbers is surprising and was explained both by corporate policies and the comparatively peaceful nature of decolonisation in Zambia.[3] This was unusual. Independence in Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe was preceded by a protracted and bloody conflict between anti-colonial nationalists and white settlers. In Angola and Mozambique, as well as in neighbouring Katanga, independence precipitated a sudden exodus of whites. By the mid-1960s, armed struggles against white minority rule, in varying degrees of intensity, were underway across the region.

White mineworkers made little attempt to resist decolonisation, though they engaged in strikes to protect their racialised privileges in the workplace before and after Zambian independence. This subdued reaction contrasts with what happened in other parts of the region. Danelle van Zyl-Hermann has detailed how white workers in South Africa, and especially white miners, engaged in a long resistance to the transition to majority rule because, she argued, the privileges of these white workers remained precariously dependent on state protection.[4]

This lack of resistance also had enduring consequences for Zambia. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen began their influential volume on settler colonialism by noting that "Southern Africa's settler states have fallen… but conflicts over the land, loyalty, and economic standing of the formerly dominant settler minority still wrack their successor majoritarian regimes."[5] This is not the case in Zambia, something best illustrated by the brief acting presidency of Guy Scott – a white Zambian and prominent political figure – following the death of President Michael Sata in 2014, a development which would be unthinkable elsewhere in Southern Africa. There was a division between transient white mineworkers and those whites who did identify as Zambians, though the position of the latter in the new nation was sometimes uneasy.[6] The same is true in other parts of the continent. Janet McIntosh, for instance, argues that for many descendants of former settlers in "Kenya *is* home," even if the settlers who came to Kenya a century ago did not imagine it that way, and some have adopted the Kenyan nationalist discourse.[7]

This was not the case for white mineworkers, for whom the designation of 'expatriate' simply formalised what was already a de facto situation. The mild reaction of the white workforce was rooted in their mobility, they did not intend to stay, either in colonial Northern Rhodesia or in independent Zambia. It was only dramatic changes in the copper industry that brought their time to an end. In 1975, there were still 4,495 whites working on the mines, more than in 1950. The total

[3] The same was not true for other groups of white workers. In 1968, for instance, the 1,000 white railway workers remaining in Zambia were transferred to Rhodesia. Ginsburgh, *Class, Work, and Whiteness*, 201.

[4] Van Zyl-Hermann, *Privileged Precariat*.

[5] Caroline Elkins and Susan Pederson, 'Settler Colonialism: A Concept and its Uses', in *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies*, eds. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.

[6] Sishuwa, 'Racialised Nationalism'.

[7] McIntosh, *Unsettled*, 2

fell sharply thereafter and by the early 1980s there were only around 1,300 white expatriates on the mines, a small fraction of the total workforce.[8]

Independence for Zambia

In September 1960, settler politician, and former mine official, Rex L'Ange delivered an uncompromising speech in the Nkana mine township:

> Here, on the Copperbelt, we are right in the front line of racial conflict, we have been here a good many years, and… I think we should make it very clear that we look upon this part of the world as our home and birthright, which we have no intention of relinquishing.[9]

Few of his audience, I would argue, sincerely thought the same. White mineworkers – a racist, privileged minority with ready access to explosives– seemingly had everything to lose in an independent Zambia yet offered little more than cursory resistance to decolonisation. Overtaken rapidly by events, whites on the Copperbelt grumbled and blustered, but ultimately abandoned claims to political power and accepted life under an African nationalist government.

This was not how contemporary observers anticipated events would turn out. The British Government made plans for military intervention to deal with a planned revolt by whites in the Federation and civil servants worried there was "a real risk that British troops would not obey when pitted against, e.g. European mineworkers on the Copperbelt."[10] The fact that there was little sustained opposition requires some explanation. The unwillingness of whites on the Copperbelt to oppose decolonisation was rooted in their mobility and in the particular form that white working-class identity took. Both contributed to a lack of attachment to Northern Rhodesia and made the colonial political order less relevant to the maintenance of their privileged position.

Bill Schwarz argued that the history of the Federation "was a history which was largely a struggle about racial whiteness: about its prospects and futures, its responsibilities and dangers, its possibilities and impossibilities." For settler politicians like Roy Welensky "and for the settlers more generally," he claimed, the struggle to save the Federation was an ideological one because "their investment in the idea of white civilization became the means by which they could defend an entire system of social privilege."[11] As the speech from L'Ange above indicates, settler politicians saw things in these terms, but it is difficult to detect much ideological struggle for notions of white civilisation on the Copperbelt in these years. The privileges of white mineworkers were based upon their position in the workplace, obtained and maintained through racialised collective struggle. Access to high wages, housing, healthcare, and education was through the workplace. Their position did not depend upon control of state power or the imperial connection with Britain. White

[8] Nationalities of expatriates in ZCCM divisions, 1983, ZCCM 1.4.1F.

[9] Speech given by Rex L'Ange to UFP meeting in Nkana, 23 September 1960, WP 635/11.

[10] 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): 752

[11] Bill Schwarz, *White Man's World*, 346, 348.

mineworkers assumed their privileged position would continue even without the colonial political order, and, as will be seen, they were more or less right about this. They also assumed that, because they regarded themselves as the real workers on the mines, their work would continue to be required. "I can't agree with people who are getting a bit panicky," noted Hugh Handford in 1963, "there will be room for skilled technicians for many years."[12]

Political change came very rapidly. After a new constitution for Northern Rhodesia was finally implemented in 1962, with a complex expanded franchise that brought significant numbers of African voters onto the electoral roll, the UFP concocted a last-ditch improbable plan to hold the Federation together: an electoral pact with the ANC and a planned coalition government between the two parties. White voters were grimly warned that Northern Rhodesia faced "a fascist Pan African dictatorship" and that UNIP were planning a Mau Mau style uprising.[13] This appeal worked and white voters loyally back the UFP in the polls, with around 90% voting for the party. The plan, however, failed. Neither UNIP, which received the most votes, nor the UFP won a majority of seats. With the ANC holding the balance of power, party leader Harry Nkumbula deftly outmanoeuvred his would-be white allies and opted for a coalition government with UNIP.[14] White politicians were outraged but did not contest the results or attempt to mobilise white supporters to prevent the outcome.

As argued in the previous chapter, white mineworkers, or whites in Northern Rhodesia more generally, played little role in this. They endorsed the UFP at the ballot box but would do no more. The real fight against decolonisation would be south of the Zambezi. Several weeks later, in December 1962, elections in Southern Rhodesia brought to power the Rhodesian Front, which demanded independence for Southern Rhodesia under white minority rule. The Federation was doomed. In March 1963, the British Government granted each territory the right to secede from the Federation, and in December it ceased to exist.[15]

Substantial numbers of whites were unwilling to accept life under an African government but packed up and left rather than tried to oppose decolonisation. Consequently, turnover among the white workforce rose markedly to 33% in 1963 and almost 25% in 1964. 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.[16] One man who claimed "most of my life was spent fighting to keep my country, [Southern] Rhodesia, out of black hands" also noted that he never had any intention of doing the same in Northern Rhodesia. He left his job at Mufulira

[12] 'Personally speaking', *Rhokana Copper Miner*, 20 September 1963.

[13] David Mulford, *The Northern Rhodesia General Election 1962* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1964), 106, 116.

[14] Giacomo Macola, 'Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, UNIP and the roots of authoritarianism in nationalist Zambia', in *One Zambia, Many Histories: Towards a history of post-colonial Zambia*, eds. Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacoma Macola (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 34-5.

[15] Phiri, *Political History of Zambia*, 114-15.

[16] Interview with Pam van Heerden, 17 October 2013.

Mine before independence and recalled "It was easy to drive south and with no regrets. Zambia was never my home."[17] Many left for South Africa. White immigrants moving to South Africa from Northern Rhodesia/Zambia rose drastically from 702 in 1960 to 6,999 in 1963 and 4,852 in 1964.[18] Many people who moved to South Africa did not stay there. Pamela Shurmer-Smith noted that whites who remained in Zambia had a mocking term for those who had left at independence and then kept moving: 'Soweto', meaning 'So where are they now?'.[19]

Many of those who left around independence would have left anyway. A 1960 survey of white teenagers commissioned by the Chamber of Mines to "gauge the stability of the next working generation" found that only 21 of the 143 people surveyed were inclined to settle permanently on the Copperbelt. Almost all had other places in mind: 47 reported they thought about moving to South Africa, 18 North America, 16 Australia, 14 Southern Rhodesia and 12 Britain.[20] White teenagers, or at least male teenagers, were encouraged to have wide horizons. Some who completed this survey may well have heard the speech given two years later by Mufulira's manager Al O'Connell to newly qualified apprentices, telling them that "as qualified artisans… they could go anywhere in the world and hold their own."[21]

The similarities that made it easy for whites to move to the Copperbelt also made it easy to leave. White Rhodesian identity was 'shallow' and not insufficiently distinct from feeling 'South African', 'Australian' or 'British'. David Kenrick's point about Southern Rhodesia applies as well to Northern Rhodesia: "individuals socialised in Rhodesia could easily move around this settler world because these other places were so similar."[22] In March 1963, Jack Purvis wrote to Welensky to reassure him that "I and my family are Rhodesians and we are here to stay."[23] Only nine months later, he wrote again that they would be moving to England for the foreseeable future.[24] A few years after that, he and his family were back on the Copperbelt again.

The lack of opposition to decolonisation, however, does not imply that white mineworkers were a quiescent bunch in these years. A series of strikes took place as they sought to secure their position as a racialised class through collective action directed against the mining companies.

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[17] Smith, *Mad Dog*, 12, 25.

[18] Sally Perberdy, *Selecting Immigrants: National Identity and South Africa's Immigration Policies 1910-2008* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), 272-73.

[19] Shurmer-Smith, *Remnants of Empire*, 159.

[20] Holleman, Mann and van den Berghe, 'White Minority Under Threat', 324-6.

[21] 'Round the Group', *Horizon*, March 1962.

[22] David Kenrick, *Decolonisation, Identity and National in Rhodesia, 1964-1979: A Race Against Time* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 35.

[23] Jack Purvis to Roy Welensky, 1 March 1963, WP 658/5.

[24] Jack Purvis to Roy Welensky, 23 December 1963, WP 658/5.

Mufulira Timberman's Strike

In early 1963, with the Federation disintegrating around them, white mineworkers at Mufulira embarked on a protracted strike over scientific management techniques. The strike was triggered by the refusal of timbermen to complete a new bonus form and crippled the mine for almost three months. This dispute is instructive as it tells us about the priorities and consciousness of the white workforce in the run-up to Zambian independence.

Timbermen were responsible for constructing props to support tunnel walls and roofs using timber and concrete. Most of the manual work was done by a group of between two and six African workers, and the timberman's job consisted of using specialised tools and supervising this group. This was ostensibly what timbermen were doing anyway. Carolyn Brown has pointed out that miners have greater autonomy at work than other industrial workers because the nature of underground workplaces renders managerial supervision very difficult. Miners can often control the intensity and frequency of work and have more control over the labour process.[25] This was certainly true for white underground workers. A description given by one timberman about his typical working day mentions that he would see a shift boss, his immediate supervisor, no more than once during a shift.[26] This autonomy was, however, racialised as white mineworkers' control over the labour process involved control over African labour. Some clearly regarded themselves as figures of authority. As one rockbreaker claimed, to his African 'gang', "I am not just boss, I am their counsellor as well."[27]

Mine managements sought to gain greater knowledge over exactly what their workforce was doing at work from the late 1950s. Part of this involved the implementation of scientific management techniques to try and improve labour productivity by linking pay to performance. As part of this, in December 1962, timbermen at Mufulira were instructed to complete new forms detailing all jobs undertaken during their shift, how long they had taken, and materials used, in order to receive their bonus. Timbermen collectively refused point blank to do this. Although scientific management techniques were relatively new on the Copperbelt, they were well-established in other industrial centres and many timbermen were familiar with them. Explaining why timbermen had refused to complete bonus forms, NRMWU President Emrys Williams explained that the men "were concerned they were effectively conducting a Time and Motion Study on themselves."[28] Moreover, filling in forms contradicted the self-image of timbermen as manual workers, and they would not do this since "they were not employed as clerks."[29]

[25] Brown, *We Were All Slaves*, 3-4.

[26] 'It's my Job', *Horizon*, February 1960.

[27] 'It's My Job – Alex Perelensy,' *Horizon*, December 1959.

[28] A time and motion study is an analysis of different parts of a job to standardise and regulate labour processes. Notes on Board of Enquiry into dispute at Mufulira Copper Mine, 25 February 1963, NAZ MLSS1/25/3.

[29] Notes on Board of Enquiry into dispute at Mufulira Copper Mine, 26 February 1963, NAZ MLSS1/25/3.

What followed conformed to the established pattern of industrial disputes on the Copperbelt, where a seemingly trivial issue quickly assumed the magnitude of a major principle, negotiations were stymied by mutual obstinacy and aggressive personal confrontations, and legal niceties ignored. Mufulira's manager Noel Kenny, who was from Southern Rhodesia and had spent much of his career on the Copperbelt, vowed "he would shut down the mine immediately [and] lay off the workers… for an indefinite period" rather than accede to their demands.[30] Kenny also paid a visit to the change house where, in front of an audience of half-dressed miners, he threatened to fire a shop steward so fast "your feet wouldn't touch the floor."[31] After wildcat strikes, the management closed the mine on 22 February and laid off all 800 daily-paid mineworkers.

One aspect that had changed was the response from the NRMWU's new leadership. A substantial chunk of the union's officials had left following the 1958 strike and further resignations from the mines in 1961 left the organisation bereft of leadership. This led to the appointment of a general secretary from outside the mining industry and outside the Copperbelt, Andrew Leslie. Broadly speaking, Leslie was from the same movement and background as the mineworkers he now represented. He had served an apprenticeship in Scotland then moved to South Africa in 1948 to take a job as an artisan on the railways. An active trade unionist, he rose through the ranks of the Artisan's Staff Association, becoming vice-president before joining the NRMWU.[32] This Association, however, had developed a "corporatist identity" and was generally opposed to strikes, and Leslie's cautious approach to industrial relations reflected this and distinguished him from his predecessors.[33]

The NRMWU leadership were lukewarm about solidarity strikes at other mines and at Mufulira the balance shifted against the strikers. The structure of the white workforce had changed gradually since the mid-1950s as the mines recruited more staff and fewer daily-paid workers. Mufulira management were confident that Mufulira's 650 staff employees were sufficient to restart operations and reopened the mine on 11 April. Pickets by NRMWU members could not prevent a steady return to work in the following days. Some white workers even wrote to the new Minister of Labour Reuben Kamanga claiming that they were being intimidated to stay away from work; appealing to an African politician to take action against their fellow white workers.[34] Timbermen capitulated at the end of April and the strike collapsed. As in previous years, industrial unrest prompted a steady stream of departures. One timberman left Mufulira as soon as the strike ended.

[30] Meetings between Mufulira Copper Mines Limited and the NRMWU, February14, 16 and 18, 1963, NAZ MLSS1/25/3.

[31] Record note, 6 May 1963, NAZ MLSS1/25/3.

[32] 'Andrew Leslie, new general secretary' *Horizon*, April 1961.

[33] Jon Lewis, *Industrialization and Trade Union Organisation in South Africa, 1925–1955: The Rise and Fall of the South African Trade and Labour Council* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 32.

[34] Message to Minister of Labour and Mines from Seven Reasonable Minded Union Members, 16 April 1963, NAZ MLSS1/25/3.

"We have decided to give New Zealand a year's trial," his wife explained, and if they did not like it then they would move to South Africa.[35]

More disputes followed. New contracts were offered to white employees in June 1963, and immediately rejected at mass meetings.[36] The NRMWU leadership, however, had concluded that the new contracts could not be prevented. Andrew Leslie and Emrys Williams privately suggested to mine managers that the companies terminate the union recognition agreement to force negotiations, as they could not otherwise enter negotiations "without their being accused by their own members and by the African Union of collusion with the Companies."[37] This was a very different approach to industrial relations than the strategy of their predecessors. Both companies took them up on the suggestion and gave notice in August 1963 that the recognition agreement would be cancelled.

There were 23 wildcat strikes by white mineworkers in the six months that followed, mostly over wages and savings schemes.[38] Strikers sought to guarantee their privileges in the workplace and to defend the racial organisation of work. Matthew Mwendapole, an AMWU official, correctly identified the dual nature of their demands: white mineworkers were seeking guarantees from the mining companies "in respect of pensions and savings, but also in respect to other preferential and discriminatory practices to which they have been accustomed for a long time."[39] In this, they were successful.

Life at Zambian Independence

Everyday life changed little for whites on the Copperbelt at independence. When I began interviewing former white residents, I initially asked an unintentionally leading question: "how did your life change after Zambian independence?" Several interviewees were puzzled by this and had to think carefully to recall something that did change. As Heather Walker, whose husband and father worked at Roan Antelope, put it, "our life didn't change at all" after independence.[40] Ronald Prain reached the same conclusion "life and work carried on very much as before."[41] Many changes that did occur were superficial. Nchanga, for instance, renamed the European and African mine townships the 'North' and 'South' townships before independence, though the racial residential segregation continued after independence.[42]

[35] 'Teacher Emigrating to New Zealand', *Mufulira Mirror*, 24 May 1963.

[36] 'Workers reject monthly terms', *Northern News*, 22 June 1963.

[37] Mining Joint Industrial Council, 30 July 1963, ZCCM 10.5.8D.

[38] Secretary, Chamber of Mines to all General Managers, 25 June 1964, ZCCM 10.5.8D.

[39] 'Rockbreakers Strike at Mufulira', *Northern News*, 29 November 1963.

[40] Interview with Heather Walker, 13 July 2013.

[41] Ronald Prain, *Reflections on an Era,* 160.

[42] 'Townships to be Renamed', *Nchanga Weekly*, 2 November 1962.

Departing white mineworkers were quickly replaced with new recruits and neither company encountered difficulties attracting white labour. Recruitment efforts, however, were directed away from South Africa. Most of the white workforce in the 1950s was South African or had experience working in South Africa. From the mid-1960s, most white employees were recruited from Britain and in 1965 70% of new white recruits came directly from Britain, attracted by the same things that had attracted whites to migrate in the 1950s: the high standard of living.[43] Peter Hills, an apprentice at Rhokana at the time, recalled "suddenly, where I worked, it was all Yorkshiremen."[44]

The British journalist Richard West spent a few days on the Copperbelt shortly before Zambian independence and concluded that, for whites, "life here is much like northern England: booze, football, gambling, occasional fights. Africa does not seem to impinge."[45] White mineworkers on the Copperbelt were, in an important sense, isolated from the country in which they lived. This was not the case for all whites in Zambia, some of whom made a determined effort to become Zambian and identify with the new nation. This included prominent individuals like Andrew Sardanis and Simon Zukas who had been active in the nationalist movement, professionals who saw promising career opportunities in a new country with a growing economy and even former colonial officials who had come to identify with Zambia.[46] Many of these whites consciously distinguished themselves from white mineworkers, either by class or by their attachment to Zambia. Grace Keith considered her family to be permanent settlers in Zambia – with some justification, as her son Guy Scott briefly became President of Zambia – and contrasted her family's situation with the "get-rich-quick-and-get-out miners on the Copperbelt, with no roots at all."[47]

Independence did little to disrupt the affluent life of the Copperbelt's white working class. Mine publications relayed stories like the miner who bought a plane flown up from Johannesburg, the winding-engine driver who built his own swimming pool, or the Central African Parachuting Club, whose leading member was a hairdresser.[48] Racial segregation in social life slackened – there were boxing matches between white and African boxers and multi-racial football teams were formed on the mines[49] – though it remained the norm. Hierarchies of class continued to play a role.

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[43] Government of Zambia, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Mining Industry 1966* (*Brown Report*) (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1966), 78.

[44] Interview with Peter Hills, 1 September 2014.

[45] Richard West, *The White Tribes of Africa* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1965), 83.

[46] Jo Duffy, 'Staying on or going 'home'? Settlers' decisions upon Zambian independence', in *Empire, Migration and Identity in the British World*, eds. Kent Fedorowich and Andrew Thompson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 214-31. Andrew Sardanis, *Africa: Another Side of the Coin: Northern Rhodesia's Final Years and Zambia's Nationhood* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003). Zukas, *Into Exile*.

[47] Grace Keith, *The Fading Colour Bar* (London: Hale, 1966), 46.

[48] 'Flying Miner Sells Plane', *Nchanga Weekly*, 15 February 1964; "A swimming pool in his yard', *The Rhokana Copper Miner*, 20 September 1963.

[49] However, the interest of whites in local mine football teams declined after they became multi-racial. Chipande, 'Chipolopolo', 90-100.

Lexie Bray recalled that "quite a lot of the social living in the mines was structured by the hierarchy on the mines," and that her parents, an underground electrician and a nurse at the mine hospital, would never have been invited to socialise with the general manager.[50]

Some whites who had left came back after Zambian independence, reassured that little had changed. Gael Whelan's parents sent her and her two sisters to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa in 1964 because her mother was "absolutely terrified" about what might happen to them at independence. However, after studying nursing in Cape Town, Gael decided "I would move back to the Copperbelt and I did." She became a nurse in Luanshya in 1966 and remained there until she moved to Canada in the late 1960s.[51] John Purvis, son of Jack Purvis, had grown up in Luanshya, left to attend school in the UK from 1963-65 and then worked overseas as a mechanic from 1968-71 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 the late 1970s.[52]

One definite change was that whites surrendered any claim to political power as an organised bloc. After the demise of the Federation, the UFP was reconstituted as the National Progressive Party, but the party lost its previous monopoly on white voters. In the January 1964 territorial elections, the last held in the colonial period, UNIP won 35% of the white vote and almost won the seat reserved for white voters in Ndola.[53] The National Progressive Party won the ten seats reserved for white voters in the first parliament (1964-68) but dissolved in mid-1966. A handful of whites who arrived in the 1960s had more progressive politics. The secretary of UNIP's Kitwe Central branch, and the town's only female councillor, was a white woman, Muriel Williams, sister of Ruth Khama and sister-in-law of Seretse Khama, Botswana's first president.[54]

Reinforcing Racial Divisions on the Mines

One reason why the timbermen had lost their strike at Mufulira is that the structure of the white workforce had been steadily changing since the late 1950s. The proportion of daily-paid workers had diminished, while the monthly-paid staff had correspondingly grown. In the early 1960s, the companies sought to accelerate this process towards a logical conclusion: the elimination of the daily-paid category by extending staff status to all white employees. This had the happy by-product of eliminating the NRMWU. Notice would be increased from 24 hours to 30 days which meant, counter-intuitively, that most white employees would have greater job security in an independent Zambia as the companies aimed to stabilise their white workforce. This same process involved the

[50] Interview with Lexie Bray, 1 July 2013.

[51] Interview with Gael Whelan, 10 June 2013.

[52] Interview with John Purvis, 8 October 2013.

[53] David Mulford, *Zambia: The Politics of Independence, 1957-64* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 328.

[54] 'Khama may see Kitwe wedding', *Times of Zambia*, 19 February 1966.

mining companies reinscribing a clear racial division in the workforce and reproducing the colour bar in post-independence Zambia.

In 1972, Michael Burawoy produced an influential account on how the colour bar was reproduced by stressing the role of class forces – namely, the Zambian Government was too dependent on copper revenues to rock the boat and the mining companies sought to protect profit margins in an unstable environment.[55] In a retrospective on his study, Burawoy explained that on 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," and that this "was a discovery made possible only by participant observation."[56]

I make the opposite argument here: the mining companies did formulate a clear plan and, moreover, that it was a plan which was successfully enacted. Documents produced by the mining companies explain their plan to use the colour bar to constrain wage demands by African mineworkers by severing any link between African and white wages. The 18 months Burawoy spent working in the research department of the Copper Industry Service Bureau – as the Chamber of Mines had been renamed at independence – generated valuable insights which would not otherwise have been obtainable, but he would not have been privy to documents produced by and for company executives and management.

Both companies formed a joint sub-committee in 1963 to consider new terms of service for their workforce. This sub-committee recommended the creation of two new categories, that were then introduced: 'expatriate' and 'local'. This was crucial in sustaining the colour bar as these categories were defined in racial terms. All African employees were designated as 'local', even if they had been born in Malawi or Tanzania, while all white employees were designated 'expatriates', even if they had been born on the Copperbelt. The companies' definition of expatriate was "skilled, white." This was, the sub-committee admitted, the "blatant reintroduction of a dual wage structure" but committee members hoped it would help remove "aspirations" among African mineworkers for higher wages, as they were "already overpaid in relation to any logical local wage." Even the term 'expatriate' was chosen to emphasise that wages received by whites were unattainable for African workers.[57] The reproduction of the racial division of labour was the result of specific corporate policies aimed at restraining pay increases for African workers.[58]

Separating the African and white workforces had become a pressing issue because, as the sub-committee emphasised, by 1963 a handful of Africans were employed in formerly whites-only

[55] Burawoy, *The Colour of Class*.

[56] Michael Burawoy, 'The Colour of Class Revisited: Four Decades of Postcolonialism in Zambia', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40, 5 (2014): 966-67.

[57] Report of a special sub-committee appointed to consider conditions of service, 15 October 1963, ZCCM 14.1.3A.

[58] The divide in the workforce was not absolute as white expatriate employees could become 'local' employees if they took Zambian citizenship. I found no instance of any white employee taking Zambian citizenship, likely in part because this would have resulted in a drastic pay cut.

jobs on the same pay and conditions as white mineworkers. The 1960 agreement over 'African Advancement' had opened training courses for 'Schedule A' jobs – the term given to jobs performed only by whites – to Africans, and the first African trainees began the 18-month courses in April 1961.[59] In February 1963, the first 80 African workers began working in 'Schedule A' jobs, mostly as underground operators, and, as a closed shop was in place, they automatically became NRMWU members. Under the 1960 agreement, the NRMWU had agreed that once Africans completed the training courses and became "fully fledged miners, they will be accepted gladly into the ranks of the Union" and "will enjoy exactly the same benefits as their European counterparts and will have their interests fully protected."[60] This appears to have been the case. When Alexander Mambwe, an underground operator at Mufulira, was killed in a road accident, his family received £1,200, the same death benefits paid to the dependents of deceased white NRMWU members.[61]

The attitudes of white trade unionists shifted in the early 1960s and both the NRMWU and MOSSA admitted African members. MOSSA President George Crane, who had stood for election in 1954 demanding a more rigid colour bar, urged his members to admit Africans into the union and not "bury [their] heads in sand."[62] A few months later, over three-quarters of MOSSA's membership voted to amend their constitution to allow African membership and small numbers of African employees who had completed staff training courses joined the organisation.[63]

The extension of the wages and working conditions of white mineworkers to Africans had long been a nightmare for the companies and was now becoming a reality. On the Copperbelt, for a brief period, some African workers were employed in the same jobs as white workers with the same wages and working conditions. These were, moreover, not just any white workers, but were among the highest-paid workers in the world. This was an extraordinary phenomenon perhaps unparalleled under colonial rule anywhere.[64] In 1964, for instance, Mufulira employed four young African men – G. Chimpempele, T. Gondwe, N. Chimumbu, and M. Katuta, who had each joined the mines in the late 1950s – as Mining Supervisors on a monthly salary of £143. This was over double the highest possible salary for Africans employed on 'local' conditions.[65] There were others as well,

[59] On the training courses, see Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the Commission appointed to Inquire into the Mining Industry in Northern Rhodesia, 1962* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1962), 14-15.

[60] Note the implicit claim that Africans only became real miners after completing the course, though several of these 'new' miners had worked underground for several years. 'White Union will 'gladly accept Africans L.O.'s', *Luntandanya*, 1 December 1962; 'A-men are automatic NRMWU members', *The Rhokana Copper Miner*, 24 February 1963.

[61] 'NRMWU Pays Out on an African', *The Rhokana Copper Miner*, 29 November 1963.

[62] 'Enrol Africans urges MOSSA president', *Nchanga Weekly*, 29 March 1963.

[63] 'MOSSA Drops Colour Bar', *The Rhokana Copper Miner*, 20 September 1963

[64] Frederick Cooper discussed how African trade unionists in French West Africa appropriated the rhetoric of French imperialism to demand the same pay and conditions as white French workers, but this was only partially successful. Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labour Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 389.

[65] African employees in MWS fields, Mufulira Copper Mines, 1 December 1964, ZCCM 3.4.2G.

nursing sisters, clerks and mechanics all receiving these same salaries. What these individuals did with this money is itself worthy of study.

These salaries were accompanied by the other generous benefits given to white employees. In mid-1963, the first Africans moved into the white township in Luanshya, families of the fifteen African men employed in 'Schedule A' jobs. Seven of these men were underground operators and so received a lecture from an NRMWU official on the history of the union, how it operated and how they could become shop stewards. An article about the imminent move was carefully accompanied by pictures of the family of Alex and Dora Mahlungu, who had moved into Mufulira's white mine township in 1962, in various domestic scenes reassuringly familiar to white readers: Alex mowing the lawn, Dora preparing supper in a kitchen with modern appliances, and the living room complete with television. Roan Antelope's general manager James Reid stated that the new labour policy was straightforward: "promotion is on merit and irrespective of race," so when African workers were promoted "they should be offered the same housing facilities as their colleagues."[66]

This was not the policy for long. The sub-committee emphasised that its plan had to be implemented rapidly, before Zambian independence. New contracts were imposed on the white workforce and came into force in February 1964. African workers who had been employed on the same contracts as white workers were given the choice of transferring to 'local' conditions, i.e. doing the same job at a much lower wage, or being paid off and made redundant, and most chose the former.[67] Ironically, these expatriate contracts were partly based on contracts for expatriate employees at Union Minière, whose fate white mineworkers in Zambia had long sought to avoid. The NRMWU was too weak to resist these changes and was itself technically dissolved by them. The organisation was reconstituted as the Mine Workers' Society (MWS) – the companies having indicated they would refuse recognition to any group with 'union' in its name – and the closed shop abolished. "It means our annihilation," was the gloomy assessment of Rzerchorzek on the new conditions of service, which he concluded constituted a permanent barrier "between the highest-paid African and the lowest-paid European," which was the companies' intention.[68]

This new expatriate policy strongly discouraged white workers from identifying with Zambia or as Zambians, by effectively providing a significant financial incentive against adopting Zambian citizenship. UNIP officially espoused a policy of multi-racialism and accordingly encouraged white residents in Zambia to take up citizenship in the new nation. However, any white employee who took Zambian citizenship would have been transferred from 'expatriate' to 'local' conditions – the one aspect of this new labour policy that was not explicitly racial – and so would have received a substantial pay cut. The companies subsequently admitted that their "policies have effectively dissuaded a considerable number of Europeans from becoming Zambian citizens."[69]

[66] 'Africans Move into Luanshya Township', *Horizon*, June 1963.

[67] Government of Zambia, *Brown Report*, 22.

[68] Graywacke Mufulira to Chamber of Mines, 13 December 1963, ZCCM 10.5.8D.

[69] Brown Commission: The Possible Shape of the Report, 4 June 1966, ZCCM 11.7.8A.

Changes in labour policy on the mines also meant reimposing racial segregation on the trade unions. The companies instructed the MWS and MOSSA to remove their African members (a total of 63 in the MWS and 73 in MOSSA).[70] The MWS initially publicly threatened "a very violent reaction" to interference in its membership, but the companies informed them that this was not a matter for negotiation.[71] Predictably, the MWS could not mobilise its overwhelmingly white membership and it again became a whites-only organisation, which had been a consistent aim of the companies since the 1940s.

Table 6.1: Comparison between minimum expatriate and local salaries for selected jobs, 1966.[72]

Job	Minimum monthly salary		Local proportion of expatriate salary
	Expatriate	Local	
Shift boss Underground	£181	£110	60.8%
Surveyor (Grade I)	£163	£93	57.1%
Foreman artisan	£193	£105	54.4%
Clerk (Grade I)	£150	£69	46%
Senior Typist	£103	£45	43.7%
Chemist (Grade I)	£149	£80	53.7%
Winding Engine Driver Underground	£170	£67	39.4%
Open Pit Power Shovel Operator	£165	£67	40.6%
Cage Tender	£137	£55	40.1%

The number of African workers directly affected were small but the principle was significant: the white and African workforces were once again separated out. There was no way that any African mineworker, regardless of skill or experience, could obtain the wages and working conditions of whites. As shown in Table 6.1, African and white mineworkers were performing the same jobs for vastly different rates of pay. One mine even created a new higher-paid job for whites in "a dead-end kind of job" who were doing the same work as Africans and were briefly employed

[70] Notes on conciliation proceedings between the companies and MWS representatives, 17 August 1965, ZCCM 16.3.7F

[71] 'Gun Boat Negotiators', *Times of Zambia*, 20 July 1965.

[72] Government of Zambia, *Brown Report*, Appendix XIX, 163-64.

on the same pay.[73] Other fringe benefits enjoyed by white mineworkers were removed. Africans moving into mine houses previously occupied by whites found that the appliances that were provided for white employees had been removed.[74]

Many African mineworkers were angered by this. At Nchanga, shop stewards from the Zambia Mineworkers' Union (ZMU) representing Africans working as timbermen and operators demanded "the expatriate wage for the job as their training had fitted them for a complete takeover and they saw no reason why any differential should be established between themselves and the expatriate."[75] These demands were ignored. The companies cynically and correctly calculated that Zambia's new government would support them – company executives suggested they emphasise "that a local person, unskilled" should not earn as much as a government minister – and with the defeat of the major African and white unions, the companies were able to implement their plan. It was, as the companies themselves put it:

> 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.[76]

A clearer racial division in the workforce was 'the way they would like' matters to be.

The nature of underground workplaces meant that the intention of the companies to maintain racial division required careful management. Underground work involved an unusual degree of intimacy between workers, who would undress and shower in communal changing facilities after shifts and travel to and from underground workplaces in often tightly packed cages. The question of who could get changed with who was a delicate one in which status was closely bound up with race. Initially, change houses were segregated by race – and before 1950 there were no changing facilities at all for Africans – and by occupational status. Mufulira Mine had seven different change houses for various grades of underground employees, meaning that mine officials did not get changed alongside daily-paid workers.[77]

Racial segregation in the changing houses was initially relaxed in the early 1960s when a few Africans were employed in Schedule A jobs. Full desegregation did not occur, however, because of both the demands of white workers and the mining companies. In 1965, some mines opened the changing houses for MWS members to newly appointed African section bosses. There were few protests at first, but as more Africans were promoted the number of whites using integrated change houses declined. Instead, they changed at home. Some white artisans protested. At Nchanga, while stressing "their whole-hearted support of non-racialism," underground artisans requested a

[73] R.A. Mudd, Bancroft to Secretary, Chamber of Mines, 20 December 1963, ZCCM 12.7.9B.

[74] Bates, *Union, Parties and Political Development*, 84.

[75] Copper Industry Service Bureau to Anmercosa and Roselite, Lusaka, 23 February 1966.

[76] Report of a special sub-committee appointed to consider conditions of service, 15 October 1963, ZCCM 14.1.3A.

[77] Roan Antelope to Copper Industry Service Bureau, 9 June 1966, ZCCM 16.3.9A.

separate change house because "the inherent degree of skill in their jobs" was much greater than section bosses and other MWS members.[78] Managing this required careful discussion and eventually the companies decided to continue racial segregation in the changing houses because they worried that sharing changing houses with white workers might encourage African workers to claim other benefits received by white workers. This would undermine the separation between 'expatriate' and 'local' conditions.[79]

Restructuring the Mining Workforce

The removal of the colour bar was accompanied by a thorough restructuring of the mining workforce. This was at odds with the views of many African mineworkers on the colour bar, who believed 'advancement' in the workplace meant performing skilled work in jobs previously done only by whites and progress towards being paid equal wages for the same job.[80] The AMWU, for instance, argued for a non-racial workforce where a white worker without qualifications should be employed as a labourer and "supervised by an African crew boss."[81] Instead, jobs performed by white daily-paid mineworkers were radically altered or eliminated, not opened to African workers.

Both companies re-organised the division of labour so that planning, supervision, and execution of work tasks were more fully separated.[82] The same occurred in other mining regions around the same time. Copper mines in Peru had already implemented the same kind of restructuring, with labour gangs abolished and existing jobs subdivided while the number of supervisory and administrative personnel expanded.[83] In 1963, Kennecott Copper instituted a wide-ranging reorganisation of the labour process at their operations in Utah, with many jobs phased out and existing employees trained for new jobs.[84] The same occurred at iron ore mines in the Pilbara, Australia.[85]

Jobs performed by white daily-paid mineworker usually combined planning, supervision, and execution. A case in point was the job of rockbreaker. In 1959, Alexis Perelensy, who was originally from Russia, provided a description of his daily working life at Roan Antelope. His job involved opening tunnels to connect the main levels to the stopes, though the drilling and blasting was done by the ten African drillers and three blasting license holders who he supervised. His duties also included some clerical work on footage drilled, checking the workplace was safe, checking that

[78] Copper Industry Service Bureau to Anmercosa and Roselite Lusaka, 8 June 1966, ZCCM 16.3.9A.

[79] Roan Antelope to Copper Industry Service Bureau, 9 June 1966, ZCCM 16.3.9A.

[80] Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, 80.

[81] 'New Manning Structure', *Northern News*, 11 April 1963.

[82] Perrings, 'Race, Value and the Division of Labour', 193-201.

[83] Luchembe, 'Finance Capital and Mine Labour', 456.

[84] Bruce Whitehead and Robert Rampton 'Bingham Canyon', in *From the Ground Up: The History of Mining in Utah*, ed. Collen Whitley (Logan: Utah University Press, 2006), 245.

[85] Ellem, *The Pilbara*, 33.

all holes had been blasted correctly, installing rockbolts to stabilise the roof, and marking the spots to be drilled and blasted, the latter he described as "part of the rockbreakers' skill."[86]

This job was phased out entirely. Responsibility for the design of stopes and placing of drill holes was transferred to survey departments on the surface, and the new position of section boss was created to take over supervisory responsibilities.[87] There was a general expansion of supervisory positions, as a manager interviewed by Burawoy explained:

> In 1964 we increased the amount of supervision, fragmented jobs and added new jobs… It was at this time that the intermediary level of supervision – the Section Boss – was introduced, the number of Shift Foremen was considerably increased.[88]

Many artisans' jobs were also fragmented. Fitters, for instance, had many of their work tasks transferred to the new position of mechanic, which itself was separated into three grades.[89] A five-year apprenticeship was necessary to qualify as a fitter, whereas the qualification for a mechanic was a six-month course. White artisans lost much of the control they had over the organisation of work. The 1962 recognition agreement with the NRMWU contained a granular level of detail on the organisation of work, with 450 clauses demarcating artisans' tasks. The new agreement signed between the MWS and the companies contained no such clauses.

Restructuring was rapid and by mid-1966 virtually all formerly whites-only jobs had been fragmented. Positions that remained unaltered were supervisory staff like shift bosses and foremen, staff in the mine hospitals, mining professionals such as engineers and geologists, and drivers of heavy machinery and winding engines.[90] Total white employment consequently fell sharply from 7,184 in 1965 to 4,845 in 1968. Thereafter it remained around that level until 1975.

The composition of the white workforce also changed. Fewer white workers were involved directly in production and more were employed in professional and administrative positions. Recruitment efforts shifted focus to young men with professional qualifications. This contrasted with the previous generation of white workers, described by one mine manager in 1967 as "our older men who did not have the opportunity of much education but who have wide experience [of mining] both in Africa and overseas."[91] That same year, there were still 159 white shift bosses – mostly former rockbreakers – who only had seven or fewer years formal education.[92]

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[86] 'It's My Job – Alex Perelensy', *Horizon*, December 1959.

[87] 'Zambianization on the Mines', *Horizon*, January 1967; Government of Zambia, *Brown Report*, 13.

[88] The job of shift foreman was largely done by white workers until the early 1970s. Burawoy, *Colour of Class*, 20.

[89] Government of Zambia, *Brown Report*, 13-14.

[90] Non-Fragmented Jobs in the MOSSA/MWS/MLSA/ZMU Field of Representation, ZCCM 11.7.8A.

[91] Zambianization in the Mining Industry, March 1967, NAZ CO10/01/4.

[92] Comments on Revised Forecast of Zambianization: Mining Operations, NAZ CO10/01/4.

The major expansion of open pit mining at Nchanga – with production rising from 1.38m tons in 1960 to 3.76m tons in 1966 – shows how the composition of the white workforce changed. In the 1950s, the introduction of open pit mining led to an increased number of white workers. Now, the changed labour structure meant that most jobs relating to production – including blast hole drilling, blasting and driving earth moving vehicles – were now performed by African mineworkers, and there was a concerted effort to train Africans to operate new mining machinery. 70% of whites employed at the open pits were employed on specialist engineering work maintaining the mechanical shovels and excavators, though a handful also operated shovels for much higher wages than Africans performing the same work.[93] One aspect remained the same. The MWS pushed for wage increases for their members operating shovels and compared their wage to miners at open pits in the United States rather than the African miners they worked alongside.[94]

Strikes in 1966 and the Zambian State

The mid-1960s was a booming and volatile period in the copper industry with rising copper prices and often tense industrial relations. A major strike hit Kennecott Copper's US operations in mid-1964, forcing the company to declare force majeure, there was an eight-month strike at Mt Isa in Australia in 1964-65, and a three month-strike by copper miners in Chile in early 1966. On the Copperbelt, both African and white mineworkers embarked on major strikes in 1966. The strikes by African and white mineworkers had much in common. Both were about wages, both were carried out in defiance of union leaderships who had failed to obtain the desired results through negotiation, and both prompted decisive state intervention. The state became progressively more important in industrial relations after Zambian independence. In particular, the relationship between African mineworkers and Zambia's new government ranged between uneasy and confrontational. As Miles Larmer observed, UNIP became "preoccupied with achieving control over Zambia's labour movement and the mineworkers' union in particular."[95]

The first to strike in 1966 were white mineworkers with a series of chaotic wildcat strikes. This was an unexpected development. The companies had forecast that the old NRMWU would "naturally" evolve into a non-militant association, while the British High Commissioner spotted "a particular gleam of satisfaction in the eye" of one General Manager who claimed that the NRMWU's demise meant that white mineworkers could never again hold them to ransom.[96] Union negotiations had also been unusually conciliatory in recognition of the serious difficulties caused by Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in November 1965. This was followed by the closure of the Rhodesia-Zambia border which severely disrupted Zambia's copper exports, which

[93] W. Burls and R.V.C. Holt, 'Further Developments in Open Pit Mining at Nchanga', *Journal of the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy* 67, 9 (1967): 434, 440.

[94] V.M. Hall to Branch Secretary, MWS Nchanga, 15 April 1965, ZCCM 2.5.3B.

[95] Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, 62. Anirudha Gupta, 'Trade Unionism and Politics on the Copperbelt', in *Politics in Zambia*, eds. William Tordoff and Robert Molteno (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), 288-319.

[96] Report of a special sub-committee appointed to consider conditions of service, 15 October 1963, ZCCM 14.1.3A. W.B.L. Monson to Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, 4 December 1964, TNA DO 183/216.

went by rail to Beira through Rhodesia, and imports of coal and oil needed for the copper smelters and power stations. Both the MWS and MOSSA consequently agreed to maintain the status quo and avoid disruption, while the ZMU withdrew a request for a strike ballot.[97]

Union members had other ideas. White mineworkers reacted angrily to proposed new fixed-term contracts announced in January 1966. Although these contained another above inflation pay rise, the companies would not guarantee that money from the company savings scheme or pensions could be transferred outside Zambia. This is another example of how the mobility of this workforce drove their actions. As the MWS explained, 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."[98]

On 7 February, white underground workers struck at Nchanga Mine and walked off the 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, white mineworkers at almost all the Copperbelt mines walked out. One striker at Bancroft warned that if the union leaders could not secure their demands by negotiation "we will take the matter into our own hands."[99] MOSSA members too joined these strikes, as their permanent staff jobs were to be altered to fixed-term contract positions under the new contract. White mineworkers still believed that they were the real workers and the ones who produced copper – the price of which was almost at a record high – so deserved to be rewarded. As one winding engine driver put it, "Don't you think there should be a really good return for the millions they have put into Government and private coffers?"[100]

Wildcat strikes plagued the mines for the rest of the month. The government's patience was soon exhausted. President Kaunda warned that "industrial chaos" which imperilled "the life-blood of our beloved country" would not be tolerated and accused those responsible for the strikes as "none other than supporters of foreign interests and intrigues." [101] Pleas by union leaders for their members to return to work were ignored. MOSSA president Len Jackets threatened to resign unless the strikes ceased, and Andrew Leslie called Kaunda's speech "a fair and timely warning," which he urged members to "take heed of" as "the country's industrial laws cannot be flouted with impunity."[102]

The visit of Ronald Prain to Mufulira, however, proved too good an opportunity to miss, and white mineworkers staged a walkout when he arrived. Industrial relations were bad at Mufulira, and

[97] Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, 69.

[98] Zambia Mineworkers Society Request, February 1966, IISH MIF Box 361.

[99] '1,000 expatriates miss shifts on copper mines', *Times of Zambia*, 9 February 1966.

[100] Letter from R.B. Greer, *Times of Zambia*, 24 January 1966.

[101] 'Miners are warned', *Times of Zambia*, 23 February 1966.

[102] *Ibid.*

the MWS branch chair, Frank Rzerchorzek, was one of the most militant leaders in the white workforce and had been elected to this position after the previous incumbent was sacked. Kaunda was not bluffing though. The very next day Rzechorzek was arrested and removed to Mporokoso, a town 500km away in Northern Province.[103] This was a continuation of the approach of the colonial state to industrial relations by physically removing troublesome individuals to dampen unrest. It mirrored the punishment inflicted on AMWU leaders during the 1956 state of emergency, as well as the deportation of Frank Maybank and Chris Meyer in 1942. The reaction of the state to the strike of African mineworkers in September 1966 was the same, though on a larger scale as 33 ZMU branch leaders were arrested and 'restricted' to rural areas.[104]

There was an angry reaction to Rzechorzek's removal. One white miner at Mufulira warned "We are ready for a showdown. The President has thrown down the gauntlet and many of us are ready to pick it up" and there were strikes at Bancroft and Rhokana.[105] This tough talk was, however, just that, only talk. Within a few days, the go-slows and strikes had ceased, a process hastened after a chastened Rzechorzek sent a letter from Mporokoso calling for white mineworkers to return to work.[106] Both white unions accepted the new expatriate contracts a few days later and by 22 March Rzechorzek was back on the Copperbelt. Temporarily, work restarted on the mines.

On 25 March, African mineworkers at Nchanga Mine – the same mine where the white mineworkers' strikes had started – walked out and the strike rapidly spread across the Copperbelt. Mineworkers were angry over a pay deal negotiated by ZMU that agreed the union would make no further pay claims for two years. This was followed by a second strike opposing the introduction of a new pension fund. Now the government clamped down, detaining ZMU branch leaders and accusing strikers of supporting Rhodesia.[107] In another echo from the colonial period, government ministers also accused whites of orchestrating the walkouts.

There is certainly evidence of a relationship between the white and African strikes. In February 1966, ZMU representatives at Nchanga "made direct references to the recent spate of expatriate stoppages and it was obvious that they feel if the expatriates can obtain favourable benefits… their best bet is to follow their example and withdraw labour."[108] A gulf separated the African and white workforces, however, and examples of inter-racial co-operation are scarce. I have found only two incidents of joint strike action between African and white mineworkers, despite the regularity of industrial unrest. Both were small-scale. In November 1965, whites and Africans employed in the concentrator at Nchanga Mine refused to work after supplies of soap were

[103] 'Copperbelt miners discuss restriction', *Times of Zambia*, 28 February 1966.

[104] Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, 74.

[105] 'Showdown on the Copperbelt Likely Today', *Rand Daily Mail*, 1 March 1966.

[106] "Obey KK" Rzechorzek', *Times of Zambia*, 4 March 1966.

[107] Miles Larmer, 'Unrealistic Expectations? Zambia's Mineworkers from Independence to the One-Party State, 1964–1972', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 18, 4 (2005): 330-32.

[108] Roan Antelope to Copper Industry Service Bureau, 9 June 1966, ZCCM 16.3.9A.

discontinued, and in August 1968 a handful of African and white shift bosses at Nchanga held a one-day strike to protect their privilege of skipping the queue at the shaft.[109]

Despite both striking over pay during 1966 and facing government repression, the question of joint action was never raised. During strikes by white mineworkers, Peter Chibuye, the Mines Local Staff Association general secretary, issued a statement calling on its members to work harder during the wildcat strikes and use this as an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to do more skilled work. Indeed, white strikers at Nchanga had returned to work to find African mineworkers and white senior officials doing their jobs. The ZMU noted that the union's General Council had discussed the situation but had nothing to say on the matter.[110]

These strikes got results. Racialised collective action once again won white mineworkers a major pay-out. In addition to above-inflation pay increases, the companies offered higher severance pay and a larger contribution to children's education while the government amended the law to allow expatriates recruited outside Zambia to remit half their salaries to any sterling-area country. All white mineworkers were now placed on three-year contracts.[111] African mineworkers also secured major gains. The government inquiry into the strikes – the Brown Commission – recommended a 22% pay increase, which was then awarded.

However, having so often held the mines hostage over the previous 25 years, this was the last major strike by white mineworkers. The decisive action of the state had a disciplining affect. Eamon Valkenberg, a shift boss at Mufulira at the time, recalled that leaders of the strike had been imprisoned "way out in the bush, for months and months and months," an indication of how this seriously this incident was regarded as Rzechorzek was only there for three weeks, and that unrest "faded out" afterwards.[112] More broadly though, changes in the composition of the white workforce meant that it became more homogenous and, consequently, conflict dissipated. Strikes and collective action persisted through the late 1960s, but on a smaller scale and white mineworkers never again attempted to co-ordinate action across the Copperbelt.

Training, upskilling and 'advancement' for white workers

Zambian independence saw, unexpectedly, a great expansion in opportunities for white mineworkers as the mining companies forecast "the new manning structure will involve European advancement."[113] New training schemes were initiated, and many white employees enjoyed regular promotion. In 1963, Anglo American opened a Staff Training School in 1963 with an education programme for older white employees without much formal education "to enable them to acquire

[109] Copper Industry Service Bureau to Anmercosa and Roselite Lusaka, 3 November 1965. Copper Industry Service Bureau to Anmercosa and Roselite Lusaka, 5 August 1968, ZCCM 16.3.9A.

[110] 'Work-to-rule on verge of collapse', *Times of Zambia*, 4 March 1966.

[111] Government of Zambia, *Brown Report*, 19-20.

[112] Interview with Eamon Valkenberg, 29 November 2013.

[113] Report of a special sub-committee appointed to consider conditions of service, 15 October 1963, ZCCM 14.1.3A.

this formal education to open for them wider fields of advancement," along with a training scheme specifically for semi-skilled white operators, those most liable to be displaced by Africans.[114] This was a new development as promotion within the mines was previously unusual for men without professional qualifications.

Training and promotion opportunities meant that relatively few white workers were displaced by African workers. The total number displaced between 1964 and 1972 was only 1,254.[115] Even as Africans undertook more skilled work and moved up the hierarchy of the mines, whites moved ahead of them. In this way, the formulation of the colour bar offered by Burawoy – "the principle that no black should exercise authority over any white"[116] – was maintained. A similar process occurred in South Africa where the fragmentation of skilled jobs from the late 1960s onwards facilitated African occupational mobility but "as Africans move into jobs previously occupied by whites, whites move up the occupational hierarchy into better paid and more skilled job."[117]

Driving this change was the expansion of the supervisory hierarchy and the decision of the mining companies to train white workers to fill these new roles. Both companies created a course on "the role of the supervisor" to train former daily-paid workers for new supervisory jobs.[118] Between January 1965 and December 1971, the number of white officials rose from 1,130 to 1,654 and the number of white senior officials increased even more markedly from 475 to 1,044, even as the white workforce as a whole shrank.[119]

Occupational mobility assisted with international mobility. Rob Hall had intended to settle in Zambia when he arrived as newly graduated engineer in 1964. However, his rapid promotion to one of the most senior underground positions meant that four years later he secured a senior position at a nickel mine in Canada, and he subsequently worked in the Middle East and the United States. Others he knew on the Copperbelt had subsequently worked at mines in Utah, British Columbia, Peru, Ghana, and in oilfields in the Gulf.[120] Similarly, Barry Coulton, who joined Rhokana in 1969 after completing an apprenticeship at a nuclear power plant in Britain, quickly gained the skills and experience to establish his own engineering contracting company, and he subsequently worked in at least seven different countries after he left Zambia.[121]

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[114] Speech at the Opening of the New Apprentices Training School, 11 July 1964, Brenthurst Library, Johannesburg.

[115] Perrings, 'Race, Value and the Division of Labour', 201.

[116] Burawoy, 'Colour of Class Revisited', 964.

[117] Owen Crankshaw, 'Changes in the Racial Division of Labour during the Apartheid Era', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22, 4 (1996): 649.

[118] Supervisory Training (Mine Workers' Society), 14 December 1964, ZCCM 17.4.5B.

[119] Daniel, *Africanization, Nationalization and Inequality*, 189.

[120] Personal communication with Rob Hall, 1 September 2015.

[121] Coulton, *Cumbrian Lad*, 129-31.

Promotions and restructuring steadily thinned the ranks of the MWS as those in more senior positions were ineligible for membership. The NRMWU had 4,857 members in 1963, but by 1966 the MWS had declined to 2,227 members, and had been overtaken in size by MOSSA, with 2,767 members.[122] The removal of the division between daily-paid and staff in the white workforce and the creation of a common expatriate category made a merger between the MWS and MOSSA an obvious step. The two unions formed a new amalgamated organisation in December 1966: the Zambia Expatriate Mineworkers' Association (ZEMA).

The Twilight of White Trade Unionism

ZEMA's membership was almost entirely white as its 5,000 members were "those employees in the categories set out in the Expatriate Salary Schedule" and its formation marked the emergence of a firmer sense of white solidarity.[123] The first strike action taken after ZEMA's formation is a good indication of this. In April 1967, five whites were arrested and imprisoned on suspicion that they were in contact with Rhodesian intelligence, including two men from the Copperbelt, both mine officials. In response, 75 white mineworkers walked out at Rhokana, followed by 84 at Bancroft, "in protest against the detention of two senior mine employees."[124] Strikes in defence of senior officials would have been unthinkable in the 1950s, when in fact many disputes were directed against them.

Munu Sipalo, the Minister of Labour, identified the kind of consciousness now at work when he argued that expatriate mineworkers regarded themselves as "a privileged group whose duty it was to maintain the rights and standards of the rest of the European community." Many white mineworkers now regarded their collective interests primarily in racial terms, in the sense that all whites in an independent Zambia had the same interests and should stick together. It was this view that Sipalo was criticising when he stated bluntly: "Expatriate miners are simply workers. They will be treated as such and they should behave as such."[125]

Open support for Rhodesia was unusual, though at the second anniversary of UDI anonymous posters appeared around Kitwe with the slogans "If you can't beat Rhodesia, join 'em" and "Rhodesia won, you know."[126] Most whites were not interested in politics and it must have been soon evident even to ardent supporters of white minority rule that open expressions of support for Rhodesia would produce a furious reaction. In October 1966, Rhodesian special forces, who carried out several sabotage operations against Zambia, destroyed Kitwe's main fuel depot. Though officially described as an accident at the time, rumours that it was sabotage by local pro-Rhodesian

[122] Annual return for a registered trade union, year ended 31 December 1963, NAZ MLSS1/26/251. A.C. Jaeckel to Registrar of Trade Unions, 18 July 1967, NAZ MLSS1/21/78.

[123] A handful of African apprentices were temporarily ZEMA members while completing their training. Zambia Expatriate Mineworkers' Association Constitution, 5 December 1966, NAZ MLSS1/21/78.

[124] 'Strikers Warned by Sipalo', *Times of Zambia*, 18 April 1967. 'Bancroft Men Join the Strike', *Times of Zambia*, 19 April 1967.

[125] 'It's Blatant Racialism, says Sipalo', *Times of Zambia*, 20 April 1967.

[126] 'All quiet on UDI front', *Zambia News*, 12 December 1967.

whites sparked riots during which one white woman, Bridget Myburgh, was killed and ten other whites injured.[127]

The strengthening of a white identity is also evident in the spate of 'black peril' scares in the late 1960s. In February 1968, underground artisans at Mufulira refused to work after two white women, both wives of artisans, were raped by a man claiming to be a meter reader.[128] A similar incident occurred in Nchanga some months later after a white woman, also married to an artisan, was sexually assaulted in the street.[129] Fears of such incidents became common. Interviews with white employees at Mufulira in 1970 found "a fairly widespread belief that African men are sexually voracious" and would assault white women and girls if given the opportunity.[130] In 1973, the SAMWU warned its members not to take up jobs in Zambia and publicised what the union considered to be the cautionary tale of Randall Evans. Evans, a Welsh mineworker, had left South Africa to take up a job as a foreman at Nchanga Mine but quickly returned to South Africa, complaining of high taxes and assaults on white women by Africans.[131]

ZEMA was an ineffective organisation and largely ignored by the mine management. Following a walkout by twenty artisans at Nchanga in September 1967, the head of department flatly refused to meet with ZEMA, stating it was an internal disciplinary issue.[132] Demands for salary increases for assayers, chemists, clerical staff, storekeepers, assistant engineers and artisan foremen were ignored, and a government-appointed conciliator, though sympathetic to their case, was instructed to "merely let the dispute drift" without resolution.[133] ZEMA was also more isolated than its predecessor organisations, who had relied heavily on support from the British trade union movement. In October 1967, the government ordered all trade unions to disaffiliate from external organisations. ZEMA's links with the Miners' International Federation were therefore curtailed.[134]

Further state intervention soon sharply circumscribed the ability of white mineworkers to pursue collective interests. The Zambian Government had sought to curb the power of the country's trade unions since independence. New legislation in 1965 established the principle of 'one union, one industry', requiring rival unions to merge. Consequently, the three African unions on the mines – the Zambia Mineworkers' Union, Mines Local Staff Association and Mines' Police Association – were amalgamated into one union in April 1967: the Mineworkers' Union of Zambia (MUZ). Once

[127] 'Zambian Race Riot', *The Guardian*, 1 November 1966.

[128] Telex 2665 from Mufulira, 20 February 1968, ZCCM 16.3.9A.

[129] Copper Industry Service Bureau to Anmercosa and Roselite Lusaka, 20 April 1968, ZCCM 16.3.9A.

[130] A Study of the Causes of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Amongst Fixed Period Contract Expatriate Employees at Mufulira Copper Mines Limited, Part I, March 1970, ZCCM 3.3.1F.

[131] 'Fantastiese lone in Zambië is bedrog, se Republiek-myner', *Die Mynwerker*, 1 August 1973.

[132] Copper Industry Service Bureau to Anmercosa and Roselite Lusaka, 26 September 1967, ZCCM 16.3.9A.

[133] S.D. Sacika to Permanent Secretary, Minister of Labour and Social Services, 24 September 1969, NAZ MLSS1/25/143.

[134] L.C. Powell to General Secretary, ZEMA, 31 October 1967, NAZ MLSS1/21/78.

this was established – no mean feat given that rivalry between two of these unions had provoked frequent strikes in the 1950s – the Ministry of Labour began pressuring ZEMA to merge into the new body.[135] Ironically, one of the two men appointed to oversee this process was William Comrie, the former British trade union official who twenty years earlier had come to the country to assist the formation of a union for African mineworkers separate from the white mineworkers' union.

Merger negotiations dragged on and the Zambian Government grew frustrated. In front a crowd of some 80,000 at Kitwe's May Day rally in 1968, Kaunda threatened to ban white unions unless they disbanded voluntarily and merged with Zambian unions.[136] In January 1969, the government acted on this threat and, such was the union's now marginal importance, did not even bother to inform ZEMA about its dissolution. Union officials first learned the news by reading newspaper reports.[137] The union's last general secretary Arthur Watson, a boilermaker, protested half-heartedly and suggested forming a 'Contract Employees' Welfare Association', which was prohibited. Most of the union's membership refused to sign the dissolution notice, as required by ZEMA's constitution, but this opposition was inconsequential. The government's stated aim was "ZEMA has to be made impotent" and the union was dissolved in June 1969.[138]

There were rumours that some white mineworkers tried to form a successor union, but this came to nothing and there is no evidence of any white workers joining MUZ.[139] There were no obvious candidates who could establish a new organisation. Almost all the leaders of the strikes in the late 1950s and early 1960s had left the Copperbelt except Jack Purvis, and he died in 1970 after suffering a serious car accident near Luanshya.[140] Moreover, the mines were no longer regularly supplied with the kind of white workers who had come in earlier decades, individuals with personal knowledge of organising unions in hostile conditions and experience of sharp industrial struggles in Australia, Britain, Canada, South Africa, or the United States. Industrial conflict in these countries had subsided. White trade unionism came to an end, not with a bang, but with a whimper.

Union membership for white workers reverted to the situation in the early 1930s as these workers viewed their stay on the Copperbelt as temporary and so retained membership of trade unions elsewhere in the world, particularly the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, a British union whose origins were in the metal industry.[141] Collective action dwindled away. The final strike by white workers took place in July 1969 when white workers in the Nchanga Open Pit took wildcat strike action and then held meetings in the pit where they voted by show of hands

[135] Gupta, 'Trade Unionism and Politics', 307.

[136] All RRWU branches in Zambia had already closed. 'White-Run Unions Warned of Ban', *Times of Zambia*, 2 May 1968.

[137] Record Note from S.K. Bwalya, 18 February 1969, NAZ MLSS1/21/78.

[138] Meeting between ZEMA and the Registrar of Trade Unions, 18 June 1969, NAZ MLSS1/21/78.

[139] 'Is ZEMA trying for a second time?', *Times of Zambia*, 11 July 1969.

[140] 'Former miners' leader dies in hospital', *Times of Zambia*, 5 October 1970.

[141] Correspondence with Zambia, Ndola, 1968-70, MRC MSS.79/AS/3/7/144.

to continue striking. White mineworkers were, as in previous years, angry about wages, and over a five-day strike they were joined by artisans from the surface plant and white women from the mine store. This, however, totalled only 245 people, and failed to seriously disrupt production. Mine management met a delegation of strikers, but rejected most of their demands, which included the formation of a works' committee to represent expatriates.[142] White mineworkers no longer had collective power in the workplace to enforce their demands. In any case, two years later, the 1971 Industrial Relations Act made it almost impossible to stage a legal strike.[143] White workers continued to enjoy high wages and privileges, but could no longer contest the power of their employers, especially as their employer soon became the Zambian state.

Nationalisation of the mining industry

The Zambian Government's faith in private sector-led economic development quickly ebbed away following independence and government officials became frustrated over what they saw as low levels of re-investment in the mining industry.[144] In 1968, the government imposed more stringent capital controls on the mining industry and began to increase state intervention in the economy. In April 1968, President Kaunda announced a new economic policy that became known as Mulungushi Reforms whereby the state bought a 51% share in the 26 largest non-mining firms. The mining industry was excluded from these measures and the government publicly denied any intention of nationalising the industry. This meant that the announcement in August 1969 that the mining industry too would be nationalised took both companies by surprise.[145] The Matero Reforms, as they became known, required both mining companies to sell a 51% stake of their operations to the Zambian Government at book value, a policy based on the process of 'Chilenization' in Chile, where the state also took greater control over the copper industry. [146]

Negotiations were swift and productive. The Zambian Government accepted the book value of the companies' assets ($343.3m for RAA and $230.7m for RST) and sought to operate the mines in a partnership with both companies. [147] The result was an orderly transfer of ownership and little change to the day-to-day running of the industry. The mining companies got a lucrative deal as both were awarded the exclusive contracts for the sale and marketing of copper (at a fee of 1.5% gross turnover, plus 2% of profits) and for management, technical and recruitment services (at a fee of

[142] Copper Industry Service Bureau to Anmercosa and Roselite Lusaka, 5 August 1969, ZCCM 16.3.9A.

[143] Mhone, *Dual Labour Market*, 167.

[144] For instance, net profits at RST doubled from K9.4m to K20.7m between 1960 and 1967 but profits retained in the business remained the same while dividends trebled to K15.4m. Morris Szeftel, 'Conflict, Spoils, and Class Formation in Zambia' (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 1978), 218.

[145] Andrew Cohen, *'Navigating Nationalisation: American Metal Climax Inc. and the Zambian Copperbelt, c. 1968-1970', Africa* 2, 2 (2020): 21-39.

[146] Closer by, Union Minière's operations in Katanga had nationalised by the Congolese Government in 1967.

[147] Sklar, *Corporate Power*, 40.

0.75% turnover plus 2% of profit after mineral tax).[148] This gave the companies considerable freedom over mining operations and even investment decisions and enabled Anglo American and AMAX (the parent company of RST) to recover almost the entire book value of their investment in management fees and dividends from their minority shareholding within a few years.[149] In addition, exchange controls which permitted only 50% of profits to be remitted were abolished and, consequently, Anglo American were able to divest entirely from Zambia. Its remaining Zambian assets were transferred to a new holding company, Zambia Copper Investments, incorporated in Bermuda.[150]

Life and work on the mines continued much as it had done under private ownership, and there was no effort to reduce the many privileges of the white workforce. In fact, salaries for white workers rose considerably, and white employees' average earnings rose from K 8,046 in 1970 to K 12,977 in 1974, an increase that outpaced inflation and occurred in a period when the Kwacha appreciated against the US Dollar and Pound Sterling.[151] The number of white mineworkers remained stable as labour recruitment strategies were unaltered by nationalisation.

The continued presence of a substantial white workforce was unexpected. Both the mining companies and the Zambian Government anticipated that white employment on the mines would fall rapidly. The joint committee on Zambianization forecast in 1968 that total white employment would fall to 3,774 in December 1970, and then to 3,168 by December 1972.[152] There were in fact still 4,375 whites employed on the mines in 1970 and their numbers had risen to 4,600 by 1972, approximately 9% of the total workforce in both years. This was roughly the same proportion as the white workforce in South Africa's gold industry, where a colour bar was in place.[153]

Thorough re-organisation of work had changed the structure and composition of the white workforce during the 1960s. Relatively small numbers were directly involved in production by the 1970s. Already in January 1968 there were only 68 whites working underground at Rhokana's Mindola shaft, among an underground workforce of around 2,200.[154] By December 1974, there were only 319 whites employed in underground mining across the entire Copperbelt, mostly mine captains and engineers, and almost twice as many whites worked in administrative roles. There were also few white workers to be found in the concentrators, smelters, or refineries. Whites constituted only 4% of the 1,000-strong workforce at the Rhokana smelter in 1974 – a drop from 16%

[148] Greg Lanning and Marti Mueller, *Africa Undermined: Mining Companies and the Underdevelopment of Africa* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), 209-211.

[149] Navin, *Copper Mining & Management*, 180-81.

[150] Cunningham, *Copper Industry in Zambia*, 224.

[151] Daniel, *Africanization, Nationalization and Inequality*, 152.

[152] Ministry of Labour, *The progress of Zambianisation in the mining industry* (*December 1968*) (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1969), 9.

[153] Chamber of Mines of South Africa, *Annual Report 1970*, 72.

[154] Bates, *Union, Parties and Political Development*, 84.

in 1958.[155] It was a different picture in the engineering workshops as the single largest category of white employment in December 1974 was artisans – boilermakers, electricians, fitters, or vehicle artisans – making up 28% of total white employment. Most other whites were mining professionals employed as chemists, engineers, geologists (see Table 7).

Table 7: Distribution of the Expatriate Workforce on all Copperbelt mines, December 1974.[156]

Management	20
Mining (underground and open pit)	360
Mining Services (ventilation, survey, geology)	293
Metallurgical production (concentrator, smelter, refinery)	222
Metallurgical services (laboratories)	109
Engineering operations	856
Engineering artisans	1266
Administration (secretarial, accounts, stores, legal, manpower planning)	588
Medical	353
Training	236
Computer services	111
Research & Development	93
Total	4507

The kind of social life enjoyed by whites who arrived in the late 1960s and 1970s was much the same as the social life their predecessors enjoyed on the Copperbelt. John Clifton, who grew up in Kitwe in the 1960s, described it as "like Elysium because we had everything we possibly wanted." He readily recalled the 10 sports and social clubs that different members of his family were involved

[155] N. Gibson, 'The Application of Oxygen in a Copper Smelter', *Journal of the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy* 74, 8 (1974): 304.

[156] Calculated from Mining Industry Zambianisation Report 1976, ZCCM 12.4.9C.

with.[157] Dave Clarke was effusive about the society he found when he arrived in Kitwe in 1970, and was astonished that other whites 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 a flying instructor, chairman of the flying club and owned speedboats on Mindola Dam: "I would never have thought of joining a flying club in England, I would certainly never have thought of water skiing!"[158] Similarly, Sara Dunn, whose husband joined Nchanga as an engineer in 1970, was amazed by the size and luxury of their allocated house in Chingola. They had previously lived in a two-room tenement in Edinburgh adjacent to a large brewery.[159]

Social life also remained largely racially segregated and offered a familiar array of leisure and pastimes for white workers. Working at Rhokana in the late 1960s, Michael Burawoy found that the mine club was "in principle desegregated but in practice a place still controlled by whites for whites."[160] Similarly, Sara Dunn found on her arrival in Chingola that sports clubs were "largely run by and for the expatriate population with supporting Zambian staff."[161] The companies, however, made some effort to disengage from the provision of leisure facilities. Direct grants to sports teams and social clubs were reduced and, most notably, the Mufulira Mine Club was not rebuilt after it was destroyed in a massive fire in 1966.

There was also consistency in the kinds of things white employees were unhappy about. At Mufulira, levels of dissatisfaction were sufficient to warrant investigation by the mine management in 1970. The mine engaged an occupational psychologist to interview 15 graduates, 15 supervisory staff, 15 artisans, along with 35 wives of employees.[162] Most interviewees came from Northern England, followed by South Africa and Scotland, some had worked expatriate contracts elsewhere, and, like their predecessors, the overwhelming majority had come to the Copperbelt to make money. Some sought to save, while others "like to live well and spend everything they earn." There was little interest in the particular circumstances of Zambia, it was simply the place they happened to work. The whites surveyed expressed a vague admiration for Kenneth Kaunda as president, but otherwise had "no interest whatsoever in political matters" and most had "no social relationships with Zambians."[163]

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[157] Interview with John Clifton, 4 October 2013.

[158] Interview with Dave Clarke, 25 September 2013.

[159] Dunn, *Malachite and Mangoes*, 10-11.

[160] Burawoy, 'Colour of Class Revisited', 965.

[161] Dunn, *Malachite and Mangoes*, 85.

[162] The white workforce continued to be overwhelmingly male and most men were married.

[163] A Study of the Causes of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Amongst Fixed Period Contract Expatriate Employees at Mufulira Copper Mines Limited, Part I, March 1970, ZCCM 3.3.1F.

The complaints they had were remarkably consistent with the grievances raised in the 1940s and 1950s: the high cost of living and the long working week compared to elsewhere in the world. What had changed was a conviction that white workers could do something to alter this through collective action. One foreman complained "it's impossible to get anything changed here. They [management] just tell you that it's worked for twenty years and they're not going to change it now." Instead, they reverted to voting with their feet, as in the 1930s. Most were planning to return to Britain, though "others feel they cannot go back and want to try Canada or Australia. A few will try Rhodesia or South Africa."[164] Dunn similarly recalled "sundowner after sundowner" celebrating "moves to South Africa, Australia, Canada, Papua New Guinea, Guyana, Chile and even troubled Rhodesia to work in other mines or industries."[165]

Slump in the Copper Industry

The timing of nationalisation was disastrous as the copper industry, both within Zambia and globally, began to undergo severe difficulties. The first of these was the Mufulira Mine Disaster on 25 September 1970, the worst on the Copperbelt to date. That night, vast quantities of mud and water escaped a tailings dam on the surface and inundated the underground workings. Survivors recalled a noise like thunder, a shockwave of air through the tunnels, then the power failing and lights going out before the mud came, flooding the mine within 15 minutes. 89 miners were drowned in the pitch dark. Almost all of those killed were African men as few whites worked underground. Only three white workers were among the dead.[166] The disaster was a rare moment were racial divisions abated, as mine rescue teams, still largely staffed by whites, rushed from across the Copperbelt and descended into the flooded mine fifty times in the following days to search for survivors, though only a handful of men were discovered alive.

The disaster was an entirely avoidable one. Tailings had first been deposited in the dam in 1933. The subsequent investigation noted with incredulity that as the underground workings steadily extended in the 40 years that followed, no mine official had seriously considered the possibility that allowing the ground underneath dams to collapse after being mined would affect the dams themselves. In fact, senior management had ruled out such a possibility. Following the Aberfan disaster in 1966, when a spoil heap collapsed onto the village of Aberfan in South Wales killing 144 people, RST investigated whether a similar situation could arise on the Copperbelt mines but concluded "there is no danger of any of this tailing finding its way into the underground workings."[167] Afterwards there were real fears the disaster could be repeated. Barry Coulton worked underground as a contractor to restore mining operations and recalled:

[164] *Ibid.*

[165] Dunn, *Malachite and Mangoes*, 241-42. A large copper mine was established in Papua New Guinea in the mid-1960s.

[166] Alfred Tembo, 'After the Deluge: Appraising the Mufulira Mine Disaster in Zambia', *Historia* 64, 2 (2019): 109-131.

[167] Government of Zambia, *The Mufulira Mine Disaster. Final Report on the Causes and Consequences of the Disaster which occurred at Mufulira Mine on the 25th September 1970* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1971), 14.

> 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.[168]

More difficulties were to come. High copper prices in the first years of Zambian independence had masked underlying difficulties in the mining industry. Declining ore grades and more technically challenging underground mining conditions progressively increased costs during the 1960s.[169] The most accessible and richest deposits had been exhausted and in 1967 RST calculated that almost 65% of world copper output was being produced more cheaply than in Zambia.[170] Transport costs also increased sharply. The mines had always been distant from their main export markets, but this was exacerbated in the 1970s by political events in the region. The border with Rhodesia closed again in January 1973 and this was followed by the onset of civil war in Angola that cut off the rail route to Lobito in 1975.[171]

The mines were high-cost producers and the consequences of this were painfully exposed at the worst possible moment. In August 1973, the Zambian Government moved to nationalise the mines fully and announced that the management and sales contracts of both companies were cancelled. This was part of a trend towards tighter control over political life and the economy by UNIP and in December 1972 the country had become a one-party state. The timing could not have been worse. The oil shock in late 1973 triggered a global recession that caused copper prices to plummet from £1,400 per ton in April 1974 to between £500 and £600 per ton in 1975. This heralded the onset of a severe and protracted slump that the copper industry did not fully recover from until the early 2000s, by which time the mines had been privatised again.

Falling copper prices rapidly brought about the end of the white workforce. In 1976, annual turnover of white labour rose above 30% for the first time since 1963 and the mines failed to recruit replacements. By 1977 16% of posts designated for expatriates were vacant. A World Bank report attributed the accelerated departures of expatriate employees to declining living standards caused by "constant shortages of basic foods like milk, eggs, butter, etc.," while the falling value of the Kwacha made salaries less attractive compared to other mining regions.[172] Deepening economic difficulties began to intrude even into the privileged lives of expatriates. Dave Clarke explained that he and his family left for Rhodesia in 1977 because "although I was still flying, and we were still water-skiing" there were serious shortages of basic foodstuffs.[173]

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[168] Coulton, *Cumbrian Lad*, 151.

[169] Hyden Munene, 'Profitability and Nationalisation on the Zambian Copperbelt: A Case Study of Rhokana Corporation's Nkana Mine, 1964–1969', *African Economic History* 48, 2 (2020): 37-66.

[170] Confidential Memorandum to Directors, 31 January 1967, ST G/103.

[171] Sklar, *Corporate Power*, 159-64.

[172] World Bank, *Zambia - Basic economic report* (*Vol. 2*). *Annex 1: mining sector review* (Washington: World Bank, 1977), 40.

[173] Interview with Dave Clarke, 25 September 2013.

Financial difficulties finally prompted a change in recruitment strategies, as the mines could no longer afford to recruit from Britain. The category of expatriate was progressively de-racialised in the late 1970s. Peter Hills, who worked at Rhokana in the 1970s, recalled that "Brits started to drift away, and then we started to see people coming from the Philippines, and from India... Sri Lanka."[174] By 1983, nationals from these three countries comprised around one-third of the 2040-strong expatriate workforce, and there were even a small number of nationals from other African states graded as expatriates.[175]

Conclusion

The time of white mineworkers on Zambia's Copperbelt reached a sudden end with global slump in the copper industry. Even before this, however, changes had taken place that meant the white workforce on the mines in 1974 was quite different to that of the early 1960s. In 1963, there was a clearly articulated sense of difference between white mineworkers and mine management as groups with divergent interests. Faced with the imminent prospect of Zambian independence, white mineworkers at Mufulira were embroiled in one of the longest disputes in the history of the Copperbelt over new bonus forms. Determined effort by white mineworkers to advance their interests as a racially delineated class even continued in an independent Zambia amidst wide-ranging changes in the organisation of work implemented by the mining companies. This had ceased by the 1970s, recruitment patterns and the organisation of work had changed, and the white workforce came to resemble the kind of expatriate workforces seen in the contemporary extractives industry.

Expatriate workforces in the extractive industries are often seen as a de facto racialised group, where expatriate is a synonym for white.[176] On the Copperbelt, we can see how this was the outcome of a deliberate corporate policy that created the category of expatriate in racial terms. Class diminished in importance as a social category among whites, and new white employees formed a more homogenous group who were encouraged by corporate policies to regard themselves in racial terms. Company policy also discouraged white workers from identifying themselves with Zambia and remaining in the country, as any white employee who took Zambian citizenship would have received a substantial pay cut.

Expatriate status made it logistically and psychologically easy for whites to move, as it always had been. If anything, the training programmes and promotion opportunities provided by the mining companies for their white employees in the 1960s and 1970s made it even easier for whites to move internationally. The skills and experience they acquired on the Copperbelt mines meant that they were much in demand at mines or, increasingly, oilfields elsewhere in the world.

[174] Interview with Peter Hills, 1 September 2014.

[175] Around half the expatriate workforce were British nationals. Nationalities of Expatriates in ZCCM Divisions, 1983, ZCCM 1.4.1F.

[176] Hannah Appel, *The Licit Life of Capitalism: US Oil in Equatorial Guinea* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 85-97.

Many young white men who began their careers on the Copperbelt mines went on to enjoy long and successful careers in the mining industry. Mobility was the norm.

The real change for whites on the Copperbelt came only in the mid-1970s when the copper industry slumped. Until that time, leisure, housing, and welfare for white employees were much the same as they had been before Zambian independence. Whites arriving in the late 1960s and early 1970s could enjoy the same remarkable variety of sports and entertainments that their predecessors had in the 1950s. Social life also remained largely racially segregated. Most white newcomers to Mufulira from northern England in 1970 had little contact with Africans other than as subordinates at work or in the home.[177] Whites lived like and associated with people like themselves.

[177] A Study of the Causes of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Amongst Fixed Period Contract Expatriate Employees at Mufulira Copper Mines Limited, Part I, March 1970. ZCCM 3.3.1F.

Conclusion

In the early 2010s, Kansanshi Mine on what is known as the 'new Copperbelt' in Zambia's North West Province constructed a lavish golf estate for white expatriate employees, with comfortable spacious housing, sports facilities, a well-appointed clubhouse containing restaurants and bars and even a school. Access to the estate is strictly controlled.[1] Take a flight from Johannesburg to Ndola or Solwezi and you can see who resides in such places, as you will soon find yourself amongst a murmur of South African, Australian, and British accents and catch glimpses of 'precision', 'drilling' or 'heavy engineering' emblazoned on company clothing. The first time I saw a crowd of white contract workers, some still dressed in overalls, knocking back beers at the bar in Ndola airport while awaiting the departure of the Johannesburg flight, it made me pause and wonder how much had changed in Zambia's mining industry.

There is still a division in the mining workforce. Mining companies on the Copperbelt today recruit expatriate workers from a separate international labour market and these workers are paid much more than locally recruited workers, even when locally recruited workers have the same skills.[2] Ching Kwan Lee found that "an invisible coloured glass ceiling was operative" on the mines in the 2010s that kept black Zambians out of top jobs. The mines now made extensive use of Chinese, Peruvian and South African contractors for mining and construction. Expatriates employed as skilled supervisors made up approximately 5-10% of contractors' workforces, which as Lee noted was around the same proportion of the workforce graded as 'expatriate' in the early 1970s.[3] At Kansanshi Mine, artisans with experience in mine construction were recruited on short-term contracts from Indonesia and the Philippines to construct the smelter in 2013, and left once it was complete. They were housed separately from African workers, at the mine site in temporary accommodation.[4] The same was true on other mines. In the late 2000s, Konkola Copper Mines – an Indian firm that owns Nchanga Mine – constructed a residential compound for their Indian employees in Chingola.[5] Moreover, this situation for expatriate workers is not distinctive to the Copperbelt, but strongly resembles mining sites in other places.[6] Expatriate employees are highly

[1] Rita Kesselring, *Trading Inequality: Urban Development in Zambian Mining Towns and the Swiss Commodity Trading Hub* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, *forthcoming*)

[2] Benjamin Rubbers, 'Mining Boom, Labour Market Segmentation and Social Inequality in the Congolese Copperbelt', *Development and Change* 51, 6 (2020): 1565-66.

[3] Lee, *Global China*, 61-62.

[4] Margaret O'Callaghan, *Copperfields: A History of the Impact of the First Decade of a Mining Boom in North Western Province, Zambia, circa 2002-2015* (Canberra: n.p., 2018), 45.

[5] Lee, *Global China*, 102.

[6] Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, 'Race and Gender in Peripheral Resource Towns: Boundaries and Boundary-Crossings in Tanjung Bara Mining Camp in Kalimantan, Indonesia', in *Company Towns: Labor, Space, and Power Relations across Time and Continents*, eds. Marcelo J. Borges and Susana B. Torres (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 208.

mobile workers who move between mining sites and perform different jobs, receive much higher pay, and are often housed separately from African workers. So, what has changed?

One change should be apparent from the above: 'expatriate' is no longer a synonym for 'white'. Another important change is less obvious. What has been emphasised in this book is that the Copperbelt's white mineworkers had a clear sense of their collective interests as separate and opposed to their white employers and they conceived of these interests in terms of race and class. The boundaries of their group were both classed and raced, they excluded Africans but did not include all whites. Forms of organization, demands and action taken by the white workforce on the mines was closely shaped by their global connections, which were collective, rather than individual. The contemporary expatriate workforce does not have a collective sense of identity different or opposed to their employers or collective organisations like trade unions. White employees are a familiar sight on Zambia's mines today, but their presence has very different consequences than in the 1940s and 1950s.

The return of expatriate workers to the Copperbelt mines from the 2000s is part of a waxing and waning of the region's global connections. Between 1997 and 2000, Zambia's mining industry was privatised and sold off to international mining companies, creating a complex ownership structure, a fragmented industry and fundamentally altering the relationship between the mines and the towns around them.[7] The end of state-ownership brought about the closer re-integration of the mines into the global copper industry.

In some ways, this book has been the reverse of the usual narrative of globalisation, a teleological history of intensifying global connections as we move towards the present. The Copperbelt was more closely integrated into the global networks of the mining industry in the early 1930s than in the late 1970s. The Copperbelt's white workforce both reflected and helped sustain these networks. Arguably, much of the world entered a period of deglobalization in the aftermath of the First World War and, as some scholars have argued, "working-class migrations" decreased during the interwar period as "entry restrictions were enacted to reduce international mobility" by many governments.[8] This was precisely the period when the Copperbelt mines began production. Opportunities for global mobility closed for some but not others, and male white mineworkers moved freely throughout this period (apart from during the Second World War). Their racial identity and industrial skills kept the world open for them, even after the British Empire crumbled. When white mineworkers finally disappeared from the Copperbelt it was not due to limitations on

[7] Jan-Bart Gewald and Sebastiaan Soeters, 'African Miners and Shape-Shifting Capital Flight: The Case of Luanshya/Baluba', in *Zambia, Mining and Neoliberalism: Boom and Bust on the Globalized Copperbelt*, eds. Miles Larmer and Alistair Fraser (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 155-183. See also Alistair Fraser and John Lungu, *For whom the Windfalls?: Winners & Losers in the Privatization of Zambia's Copper Mines* (Lusaka: Civil Society Trade Network of Zambia, 2007) and Mususa, 'There used to be Order'.

[8] Dirk Hoerder, 'Migrations and Belongings', in *A World Connecting, 1870-1945*, ed. Emily Rosenberg (London: Belknap, 2012), 564. For a critique of this periodisation, emphasising the continuance of mass migration, see Adam McKeown, 'Global Migration, 1846-1940', *Journal of World History* 15, 2 (2004): 155-189.

their mobility, but to the dire state of the industry in Zambia and because opportunities in the expanding mining industries in Australia and Latin America offered better prospects.[9]

Still, the forces of nationalism counteracting such global linkages were forces to be reckoned with. By the late 1970s, the nation-state was in the ascendancy. The mines had become a nationalised industry in which almost all employees were Zambian nationals.[10] The same trends are evident elsewhere. In her study of Nigerian seamen, for instance, Lyn Schler sets her subjects in the context of "transcontinental migrations and cosmopolitan lifestyles," but argues that "nationalism and nationalisation became hegemonic forces" and "transnational imaginaries lost ground."[11]

Such imaginaries and connections are not an unambiguous good. The circulation of people and ideas produces not only common ground but also "disassociations and differences."[12] The arrival of a globalised white workforce who sought to maintain a division in the workforce along racial lines was largely to the detriment of Africans in what is now Zambia, especially those who worked on the mines. These white workers, through their collective militancy, inadvertently provided African mineworkers with a powerful example of how to improve their own pay and conditions. This had lasting consequences and there was a close relationship between white and African worker militancy, even if collaboration between the two section of the workforce was rare. Yet for successive decades, white mineworkers monopolised skilled jobs on the mines, blocking Africans and taking the largest share of wages for themselves.

The racial division of labour was instituted by the mining companies at the outset – and corporate protestations over the colour bar in the 1950s need to be set in the context of threats to profits and managerial control – and the white workforce struggled with their employers over who controlled this division of labour. The arrival of white mineworkers on the Copperbelt was rooted in corporate policy, but this had unintended consequences. White mineworkers brought with them the traditions of the international labour movement, and many who came to prominence in the 1930s and 1940s had long experience within that movement. In these years, like was replaced with like. Only a few months after Tommy Graves abruptly left the Copperbelt in 1939, Frank Maybank arrived, a man with a similarly globe-trotting work experience, a deep immersion in the radical end of the labour movement and an enthusiasm for confrontational industrial disputes.

Collective action, ineffective during the 1930s, erupted during the Second World War as white mineworkers, their customary mobility blocked, decided to fight it out and take full advantage of the wartime necessity for copper production. Several years of bruising strikes won the

[9] Daniel, *Africanization, Nationalization and Inequality*, 135.

[10] Duncan Money, "'Aliens' on the Copperbelt: Zambianisation, Nationalism and Non-Zambian Africans in the Mining Industry', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 45, 5 (2019): 871-73.

[11] Schler, *Nation on Board*, 10-11. On the curtailment of global connections by newly established states, see Gareth Curless, 'The Triumph of the State: Singapore's Dockworkers and the Limits of Global History, c. 1920–1965', *The Historical Journal* 60, 4 (2017): 1097-1123.

[12] Andreas Eckert, 'Why all the Fuss about Global Labour History?', in *Global Histories of Work*, ed. Andreas Eckert (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 11.

Copperbelt's white mineworkers material gains, a closed shop, and a colour bar, the latter of which illustrates one the central contentions of this book that the working-class made itself white through its own agency. Race was made and re-made on the Copperbelt. Racism was accompanied by radical politics, and the NRMWU was headed by an avowed communist for a decade, Maybank. Wartime strikes also brought the Copperbelt's white mineworkers into the orbit of the imperial and international labour movement. The British TUC and other trade unions established close links with the Copperbelt's white mineworkers and continued to assist and advise them until the early 1960s.

The industrial militancy, political radicalism and racial exclusivity which came to dominate life on the Copperbelt were transnational in origin, but this transnationalism, and the chosen points of comparison, had a racial and imperial logic. White workers consciously looked to developments in industries in Britain, South Africa, Australia, Canada, and the United States, and used these to shape their demands. The knowledge that animated these demands was partly derived from connections with trade unions in those places, who acknowledged white trade unions as part of an international labour movement, and partly the personal knowledge of individual white mineworkers who had previously worked in those places.

What I want to emphasise is the appeal of this racialised class identity: it worked. In 1908, the Prime Minister of Cape Colony John X. Merriman observed that white workmen who "however unjustly" were regarded as lower class in Europe were "delighted on arrival here to find themselves in a position of an aristocracy of colour."[13] This was perhaps nowhere more true than on the Copperbelt, where wages received by white mineworkers outpaced even white workers in South Africa. Several years of industrial unrest in the 1940s were, fortuitously and unexpectedly, followed by a major boom. Corporate attitudes softened. Soaring copper prices meant that both companies could afford to be generous and worry less about steadily rising costs.

Copper prices trended upwards in the post-war period until the mid-1970s. White mineworkers were in the right place at the right time and obtained from the companies not only high wages, but a wide array of welfare and leisure benefits, all paid for from the proceeds of copper. White mineworkers' fortunes were bound up with the fortunes of the mining industry, and their ability to act collectively to extract benefits from that industry.

Paradoxically, many of the things that attracted whites to the Copperbelt – high wages, lavish benefits from the mines, etc. – also made it easy for them to leave. Houses, furniture, fixtures and fittings were all owned by the mining companies, and anything that couldn't be packed up was easily sold to new arrivals. The transience of Copperbelt life was obvious to white residents at the time. "It's an odd life here," one white woman commented in the 1950s:

> The population is migratory; people come and go continually. New faces, new voices, new acquittances, drawn here by tales of fabulous wages and inexhaustible copper wealth. Then,

[13] Elaine Katz, *A Trade Union Aristocracy: A history of white workers in the Transvaal and the General Strike of 1913* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1976), 77.

> suddenly, they are no longer here. 'Where's so-and-so?' you ask; 'I haven't seen him lately.' 'Oh, didn't you know?' comes the reply, 'He's finished up!'[14]

The ability and willingness of white mineworkers to move had important consequences for responses to African nationalism and the end of colonial rule. Most were not settlers making a claim at permanency in colonial Zambia and their privileged position did not rely on protection from the state. Their status as settlers was, of course, not only about intent. Nicola Ginsburgh and Will Jackson point out that "we can hardly view the settler in isolation from the supporting social and political structures that helped determine whether those ambitions [to settle] were fulfilled."[15] Mine work was precarious for daily paid workers, who could be sacked with little notice. The fortunes of white mineworkers were tied to an extractive industry, whose owners had no abiding interest in the formation of a permanent white population beyond the requirements of the mining industry. The basis of their privileged position in the workplace, rather than on the colonial state, and their propensity to move encouraged a more ambivalent attitude towards the colonial political order.

In the post-war period, this brought about another kind of mobility: social mobility, in an individual and an intergenerational sense. Opportunities for white workers changed markedly over time. White earnings increased enormously in the 1950s and 1960s and both mining companies decided to upskill and promote white workers during the 1960s. The consequences of this were apparent during the interviews I conducted. Broadly speaking, the descendants of whites who worked on the Copperbelt in the 1930s and 1940s often had jobs not dissimilar to those of their parents and grandparents: fitters, miners, nurses, train drivers, and, in what is perhaps the closest parallel, transient oil workers. In contrast, the descendants of whites who worked on the Copperbelt in the 1950s and 1960s often received a university education and subsequently worked as accountants, academics, medical doctors, or in management roles if they joined the mining industry. Mine work in this latter period was a way out of the working class for many. This social mobility enhanced physical mobility. As *The Economist* noted pertinently when discussing the colour bar and employment prospects for the sons of white miners, these sons "may not want to be miners, or even Rhodesians."[16]

Classes that were made could be unmade. Until the copper price slump in the mid-1970s, there were still several thousand white employees in Zambia's copper industry. It is more difficult to identify this group as a class. The kind of jobs they performed had changed and there was little sense of collective identity other than a racial one. There was disquiet and grumbling among the white workforce, but nothing that could be reasonably termed antagonism or conflict. In this way, these workers metamorphosed into expatriate workers. Mobile, usually highly skilled and highly paid but largely without collective interests, and no forms of collective organisation.

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[14] Anne Broome, 'Rhodesian Boom Towns', *African World* (January 1958), 15.

[15] Nicola Ginsburgh and Will Jackson, 'Settler Societies', in *A Companion to African History*, eds. William H. Worger, Charles Ambler and Nwando Achebe (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), 78.

[16] 'Odd man out on the Copperbelt', *The Economist*, 10 September 1955.

Labour history has often been about rescuing forgotten figures from, in E.P. Thompson's memorable phrase, "the enormous condescension of posterity."[17] Certainly, these white workers had largely been forgotten, attracting little more than a passing mention in what is otherwise among the most extensively studied areas of labour history on the African continent. Yet what Thompson goes on to say in that same passage about forgotten figures is surely less applicable, that despite goals and struggles that now appear foolhardy and backward, "their aspirations were valid in terms of their own experience."[18] This book has argued that the experiences of the Copperbelt's white mineworkers informed their aspirations, but it seems perverse to conclude these aspirations, rooted in their experience of the global racial division of labour, were valid.

Yet in other contexts, these same men would have attracted the sympathy or praise of labour historians. The founders of the NRMWU included participants in tumultuous and much-studied labour disputes across and beyond the British Empire and considered themselves stalwarts of Britain's labour movement: men who struck in Britain's 1926 General Strike and had survived the nine-month lockout that followed, men who were veterans of the struggles of Red Clydeside, men who had been rounded up at gun point in America's 'labour wars'. The Copperbelt's white mineworkers had considerable justification for seeing themselves as part of the labour movement, though they have not been regarded as such since.

The significance for labour history is in understanding how labour internationalism in the mid-twentieth century was racialised. In the 1940s, white mineworkers considered themselves the real workers on the copper mines, and had no difficulty convincing the international labour movement that white male workers were the de facto working class in the region. Venues like the WFTU conferences gave them a sympathetic hearing and support. By the 1960s, however, this was not the case, and they were no longer considered to be workers in a meaningful sense. African trade unionists had played an important role in contesting the connections of the Copperbelt's white workforce, and disrupting their image as the 'real' working class on the mines. This can be seen in the historiography that emerged in this period, as scholars became increasingly interested in the region's labour history, the focus was on African mineworkers.

Many of the generation of Africanist scholars in the 1960s and 1970s were committed opponents of colonialism and supporters of African nationalist movements. It is understandable why they did not choose to study the Copperbelt's then still present white workforce, who, as we have seen, continued to maintain a racially segregated life for themselves in the mining towns. However, simply because they are dislikeable does not mean that they are unimportant. Moreover, many working-class movements in history have been riven with hierarchies and rigidly stratified. Some purported histories from below are actually "histories from the lower middle up."[19] White workers were below some in the workplace hierarchy. Even their extraordinary affluence was

[17] Thompson, *English Working Class*, 12.

[18] *Ibid*., 13.

[19] Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, x.

precarious since most of the white workforce could be sacked with 24 hours' notice, yet these workers had direct authority over Africans in the workplace and the household.

This book has stressed the agency of white workers in enforcing and shaping these hierarchies. These workers were not tricked into believing they were white by deceptive bosses who sought to cause divisions among their workforce and prevent united action. The prospect of joint action between African and white mineworkers, though distant, was a persistent worry for the mining companies, but it was the white mineworkers' own agency that formed themselves as a separate, racialised class.

The term 'white working-class' gained surprising currency in the 2010s as a convenient shorthand to describe the perceived voting base of right-wing populists in Europe and North America. Mostly, its members are viewed as atomised, resentful individuals left behind by economic and cultural changes and disregarded by mainstream political parties. Seen from the standpoint of the 1940s, this contemporary usage of the term 'white working class' is unrecognisable. It is hard to see how 'class' figures in the white working-class of the 2010s, and how it forms a collective identity other than a racial one. In contrast, the white working-class on the Copperbelt formed a collective identity along the lines of both race and class. It incorporated some whites while very clearly excluding others. White mineworkers formed racially segregated trade unions, took collective action to win material gains for white workers, spent an inordinate amount of time demarcating who could do what kind of work, and regularly called upon the international labour movement to assist them, assistance they believed they were due by dint of their shared membership of that labour movement.

White men working on the mines were a turbulent and raucous group who, with extraordinary success, looked after themselves and people like them, and helped to create an extraordinarily affluent society on the Copperbelt. A lot changed between the 1920s and 1960s. Yet whether they were poverty-stricken Glaswegian riveters brawling their way through the rough mining camps or Jaguar-driving, polo-playing rockbreakers motoring down to Johannesburg with a fat cheque in their back pocket, they had something in common: on the mines they were in a class of their own.

Appendix I: Statistical Profile of the Mining Workforce, 1931-1976.[1]

	African mineworkers	White mineworkers	White proportion of total workforce	Annual white labour turnover
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 (estimate)	10.2%	
1938	20,358	2,296 (estimate)	10%	
1939	20,924	2,609	11.1%	35%
1940	24,328	2,971	10.9%	
1941	27,720	3,098	10%	
1942	30,425	3,306	9.8%	
1943	32,805	3,566	9.8%	
1944	30,470	3,445	10.2%	
1945	28,304	3,272	10.4%	
1946	27,832	3,426	11%	
1947	29,166	3,681	11.2%	
1948	30,932	3,958	11.3%	
1949	33,061	4,293	11.5%	
1950	34,814	4,604	11.8%	

[1] Figures on African and white mineworkers taken from Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey Vol. II*, 422; Berger, *Labour, Race and Colonial Rule*, 238-39; Daniel, *Africanization, Nationalization, and Inequality*, 72, 107. Figures on the numbers of white daily-paid and staff employees and white annual labour turnover until 1960 taken from Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, *Year Book 1956*, 68 and *Year Book 1961*, 30. Figures on white labour turnover 1961-76 taken from Daniel, *Africanization, Nationalization and Inequality*, 133.

1951	35,432	5,184	12.8%	
1952	36,668	5,504	13.1%	16.5%
1953	36,147	5,879	14%	17.6%
1954	37,193	6,294	14.5%	17.3%
1955	35,190	6,566	15.7%	13.8%
1956	37,533	7,065	15.7%	13.1%
1957	38,763	7,304	15.8%	24.9%
1958	32,824	6,739	17%	36%
1959	35,014	7,259	17.1%	16.2%
1960	36,806	7,528	17%	17.4%
1961	39,036	7,641	16.4%	20.6%
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%	23.2%
1968	43,198	4,845	10.1%	28%
1969	43,500	4,727	9.8%	26%
1970	41,951	4,375	9%	25%
1971	44,997	4,751	9.6%	23.6%
1972	46,245	4,600	9%	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%

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