

The Objects of Life in Central Africa

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The Objects of Life in Central Africa

The History of Consumption and Social Change,
1840–1980

Edited by

Robert Ross
Marja Hinfelaar
Iva Peša



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Cover illustration: Returning to village, Livingstone, Photograph by M.J. Morris, Leya, 1933
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In memory of Gertie Janssen

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	ix
List of Contributors.....	xi

Introduction: Material Culture and Consumption Patterns: A Southern African Revolution.....	1
<i>Robert Ross, Marja Hinfelaar and Iva Peša</i>	

PART I

PRE-COLONIAL TRADE AND FIREARMS

Wearing Cloth, Wielding Guns: Consumption, Trade, and Politics in the South Central African Interior during the Nineteenth Century	17
<i>David M. Gordon</i>	
The Role of Firearms in the Songye Region (1869–1960)	41
<i>Donatien Dibwe Dia Mwembu</i>	

PART II

MIGRANCY, MOBILITY AND INNOVATION

<i>Sipilingas</i> : Intraregional African Initiatives and the United Methodist Church in Katanga and Zambia, 1910–1945	67
<i>J. Jeffrey Hoover</i>	
‘Walking Home Majestically’: Consumption and the Enactment of Social Status among Labour Migrants from Barotseland, 1935–1965.....	93
<i>Michael Barrett</i>	
Railways, Railway Culture, and ‘Industrial Work Discipline’ in the Rhodesias.....	115
<i>Kenneth P. Vickery</i>	

PART III

ADVERTISING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Advertising, Consuming Manufactured Goods and Contracting
Colonial Hegemony on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1945–1964..... 143
Walima T. Kalusa
- Fabricating Dreams: Sewing Machines, Tailors, and Urban
Entrepreneurship in Zambia 167
Karen Tranberg Hansen

PART IV

TRADERS

- Indian Traders as Agents of Western Technological
Consumption and Social Change in Mukuni: Memories
of the Sharma Brothers' Trading Store, 1950s to 1964..... 189
Friday Mufuzi
- The Social and Economic Impact of the Fort Jameson
(Chipata) Indians on the Development of Chipata District,
1899–1973..... 215
Bizeck J. Phiri
- Business, Consumption and Politics: Robinson Nabulyato's
Banamwaze Store, 1949–1969 237
Marja Hinfelaar
- Buying Pineapples, Selling Cloth: Traders and Trading Stores
in Mwinilunga District, 1940–1970..... 259
Iva Peša
- Index..... 281

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS, TABLES AND MAPS

2.1	A Lake Mweru Chief.....	37
2.2	Illustration of Msiri, along with one of his wives.....	39
3.1	Map of the Songye region.....	42
3.2	The Songye Chief Lumpungu A Kikolo.....	45
3.3	Rifle used by the Tshokwe in the Luso-African area	49
4.1	First Methodist Church in Élisabethville	72
4.2	Second Methodist Church in Likasi.....	72
4.3	Second Methodist Church in Likasi.....	78
4.4	Joseph Jutu leaving church to sell books in the city	86
4.5	Interior of the second Methodist Church in 1917	86
4.6	Start of the construction of the Wallace Memorial Church.....	89
4.7	Placement of the cornerstone of the Wallace Memorial Church... ..	89
5.1	Isha-Kashewa, a Mbunda labour migrant.....	95
6.1	Canadian-built Mountain at Bulawayo, 1949.....	116
6.2	The royal train heading for Victoria Falls, 1947	120
6.3	First train to arrive at Victoria Falls, 1904	125
6.4	Passenger train from Umtali to Salisbury, 1899.....	129
6.5	Beira Railway Falcon	136
7.1	Advertisement for Castle lager in <i>Nshila</i>	149
8.1	Modern African life, Lozi, 1959.....	175
8.2	Tailors and <i>salaula</i> vendor in Mansa, 1995.....	177
8.3	Male and female tailoring students, Lusaka, 2001.....	178
8.4	A designer and her male tailors, Lusaka, 2008.....	183
9.1	Table: Growth of the Asian population, 1911–61	195
9.2	The old Sharma Brothers' Store in Mukuni	197
9.3	Nayee Brothers outside their shop, Livingstone, 1950s	199
9.4	Woman wearing old Leya dress.....	204
9.5	Woman wearing <i>musiinsi</i> and <i>chibaanda</i>	205
9.6	Women pounding grain in Malawi, 1914	208
9.7	Woman at work on a stone grinding mill, 1860s.....	209
10.1	Table: Male Asiatic population, 1938	224
11.1.1	Kenneth Kaunda	239
11.1.2	Robinson Nabulyato's grave and store.....	242
11.3	Map of Banamwaze in Namwala District.....	243
12.1	Map of licensed trading stores in Mwinilunga District	264
12.2	The house of Thomas Kapita at Ikelenge, 1954.....	270

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INTRODUCTION:
MATERIAL CULTURE AND CONSUMPTION PATTERNS:
A SOUTHERN AFRICAN REVOLUTION

Robert Ross, Marja Hinfelaar and Iva Peša

In the last years before the independence of Zambia and Malawi, the researchers of the renowned Rhodes-Livingstone Institute were contemplating writing a book to be entitled ‘The Industrial Revolution in Central Africa.’¹ In the end, nothing came of this project. Part of the reason for this failure of nerve, or commitment, may have been a cold-headed account of the nature of the economic phenomena for which they were intending to describe the social consequences. This was made by Phyllis Deane, who had been an economist working for the Colonial Office in conjunction with the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute before she left to take up a lectureship in economics at Cambridge. There she would become one of the leading economic historians of her generation, and author of a renowned work on Great Britain, famously entitled *The First Industrial Revolution*.² Before that, however, she produced a short article on ‘The Industrial Revolution in British Central Africa.’³ In this, she implicitly compared the two phenomena of rapid economic growth, that in Great Britain in the decades around 1800, and also South Africa since around 1930,⁴ and that in what was then the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in the period after 1945. In the latter case, the drive towards industrialisation was primarily in the hands of the white minority, and the mass of industrial

¹ H. Macmillan, ‘The historiography of transition on the Zambian Copperbelt : another view’, *Journal of Southern African studies*, 19:4 (1993), 690; c.f. R.J.B. Moore, *These African copper miners: A study of the industrial revolution in Northern Rhodesia, with principal reference to the copper mining industry* (London: 1948); More generally, J-B. Gewald, M. Hinfelaar and G. Macola (eds.), *Living the end of empire: Politics and society in late colonial Zambia* (Leiden, 2011).

² Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1965.

³ *Civilisations* 12 (1962); It is not inconceivable that this article began as an introduction for the Rhodes-Livingstone institute book which never materialised. Elizabeth Colson has no recollection of the volume, but believes that it may have been planned by J. Clyde Mitchell, but abandoned when he moved the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, around 1955. Email to Marja Hinfelaar, 23.3.2012.

⁴ On the use of this comparison, see J-B. Gewald, ‘Researching and writing in the twilight of an imagined conquest: Anthropology in Northern Rhodesia, 1930–1960’, *History and Anthropology*, 18:4 (2007), 459–87.

production was concentrated in what was then Southern Rhodesia, while it was the copper mines of what was to become Zambia which provided the income. As Phyllis Deane noted, the enclave of what she called the modern economy had a tenuous relationship with ‘the rest of the community (...) It finds its major markets outside and spends most of its gross receipts on imported goods and services.’

One of the main differences between what went on in Central Africa and the original Industrial Revolution in Great Britain was precisely in the extent to which production in the latter was geared to a local market. The debates on British economic transformation around 1800 are beyond the scope of this introduction, and recently seem to have revolved primarily around questions of energy supply and of the high wages paid in Britain, which increased substantially the incentive for innovation.⁵ Nevertheless, a corollary of the high wage levels in Great Britain during the eighteenth century was that the levels of disposable income were such as to allow the creation of a flourishing market for the products of industry.⁶ The contrast with Central Africa is quite clear. There, no internal market could allow the growth of the economy to ride out the vagaries of the international economic conjuncture. The dramatic fall of the copper price subsequent to 1976 was catastrophic for the economy of what was now Zambia. There was nothing to fall back upon. The hopes of sustained economic growth were dashed because the economy was entirely dependent upon the export of raw, or minimally processed, materials and on the import of manufactured goods.

Nevertheless, the anthropologists of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute saw clearly that the inhabitants of the towns on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, who they were studying, were in the process of undergoing a major, if not necessarily permanent, cultural shift. There was an economic revolution, but it was one of consumption, not production. The mantras that were propounded by Max Gluckman—‘An African townsman is a townsman; an African miner is a miner’⁷—and which were investigated by his associates, above all perhaps Clyde Mitchell and the Epsteins,⁸ were

⁵ For recent syntheses see R.C. Allen, *The British industrial revolution in global perspective* (Cambridge, 2009), E.A. Wrigley, *Energy and the English industrial revolution* (Cambridge, 2010).

⁶ J. De Vries, *The industrious revolution: Consumer behavior and the household economy, 1650 to the present* (Cambridge, 2008).

⁷ M. Gluckman, ‘Anthropological problems arising from the African industrial revolution’, in: A. Southall (ed.), *Social change in modern Africa* (London, 1961).

⁸ Notably, Clyde Mitchell, *The Kalela dance: Aspects of social relationships among urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia* (Manchester, 1956); *idem*, *Cities, society and social*

not without power. They appreciated what was going on in the Copperbelt, and in the villages of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This can be described in many ways, but one of the most obvious is to claim that a slow but decisive and shift was occurring in the material culture of the African populations of the Southern Savanna. This obviously had a dialectic relationship with shifts in political allegiance, kinship structures, religious beliefs and so forth, but it was a major phenomenon in and of itself. In other words, the men and women who came to live in the towns of Northern Rhodesia did so not to produce consumer goods, but to acquire them. As Godfrey Wilson reported, in the first great work of African Urban anthropology, *An essay on the economics of detribalization in Northern Rhodesia*,⁹ the people he was studying in Broken Hill (now Kabwe) had become a 'dressed people', and as such, at least temporarily, they set themselves aside from the rest of the population.

In this, as in so much of the history of the Southern Savannah, Central Africa was part of a wider regional pattern. There had of course been a rich material culture in the region, particularly notable for its basketry and pottery, but in this there was only local consumption, not distribution. Its use disappeared during colonial periods, except for those pots with a ritual significance, and the basketry, especially that made by the Tonga, which found a tourist market.¹⁰ Against this, there was the deep history of the use of imported goods as the basis of political power. In the region's pre-colonial history, this took two forms. On the one hand, there was the direct use of imported weapons of individual destruction. Firearms and gunpowder were used in many places to kill opponents and to subjugate the survivors. A number of the new kingdoms of the Southern Savannah, most notably perhaps Msiri's Yeke polity which dominated southern Katanga in the last part of the nineteenth century, owed their considerable power to their control of the local gun and gunpowder trade. In this case, it has been argued, it was a temporary hiatus in the import of gunpowder which left Msiri vulnerable to the assault by the Congo Free State. Most, though

perception: A Central African perspective (Oxford, 1987); A.L. Epstein, *Urbanization and kinship: The domestic domain on the Copperbelt of Zambia: 1950-1956* (London, etc., 1981). For a recent laudatory reappraisal of their work, see J. Robinson, *Ordinary cities: Between modernity and development* (London, 2006).

⁹ G. Wilson, *An essay on the economics of detribalization in Northern Rhodesia* (Reprinted, Manchester, 1968).

¹⁰ E. Syabbalo, *Tonga crafts in figures*, no date, no place (Lusaka), gives a description of what is available on the market. The collections of the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum, Livingstone, including its photographic collection, provide the best entry to Zambian 'traditional' material culture.

not all other polities also relied on firearms, whether for offence or for defence, and whether to be used against humans or in the hunt, notably for ivory, not that these categories were exclusive.¹¹

On the other hand, imported goods could be used to create relationships of dependency, debt and eventually slavery. This was on the basis of a political economy within the system of value characterised by Jane Guyer and Samuel Belinga as 'Wealth in People', under which power, and indeed economic survival, were related directly on the control of dependents, or to an individual's position within the social hierarchies.¹² There is an important argument, made first by Joe Miller for West central Africa, that those who were able to act as gatekeepers for the import of European commodities, above all cloth and strong drink, were able to distribute these among their followers to ensure the maintenance of relations of dominance and subservience. If the game was played well, then it would be possible to create a cycle by which goods were invested in asymmetric relationships, which in turn produced slaves, who could then be sold to acquire more commodities. There thus existed two cycles, one of which can be described as Commodity₁—Slave—Commodity₂ and the other as Gun₁—Slave—Gun₂ (and indeed Gun₁—Ivory—Gun₂). These are in the strictest economic sense virtuous cycles—in all other respects vicious ones.¹³ Thus, power had to do with the control of imported goods. It grew out of the barrel of a gun, but also out of the distribution of such barrels, not just their firing.

The goods which could be converted into people, and the people who could be converted into goods, moved along what were essentially east-west lines of communication, which ended at the ports of either the Atlantic or the Indian Ocean. As what was to become Northern Rhodesia was absorbed into the empire of the British South African Company, both these things changed. The main route to the ports now lay southerly, on the railway across the Zambezi and on to Beira, Durban or Cape Town. Even southern Congo was initially orientated on this route, rather than to the mouth of the Congo river or to Benguela, as occurred

¹¹ See G. Macola, 'Reassessing the significance of firearms in Central Africa: The case of north-western Zambia to the 1920s', *Journal of African history*, 51:3 (2010), 301–21, and other work by Macola, forthcoming.

¹² J.I. Guyer and S.M. Eno Belinga, 'Wealth in people as wealth in knowledge: Accumulation and composition in Equatorial Africa', *Journal of African history*, 36:1 (1995), 91–120.

¹³ J.C. Miller, *Way of death: Merchant capitalism and the Angolan slave trade, 1730–1830* (Madison, 1988).

later. Furthermore, the equations between goods and people began to change, as the power of senior men over women, children, slaves and other dependents decreased, or at least could be less certainly enforced. The colonial abolition of slavery, and of the slave trade, was of major importance in this.

As a result, as migrant labour began, imported goods began to be what attracted young men to the mines, following the opening of Kimberley, the Witwatersrand and the Congolese and Zambian Copperbelts. Why throughout Southern Africa, did men go in substantial numbers to work in the mines? The classic answer is that they did so in the first instance in order to pay the tax that the colonial government imposed on them, or to acquire cattle and other capital goods for their agricultural enterprises. The latter is not entirely mistaken, the cattle herd of Pondoland in the South African Transkei was never larger than in the 1920s, and for a long time workers were paid their wages in stock, often before they had undertaken their contract.¹⁴ But there was always also, and indeed primarily, a demand for goods. Patrick Harries has described how Mozambiquan miners on the Witwatersrand, early in the twentieth century, would have a locked tin truck in the backroom of the local trader's store, in which they held their purchases. When their contract was finished, they collected it and paid off any remaining debts. The contents of ten such trucks have been listed. Harries notes that:

the buying patterns were determined by questions of symbol and status as much as by practical concerns. (...) Over three-quarters of the sum was spent on knives, boots, cloths and blankets, the diversity and cheapness of which could not be matched in Mozambique. The presence of table knives and spoons, bedspreads and table cloths, brushes and combs, vests, waistcoats, shirts, jackets, socks and belts suggest a new compartment. Most of the men brought mirrors and knives of various shapes and sizes and several carried iron files to reforge at home. Half the trunks contained up to 12 kilos of soap in rough bars.¹⁵

Similar lists can be found for the Copperbelt in the 1930s. In one case a man took home, to Chinsali district in rural Northern Rhodesia:

¹⁴ W. Beinart, 'Labour migrancy and rural production: Pondoland, 1900–1950', in: P. Mayer (ed.), *Black villagers in an industrial society: Anthropological perspectives on labour migration in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1980), *idem*, 'Joyini Inkomo: Cattle advances and the origins of migrancy from Pondoland', *Journal of Southern African studies*, 5:2 (1979), 199–219.

¹⁵ P. Harries, *Work, culture, and identity: Migrant labourers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860–1910* (London, 1994), 174.

1 imitation leather suitcase, 8 women's dresses, 1 woman's slip, 6 men's shirts, 5 pairs men's trousers, 3 singlets, 1 pair tennis shoes, 2 sweaters, 1 cardigan, 2 prs. Men's socks, 3 men's ties, 1 cap, 1 pr. Puttees, 1 sheet, 1 towel, 1 handkerchief, 3 second-hand blankets, 1 steamer rug, 6 lengths print (24 yards), 1 umbrella, 1 enamel mug, 3 wash dishes, 2 mirrors, 1 comb, 1 gillette safety razor, 1 shaving stick, 1 bottle toilet water, 1 bottle perfume, 2 boxes blanco, 1 tooth brush, 2 notebooks, 2 pencils, 2 pens, 1 pr. Scissors, 1 box safety pins, 8 bars soap, 1 bottle salt.¹⁶

In addition, among the possessions of other miners investigated, were two bicycles and one gramophone, but, the investigators noted, no sewing machine—normally, apparently this would have been expected.

The incorporation of the goods which migrants brought back obviously led to considerable conflicts. Clyde Mitchell, when he was working as an anthropologist in Southern Malawi, records how the local aristocracy, whose wealth and thus power had been based substantially on slave trading, were challenged by the new wealth which came back from the mines. Chiefs were precluded by their position from seeing a cash income. Whereas they had previously monopolised the goods brought in, they were now increasingly marginalised, and challenged by the young men.¹⁷ There remained all sorts of problems notably in the distribution of the 'loot' between the workers' family members. Should money, clothes, and other goods be given to the parents-in-law, as a surrogate for bride-service, or to a man's own parents, or simply to his wife? In one case, a wife complained that too much had gone to her mother-in-law. The conflict became so intense that, in the end, the wife poisoned her husband's mother—at least so was her death interpreted.¹⁸

Conflicts and realignments were of course continuous, and at the local level could derive from seemingly minor changes. Thus, at the conference from which this book derives, Elizabeth Colson described how she had observed the consequences of the opening of shops in the Tongaland countryside where she first began fieldwork over sixty years ago. The result was that the women were no longer dependent on their menfolk to

¹⁶ M. Davis (ed.), *Modern industry and the African: An enquiry into the effect of the copper mines of Central Africa upon native society and the work of Christian missions made under the auspices of the Department of Social and Industrial Research of the International Missionary Council* (London, 1933).

¹⁷ J. Clyde Mitchell, *The Yao village: A study in the social structure of a Nyasaland tribe* (Manchester, 1956). For a recent study, see Yizenge Chondoka, *Machona: Returned labor migrants and rural transformation in Chama District, North Eastern Zambia, 1890–1964* (Lusaka, 2007).

¹⁸ Cited in A. Kaler, "Many divorces and many spinsters': Marriage as an invented tradition in Southern Malawi, 1946–1999", *Journal of family history*, 26 (2001).

provide them with the goods deriving from the Western economy, particularly cloth. For the first time the women had a choice in what they would wear, and no doubt in a wide number of other consumption decisions. They no longer wanted their men to bring back goods from their stays in town; they wanted cash. Equally, they could now set about earning cash themselves, for instance by commercialising the brewing of beer. The consequences for village life were very considerable.

It was not only at the micro level that such matters began to play a major role. By the 1950s, the British Colonial government was beginning to appreciate the need for a good distributive system in order to provide initiatives for rural production. An enquiry was held in what was then Nyasaland and Tanganyika into 'the distribution and consumption of commodities among Africans.' The reason for this enquiry was to test the widely held view that 'the consumer goods which were being distributed failed to constitute long-run inducements to the consumers to produce.'¹⁹ Though in the end the investigator did not endorse this argument, there remained the question as to the relationship between labour and consumption, and on the incentives for participation in the cash economy. It was only in the years around independence, that this became universal.

This is of course a well-known argument within the economic history of Africa. Work within the commercial economy, whether that of mining, cash cropping, manufacturing or the service sector, was pointless without the means and the desire to spend the money so earned.²⁰ Nevertheless, there has been relatively little work on the history of consumption in Africa, this in contrast to recent developments in Europe.²¹ In this book we are attempting to help in the redressing of that continental imbalance.

The reasons for doing this go beyond the purely historical. Much of the recent history of Zambia, and to some extent Malawi, centres around the

¹⁹ Cited in F.C. Wright, *African consumers in Nyasaland and Tanganyika: An enquiry into the distribution and consumption of commodities among Africans carried out in 1852–1853* (London, HMSO, 1955), 6.

²⁰ See notably three articles by G. Austin, 'Resources, techniques and strategies south of the Sahara: Revising the factor endowments perspective on African economic development, 1500–2000', *Economic history review*, 61:3 (2008), 587–624; 'The "reversal of fortune" thesis and the compression of history: Perspectives from African and comparative economic history', *Journal of international development*, 20:8 (2008), 996–1027; 'Cash crops and freedom: Export agriculture and the decline of slavery in colonial West Africa', *International review of social history*, 54:1 (2009), 1–37.

²¹ For exceptions see: T. Burke, *Lifebuoy men, Lux women: Commodification, consumption and cleanliness in modern Zimbabwe* (Durham, N.C., 1995); J. Prestholdt, *Domesticating the world: African consumerism and the genealogies of globalization* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2008); K.T. Hansen, *Salaula: The world of secondhand clothing and Zambia* (Chicago, etc., 2000); J.M. Allman, *Fashioning Africa: Power and the politics of dress*

relationship between the individual accumulation of wealth, not always by the most honest of means, and the attempts of the state to ensure the spread of income and services among the population as broadly as possible. Kenneth Kaunda, the first president of the republic of Zambia, once commented that he did 'not want to see a small group of Zambians owning large cars, plush houses; whose conspicuous consumption is a continuous taunt to the rest of the nation.'²² The problem was that of a combination of economic nationalism and the hard realities of the international economic conjuncture, particularly the fall in the copper price after 1976. These led first to ill-founded nationalist political decisions, for instance breaking the expatriate and Indian owned retail networks, which prevented the access of rural dwellers to the consumer goods they had enjoyed for close on half a century.²³ Secondly, restrictions on the acquisition of foreign exchange, in an attempt to cope with the difficulties caused by copper price cuts, deprived even the city dwellers of such goods, as Zambia plunged into economic depression and hyperinflation.²⁴ Nevertheless, many members of the elite retained access to foreign exchange and thus many consumer goods—this may indeed have been the defining characteristic of the elite in this period—with the result that both economic differentiation and social unrest became more pronounced. In his attempt to spread and to nationalise wealth, and to make the accumulation of private fortunes impossible—an endeavour which failed—Kaunda had inadvertently prevented the mass of Zambians from continuing their acquisition of the simpler consumer goods to which they had become accustomed. There can be no doubt that this contributed very significantly to the massive unrest which led to the fall of Kaunda's UNIP government.²⁵

(Bloomington, IN, etc., 2004). For more general information on clothing, not only in (Central) African history, see R. Ross, *Clothing: A global history; or the Imperialists' New Clothes* (Cambridge, 2008).

²² Quoted in A.A. Beveridge, 'Economic independence, indigenization, and the African businessman: Some effects of Zambia's economic reforms,' *African studies review*, 17:3 (1974), 487.

²³ H. Macmillan, "The devil you know": the impact of the Mulungushi economic reforms on retail trade in rural Zambia, with special reference of Susman Brothers & Wolfsohn, 1968–1980', in: J-B. Gewald, M. Hinfelaar and G. Macola (eds.), *One Zambia, many histories: Towards a history of post-colonial Zambia* (Leiden, 2008), 187–211.

²⁴ J. Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1999); Hansen, *Salaula*.

²⁵ For preliminary discussions of this, L. Rakner, *Political and economic liberalisation in Zambia 1991–2001* (Uppsala: 2003); M. Larmer, *Rethinking African politics: A history of opposition in Zambia* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2011).

Since 1991, things have been changing. In many ways, indeed, this political regime, which fits perhaps uncomfortably into the categorisation of African states known as neo-patrimonial,²⁶ but which has certainly been corrupt and self-enriching,²⁷ has been the mirror image of the old 'wealth in people' political economy of the region. Power required the maintenance of a clientele, through the distribution of goods and services and by ensuring that the state distributed its own goods in the desired way. The relationships which were built up, however, were categorical, as much as personal. Politicians had to service their constituencies, both geographical and social, but could use the benefits of state power for their own personal gain. In time, though, as the slow recovery of the economy gathered pace, the expansion of South African capitalism to the north over the last decade, and what could be called Shoprite imperialism, is predicated on a previously unrequited desire for commodities.²⁸ With the introduction of the mobile phone, it is both a symbol of, and a major contribution to, Central African economic transformation. Perhaps in the current phase of re-industrialisation, it may help obviate some of the vulnerabilities which had previously existed. What used to be known as the Westernised elite distinguished itself from the rest of the population on the basis of its physical possessions, as do the current mega-rich of many African countries. Possessions are thus highly politicised, as well as being economic. It matters what sort of car one drives, or what sort of house one has been able to build. These things—quite literally things—are the rewards for political and economic success. But at the same time the pressures on such individuals to share the goods they have acquired can on the one hand be seen by the successful as an onus, but on the other may well be the cement which holds together what can be highly divided societies.

There are substantial methodological problems in the historical study of African consumption. The study of material culture has tended to be one which exoticises its subject, which is concerned to actively ignore the changes to which we have been pointing. Museum collections do not include mass-produced Chinese enamel bowls, or even three-legged

²⁶ M. Leenstra, *Beyond the façade: Instrumentalisation of the Zambian health sector* (Leiden: 2012).

²⁷ J.K. van Donge, 'The plundering of Zambian resources by Frederick Chiluba and his friends: A case study of the interaction between national politics and the international drive towards good governance', *African affairs*, 108:430 (2009), 69–90.

²⁸ See e.g. D. Miller, 'South African multinational corporations, NEPAD and competing regional claims on post-Apartheid Southern Africa', *African sociological review*, 8 (2004), 176–202.

Birmingham cooking pots, despite their evident importance in African material culture. Nor can historians of Africa fall back on the classic European written sources for material culture, such as inventories of property made at someone's death. Rather Africanists have had to rely on ethnographic accounts, with the danger, not found in the reports of the Rhodes-Livingstone institute, that modern things are ignored; on advertisements, which perhaps illustrate aspirations more than reality; on budget studies, which again often limit themselves to the so-called essentials of life; on oral material, which has its own problems with regard to the chronology of memory; and on the occasional comments which archival research can throw up. Even the study of advertisements does not lead to many results, primarily because until well after independence most advertising even in the main newspapers was aimed at the white population, who did after all possess a highly disproportionate amount of the country's disposable income.²⁹ Perhaps for this reason, this book has a number of studies of shopkeepers, on the assumption that it is easier to investigate the seller than the buyer and in this way gain insight into the consumptive patterns of the mass of Africans.

This collection brings together a set of essays written by historians and anthropologists, with the objective of providing a fresh approach towards the history of consumption in Central Africa. The contributions are empirically based, but equally aim to further theoretical debates in the field of study. The case studies deal with the Central African region (including chapters on present-day Congo, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Angola), but highlight the importance of seeing this region in its broader geographical, socio-economic and political setting. The circulation of people, goods and ideas throughout the area is one of the main concerns of this book. Straddling the boundaries between pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods all contributions argue that consumption should be viewed as embedded in a specific historical setting, touching on core themes of culture, politics and economic organisation.

The first section of the book, focusing on the pre-colonial period, takes a stand on the role of the long-distance trade. This trade made imported goods, such as cloth, beads, but most especially firearms, accessible throughout the area. The first contribution, by David Gordon, assesses the effects of imported goods on the local political economy of South Central Africa. These could be both positive (state-building and

²⁹ Though, see Chapter 7 below.

wealth-generating) and negative (resulting in debt, fragmentation and war). By looking at the import of guns and cloth, Gordon argues that their supply eventually fostered instability and the rise of warlord polities, which would become so characteristic of the late nineteenth century political setting. Focusing on guns in particular, Donatien Dibwe Dia Mwembu examines the role of firearms in the Congolese Songye region, extending his analysis up to the time of independence. Although firearms carried a vast destructive potential, he argues, they always remained ultimate symbols of prestige and power. In this region, located at the crossroads of east-west trade routes (between the Arab-Swahili sphere in the east and the Portuguese-Ovimbundu sphere in the west), guns could be used for hunting, communication, but also became a symbol of the emergence of a new form of military power prior to the advent of colonial rule.

Connecting to and expanding on the above-mentioned themes, the second section deals with issues of migration, mobility and innovation. *Sipilingas*, Katangese followers of the Springer Methodist missionary family, were mobile individuals *par excellence*. Both their social and geographical mobility is described by J. Jeffrey Hoover, who argues that the power of the 'word' – embodied by education and possession of the Bible – was at the same time material and immaterial. Mission workers, drawn from Zambia, Angola and beyond, created international linkages through migration. Understanding what attracted these labour migrants to the mission can elucidate the meaning of imported goods in an ever-changing local setting. Michael Barrett vividly captures how labour migrants from Barotseland were able to 'walk home majestically'. The purchase of goods, enabled by wage labour, provided an opportunity for migrants to obtain social status within their home community. To understand why labour migration became such a strong, durable and transformative institution, Barrett argues that it is necessary to look at material culture. In the Western Province of Zambia, consumer goods transformed local expectations of life, work and family relations, in addition to creating new tastes and beliefs. Notably, consumption played a role in negotiating gender, generation and social status. The contribution by Kenneth P. Vickery looks at the railway, the quintessential symbol of mobility. By drawing similarities between European, North-American and African perceptions of the railway, he proposes ways in which to approach the hitherto neglected study of railway culture in Africa. By focusing on industrial work discipline on the Rhodesian railways, he illustrates how a specific work culture emerged there. Through their daily actions and practices, Vickery shows

how railway workers played a role in shaping and on occasion subverting this industrial work discipline, epitomised by the clock, order and discipline.

Advertising and entrepreneurship is the theme of the third section. Walima T. Kalusa deals with the advertising of manufactured goods on the Zambian Copperbelt after the Second World War. He argues that colonial advertisements had a hidden agenda, aiming to create a market for European manufactured goods and to further the civilising mission, by instilling modern bourgeois habits in the population. However, goods could be consumed in unexpected ways and migrant labourers generally undermined and challenged colonial intentions. Kalusa illustrates how the consumption of goods could serve to negotiate relationships of gender, age and identity, and ultimately to contest colonial power itself. By looking at the sewing machine and tailors as urban entrepreneurs, Karen Tranberg Hansen shows how dreams and aspirations were fabricated through dress in Zambia. Technology, entrepreneurship and consumer taste come together in this chapter which points out the social importance of cutting a nice figure in dress. Starting with the first imports of sewing machines during the nineteenth century, Hansen sketches historical transformations leading to the emergence of the present design scene and the persistent desire to produce and wear 'the latest'.

In the study of consumption traders form a unique category, as they link producers, consumers and commodities together. The final section opens with a contribution by Friday Mufuzi on Indian traders in Livingstone, in which he problematises the connection between the spread of mass-produced Western consumer goods and the demise of locally produced handicrafts and utensils. The Sharma Brothers' trading store is interpreted as a motor of social change during the 1950s and 1960s, as Indian traders created new tastes which influenced society. The desire for consumer goods propelled labour migration and questioned established age, gender and power hierarchies. However, Mufuzi shows that the social differentiation which access to trade goods caused could have disruptive effects, such as drunkenness, prostitution and marital problems. The chapter by Bizeck J. Phiri revolves around another group of Indian traders, this time in Chipata District in the Eastern Province of Zambia. It traces the changing patterns of commodity production and consumption under the influence of Indian merchant capital throughout the twentieth century, up to the period of the Mulungushi reforms. Importantly, it looks at the relationship between Indian wholesale and retail business and African trade, production and consumption. Phiri argues that Indian

traders played a considerable role in transforming the existing African way of life. Looking at one particularly significant trader in the Southern Province of Zambia, Marja Hinfelaar points towards the reasons for the initial success and the eventual decline of Robinson Nabulyato's trading enterprises. She aptly draws attention to the linkages between trade, culture and politics, by connecting Nabulyato's business as a trader to his famous career as a national politician. Counteracting narratives of failed African businessmen, Nabulyato's story illustrates the ingenuity and entrepreneurship of traders in the face of prohibitive government policies. Finally, examining the impact of European and African traders in the North-Western part of Zambia, the chapter by Iva Peša looks at trading stores in Mwinilunga District from 1940 to 1970. The rapid increase in the number of trading stores during this period is attributed to the unique linkage which traders provided between production and consumption. Not only did traders sell consumer goods, such as cloth and bicycles, but they also bought up local produce, such as pineapples and cassava, thereby greatly stimulating the volume of trade. Although this chapter stresses the changes brought after independence by marketing boards and the Mulungushi reforms, it underlines that trade and the acquisition of consumer goods remained indispensable throughout. All four contributions in this section deal with rural traders and show that entrepreneurship was not merely located in the urban mining centres of Central Africa, but that throughout the region patterns of consumption have been, and continue to be, changing, at varying rates and with varying effects on the societies of the region.

We do not claim that the desire for new things can explain everything that has happened in Central Africa over the last century and a half. Such a form of reductionism would scandalously overestimate the importance both of the objects themselves and of the demand for their acquisition. It would, nevertheless, be easy to underestimate the importance of these matters. At the very least they provide a particularly fascinating entry into the questions of capitalist penetration, urbanisation, political change and social reorganisation, which have rightly dominated the historiography and sociology of South Central Africa over the last hundred years.

PART I

PRE-COLONIAL TRADE AND FIREARMS

WEARING CLOTH, WIELDING GUNS:
CONSUMPTION, TRADE, AND POLITICS IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL
AFRICAN INTERIOR DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

David M. Gordon

There are two broad schools of thought regarding the connections between the pre-colonial African polities and international trade. The first emphasises African agency and ingenuity in the face of opportunities presented by access to international markets. This school tends to view international trade as stimulating the rise of centralised polities and greater scale in political organisation.¹ On the other hand, at least since the publication of Walter Rodney's *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*, a far less sanguine view of international trade has focused on its destructive aspects, including African indebtedness, dependency, warfare, and the collapse of polities. The deterministic aspects of this neo-Marxist argument have fallen into disrepute among Africanists, even while scholars such as Edward Alpers, Paul Lovejoy and Joseph Miller follow some of its main contours.²

Within South Central African historiography, there are examples of both schools. Perhaps in response to the then fashionable neo-Marxist perspective, Andrew Roberts contended that it was 'wrong to suppose that such a trade had a merely destructive effect or even that it served only to make a few chiefs rich and powerful.'³ His major work on the Bemba kingdom argues that foreign traders 'never exerted any political influence; on the contrary they served to increase the power of the Bemba themselves against the surrounding peoples.'⁴ Giacomo Macola views the Kazembe kingdom reaching its political heyday when it exerted control

¹ An influential and relatively recent example, J. Thornton, *Africa and Africans and the making of the Atlantic world* (Cambridge, 1998).

² W. Rodney, *How Europe underdeveloped Africa* (Washington DC, 1972); J. Miller, *Way of death: Merchant capitalism and the Angolan slave trade, 1730–1830* (Madison WI, 1988); E.A. Alpers, *Ivory and slaves: Changing patterns of international trade in East Central Africa to the later nineteenth century* (Berkeley CA, 1975); P. Lovejoy, *Transformations in slavery: A history of slavery in Africa* (Cambridge, 1983).

³ A. Roberts, 'Precolonial trade in Zambia', *African social research*, 10 (1970), 715–46.

⁴ A. Roberts, *A history of the Bemba: Political growth and change in North-Eastern Zambia before 1900* (London, 1973), 198.

over international trade and used imports of luxury goods to extend its patronage networks to peripheral regions. Its decline, as he also points out, was in part a result of the loss of control over this international trade to armed Nyamwezi and Swahili traders.⁵ With a focus on the fall of both the Tumbuka and Ngoni polities in northern Malawi and eastern Zambia, Leroy Vail concludes that ‘the failure to link local political institutions with a meaningful control over trade weakened the state to such an extent that it was not able to withstand pressure from without.’⁶ Here, in a typical neo-Marxist argument, Vail claims that international trade led to the loss of the material underpinnings of Ngoni and Tumbuka polities.

The differences between these arguments were often more apparent than real, as they derived from the precise object of an individual author’s study. Furthermore, since international trade empowered some and disempowered others, its impacts remain a conundrum. In their works on different polities across the interior, scholars narrate a similar historical trajectory. The rise of polities seems linked to trading opportunities and their fall to some change in the nature of trade. Trade at some point in time helps to build states, while at other times it destroys them. Historians tend to argue that when pre-colonial states failed to exert effective monopolies over trade, competing polities or armed trading factions within their states undermined them. International trade appears to be a zero sum game that empowered some at the expense of others.

Since international trade affected individual polities and peoples in different ways at different times, a comprehensive account needs to synthesise its impacts geographically as well as temporally. In the South Central African interior, the emphasis on agency and opportunity seems appropriate for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when Luba and Lunda expansion was influenced – but not determined – by long-distance trading opportunities. However, by the middle of the nineteenth century international trade led to unsustainable debt and dependency that undermined established political relationships. Even new elites found it difficult to maintain authority for any length of time. Governance gave way to instability, war, and the rise of a new type of leader, the warlord. This periodisation is geographically specific and does not apply to the entire South Central African region. Closer to the Portuguese colonies of Angola,

⁵ G. Macola, *The kingdom of Kazembe: History and politics in North-Eastern Zambia and Katanga to 1950* (Hamburg, 2002), 128–60.

⁶ L. Vail, ‘Trade and politics in pre-colonial Northern Malawi: The strange relationship’, University of Zambia history department seminar series, No. 7, 1974–5, 33.

west of the Kwango River, and Mozambique, east of the Luangwa River, the rise of debt, dependency, instability, and war can be linked to a far earlier period, as far back as the seventeenth, and certainly throughout the eighteenth century.⁷

By the late nineteenth century most polities of the South Central African interior, even those that seem to have benefited initially from long-distance trade, such as the Bemba and Msiri's Nyamwezi, could no longer control the forces unleashed by trade. Their political systems became dependent on foreign imports, and they were increasingly forced to surrender their sovereignty to gain access to them. A convincing explanation for these destructive influences is required. In a broad survey of the South Central African interior, Richard Gray and David Birmingham argue that the failure of trade to promote economic growth and to benefit states in this region was linked to the force of alien competition and to the proximity of formal colonialism to market penetration.⁸ This argument needs some qualification. Even from a late nineteenth century perspective, formal European colonialism appeared unlikely – and certainly not inevitable – to Central African leaders. The argument that nineteenth century economic domination was due to the historical proximity of formal political domination is teleological: it does not explain the destructive influence of trade in terms of nineteenth century forces. Instead of questions concerning the nature of 'alien competition', what gave such alien traders political and economic advantage needs careful consideration.

The access of these traders to new industrial imports, which circulated rapidly across the globe and inspired a new type of Central African consumerism, gave 'alien' (or coastal traders) a decisive advantage. The expansive trade in and use of these commodities made it difficult to maintain mercantile monopolies, which undermined those political hierarchies that rested on the distribution of rare imported goods to clients. The proliferation of imported goods thereby eroded the old tributary relationships that had formed the basis of South Central African mercantile states. This new free trade, illegitimate in terms of old and established political interests and elites, fostered a political economy of instability. In this sense, it was the new type of commodity, the products of Euro-American

⁷ For West Central Africa in the eighteenth century, see Miller, *Way of Death*. For East Central Africa, see Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*.

⁸ R. Gray and D. Birmingham, 'Some economic and political consequences of trade in Central and Eastern Africa in the pre-colonial period', R. Gray and D. Birmingham (eds.), *Precolonial African trade: Essays on trade in Central and Eastern Africa before 1900* (London, 1970).

industrialisation, which fundamentally restructured the political economy of the South Central African interior. While mercantile capitalism had contributed to the gradual growth of stable polities, industrial capitalism – and industrial goods or their equivalent – contributed to indebtedness, fragmentation, and often war.

The existing literature on ‘trade and politics’ in this region and beyond generally focuses on exports – predominantly slaves and ivory.⁹ While there are sophisticated anthropological studies of the use of industrial commodities, including cloth, in the twentieth century, there is a noted absence of an understanding of the varied political, economic, social and cultural uses of imports, especially in the pre-colonial period.¹⁰ Such an emphasis on consumption refocuses historical attention from Euro-American demand to African demand and from the politics of trade to the politics of consumption. By appreciating patterns of consumption, as well as the needs and desires that motivated African involvement in international trade, African agency can be shown to inform broader economic processes, even while such agency may not necessarily lead to stable and prosperous polities.¹¹

By the early nineteenth century, South Central Africans consumed a variety of international imports. The archival evidence of trade statistics from coastal regions indicates the preponderance of woven materials (including cloth, textiles and woollens), followed by alcohol, beads, and to a lesser extent, guns and gunpowder. By the mid- to late nineteenth century, industrial iron and brass was also becoming significant.¹² Oral

⁹ The classic conventional study is K.O. Dike, *Trade and politics in the Niger delta, 1830–1885* (Oxford, 1956). For a study closer to this region, see Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*; S.H. Broadhead, ‘Trade and politics on the Congo coast, 1770–1870’, (unpublished PhD thesis, Boston University, 1973); P.M. Martin, *The external trade of the Loango coast, 1576–1870* (Oxford, 1972); and essays in Gray and Birmingham, *Precolonial African trade*. For an exceptional focus on consumption, see Miller, *Way of Death*, 71–104.

¹⁰ For cloth and clothing in the twentieth century, see K.T. Hansen, *Salaula: The world of second-hand clothing in Zambia* (Chicago, 2000). For an exceptional focus on pre-colonial consumption, see Miller, *Way of Death*, 71–104.

¹¹ For the agency of East African consumerism in international trade, see J. Prestholdt, ‘On the global repercussions of East African consumerism’, *American historical review*, 30:109 (2004), 755–81.

¹² To my knowledge, we lack a thorough accounting of imports. Limited evidence from the coastal areas of the quantity and type of trade are available from J.V. Miller, ‘Imports at Luanda, Angola, 1785–1823’, 165–246; and G. Liesegang, ‘A first look at the import and export trade of Mozambique, 1800–1914’, 451–524. G. Liesegang, H. Pasch, and A. Jones (eds.), *Figuring African trade: Proceedings of the symposium on the quantification and structure of the import and export and long distance trade in Africa, 1800–1913* (Berlin, 1986). For British trade from 1699 to 1808, see M. Johnson, *Anglo-African trade in the eighteenth century*:

evidence from the interior adds the *Impande* shells, collected on the West African coast, and traded principally by the Mbundu. Such commodities, acquired from international long-distance trade, were often unavailable from regional trade, and were priced differently. Thus, the characteristics of international commodities distinguished long-distance trade from regional trade.¹³ Prior to the nineteenth century, at least in the interior, the scarcity of such international commodities and the robustness of local forms of production meant that the foreign commodities' main functions were as luxury goods, for ritual and ceremony, and for the consolidation of political hierarchies by those leaders who monopolised access to these goods and their distribution.

As foreign imports became more widespread, their impacts changed, depending on local patterns of production and demand. International imports could stimulate and feed into regional sites of production and trading networks or undermine them. Industrial iron (mostly in the form of wire), for example, seems to have had little impact on the ironsmithing traditions of the Congo basin, in which workshops continued to produce implements adjusted to local environmental conditions as well as prestige items. Thus the production of iron may have declined but blacksmithing traditions continued or were even stimulated.¹⁴ On the other hand, when Birmingham brass flooded the interior market, the value of Katangan copper collapsed along with its production.¹⁵

The two commodities with the most influence on local and regional political economies were those crucial to Euro-American industrial manufacturing, guns and cloth. Even while guns and gunpowder were but a small proportion of the total value of South Central African imports, by the mid- to late nineteenth century they had become crucial to a regional political economy, a factor of production for ivory and slaves, which in turn were necessary to secure imports of cloth (or woven material more generally), probably the most significant industrial import by value and quantity. The availability of cheap cloth (in terms of ivory) disrupted old political hierarchies that depended on the distribution of cloth and other

English statistics on African trade, 1699–1808, in: J.T. Lindblad and R. Ross (eds.), *Inter-continenta*, 15 (Leiden, 1990).

¹³ For the relationship between long distance and regional trading networks, see A. Roberts, 'Pre-colonial trade in Zambia', *African social research*, 20 (1970), 715–46, especially 716–7.

¹⁴ C.E. Kriger, *Pride of men: Ironworking in 19th century West Central Africa* (Portsmouth NH, 1999).

¹⁵ E.W. Herbert, *Red gold of Africa: Copper in precolonial history and culture* (Madison WI, 1984), 169–78.

rare goods to dependents, leading to a desperate search for more cloth as a way of maintaining political power, however fragile.

This argument is developed with a great deal of synthesis and generalisation. Its strength lies in the commonality of historical experiences across the South Central African interior. These experiences are illustrated by focusing on the Luba and Lunda confederations of the South Central African interior, with numerous examples drawn from the principal polities of the region, including the central Luba, Mwaant Yav's Lunda, Mwata Kazembe's eastern Lunda, Chitimukulu's Bemba, Msiri's Yeke, the Lozi, the Swahili, the Chikunda, the Chokwe, and the Ngoni.¹⁶ The actual quantity of this trade is not the subject of analysis. Instead, the argument is developed by reflecting on the social, military, political and economic implications of imported guns and cloth.

Following a sketch of the changing dynamics of international politics and commerce that drove changes in the South Central African interior and connected the South Central African interior to the world economy during the nineteenth century, this chapter turns to the political economy particular to the import of guns and cloth and their South Central African uses. The final section considers the instability and warlordism fostered by the supply of foreign imports.

INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES ON THE SOUTH CENTRAL AFRICAN INTERIOR¹⁷

Far removed from the more devastating impact of slave raiding nearer to the east and west coasts, international trade from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century had contributed to the expansion of Luba and Lunda confederations. Commercial credit from the Atlantic trade reached the

¹⁶ The geographic and historical focus complements scholarship that examines earlier periods of mercantile transformation on the East and West Central African coasts. For West Central Africa, see Miller, *Way of Death*; Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*. In addition to synthesising several decades of scholarship by historians of South Central Africa, this paper introduces new primary sources that allow for a detailed first-hand view of these internal transformations. These primary sources include a unique set of interviews conducted by the missionary and historian, Fergus Macpherson, in the 1960s and 1970s. Interviews are deposited in the Center for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World (CSCNWW), Edinburgh. While I have conducted extensive interviews across this region, memories of pre-colonial events are not as reliable nor as rich as such earlier testimony.

¹⁷ This first section of the paper is elaborated in D. Gordon, 'The abolition of the slave trade and the transformation of the South-Central African interior', *William and Mary Quarterly* Special edition on the global consequences of the 1807 abolition, 66: 4 (2009), 915–38.

centre of the Lunda confederation (the *Musumba*), and European-financed traders dealt directly with the Lunda there. The Lunda paramount, titled the *Mwaant Yav*, his appointed overseers (*chilol*), and his prominent military slaves exerted control over trading activities through a network of positions that reached west as far as the Kwango River where they met up against a militarised Portuguese network of traders. To the east, the Luba confederation, oriented around a sacred king (*mulopwe*) and an elite *bumbudye* society, had a more tenuous relationship with the Atlantic trade and specialised instead in a north-south-oriented interior trading network from the Copperbelt to the forest edge of the Congo basin, combined with limited trading to the Indian Ocean world through African intermediaries such as the Bisa and the Yao. Lunda and Luba warriors and their followings were sent or migrated to strategic centres of trade and agricultural production. Through conquest, marriage, and incorporation, they came to political arrangements with local people, adopting many of their older systems of decentralised rule, and religious ideas. Away from the coast and towards this interior region, international commerce had a definite but contained influence.¹⁸

The nineteenth-century abolition of the slave trade and the rise of industrial demand, both of which drove changes across the mercantile world, came to profoundly impact the Lunda and Luba polities and peoples. British naval enforcement of their abolition of the maritime slave trade after 1807, combined with a variety of international treaties prohibiting slaving north of the equator, led to a concentration of slave trading activities in the Angolan ports of West Central Africa and the Mozambican ports of South East Africa. The trade routes on which these slave-trading ports relied stretched deep into the interior, and contributed to increases in the internal trade in slaves. In the second half of the century, spurred on

¹⁸ J. Vansina, *Kingdoms of the savanna* (1966, Madison WI). For more details on the long-distance trade routes, see J. Vansina, 'Long-distance trade-routes in Central Africa', *Journal of African history*, 3:3 (1962), 375–90. For developments leading to the establishment of the Lunda confederacy, see J. Vansina, *How societies are born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville and London, 2004), 206–60. For the Lunda consolidation and expansion, see J.J. Hoover, 'The seduction of Ruwej: Reconstructing Ruund history (The nuclear Lunda; Zaire; Angola; Zambia)' (unpublished PhD thesis, Yale University, 1978). For commercial credit and the Lunda relationship with the Atlantic trade, see Miller, *Way of Death*, especially 71–169. For the North-South trading routes and the Luba, see T.Q. Reefer, *The Rainbow and the Kings: A history of the Luba empire to 1891* (Berkeley, 1981), 93–101. For long-distance trade and the Luba, see A. Wilson, 'Long distance trade and the Luba Lomami empire', *Journal of African history*, 13:4 (1972), 575–89. For the relationship between outsiders and autochthones, see D. Gordon, *Nachituti's gift: Economy, society, and environment in Central Africa* (Madison, 2006), 27–61.

by increased investment in the global commodity trade, the focus on legitimate goods, especially ivory, exacerbated this internal slave trade and promoted the economic exploitation of slaves to produce commodities. The region offered opportunities for outside commercial agents as well as entrepreneurial insiders, all of which contributed to revolutionary changes in political economy and governance.

Three distinct routes of international influence can be identified. First, changes in the Mozambican and Angolan trading colonies, influenced in part by British abolitionist efforts and European and Brazilian commercial interests. Second, from 1820 but especially after 1850, international demand for East African products, including cloves and ivory, combined with British abolitionist treaties with East African coastal and island rulers (especially the Omani of Zanzibar and the Merina of Madagascar) which restructured – but did not abolish – the slave trade. Third, to the south, the British colonisation of the Cape in 1806 and their abolitionist and commercial involvement there. The colonisation of the Cape contributed to the expansion of European settlement in Southern Africa, and the movement of the Boers to the interior (in part, fleeing British abolition), which in turn led to a chain of African migrations that reached South Central Africa.¹⁹

These regional political and economic forces catalysed changes that led traders and sometimes armed invaders into the South Central African interior, effectively surrounding the region. The autochthonous peoples of this region could only isolate themselves by migrating to the equatorial rainforest to the north, an area for which their long-standing settlement patterns and agricultural activities were ill-adapted. If, by the eighteenth century mercantile capitalism had not transformed the central African interior, the newfound demand for raw materials by European industrial capitalism and the supply of cheap industrial commodities to Africa in the nineteenth century would do so. Changing ties to the global economy facilitated trading opportunities that led to the emergence of networks of debt and dependency that undermined established political and economic relationships. New elites gathered the wealth, followings, and armaments that enabled them to challenge established Luba and Lunda hierarchies. Crucial to these revolutionary changes was a political

¹⁹ The changes from the South have traditionally been related to Zulu consolidation and its aftermath (the *mfecane*), rather than to British and European settler agency. Since the 1980s, a revisionist history has questioned Zulu agency and instead emphasised European influence. For a survey of the revisionist position, see N. Etherington, *The Great Treks: The transformation of Southern Africa, 1815–1854* (London, 2001).

economy that revolved around the purchase of guns and cloth with slaves and ivory.

WEARING CLOTH, WIELDING GUNS

Before the nineteenth century, elites used international imports as luxury or prestige items for interlinked political, status, ritual, and ceremonial purposes. The distribution of these commodities secured clients for political rulers. As the terms of trade for ivory and slave exports improved – in other words as Central Africans acquired more industrial commodities for their exports – rulers found it difficult to monopolise the distribution of these commodities. Networks of political and economic clients became unstable and precarious. Entrepreneurial upstarts in alliance with coastal traders gained access to slaves and ivory – and hence international commodities. This process only increased as these commodities – the products of the industrial world – became linked to quotidian existence rather than ritual and extraordinary wealth and power. Guns and cloth both illustrate this process, albeit in divergent ways.

Elites used imported cloth in the eighteenth century for ceremonial and religious functions. It was only among the wealthiest, at centres of power such as Kazembe's kingdom, that cloth was worn and used for these purposes. Blue cloth, for example, was left at the burial places of royal ancestors.²⁰ The Kazembe kingdom's aristocrats distributed fine red cloth to *kalamba* overseers.²¹ To secure such fine and politically important cloth, Kazembe sought to trade directly with the Portuguese, instead of relying on Yao and Bisa intermediaries.²² Even in the early nineteenth century, documentary evidence indicates cloth was desired for its distinctive qualities, for luxury and fashion, rather than ordinary use. For example, in the early 1830s, during Gamitto's expedition the diverse values of imported cloth in the hinterland led to such a complex system of exchange values that Gamitto lamented, 'To begin to analyse this subject would take a whole book.'²³ A single unit of cloth, a *Bare*, consisted of a dozen different patterns and colours, each of which had very different values, which

²⁰ 'Journal of Dr. de Lacerda', *Lands of Cazembe*, 102.

²¹ 'Baptista's report of a journey', *Lands of Cazembe*, 229. This is a custom which has remained evident through to the present day. For the 1880s description of clothing of Kazembe and the royalty, see V. Giraud, *Les lacs de l'Afrique Équatoriale, Voyage d'expédition exécuté de 1883 à 1885* (Paris, 1890), 356.

²² Lacerda, 'On the proposed Cazembe expedition', *Lands of Cazembe*, 37.

²³ Gamitto, *King Kazembe I*, 28.

fluctuated according to scarcity and taste.²⁴ The exacting tastes of Central African buyers indicate that the market for such cloth was limited to the luxury consumption of elites. This was high fashion, not quotidian wear.

The provenance of imported cloth during the early nineteenth century was from Indian weavers, transported by Banyan traders to either the East African Swahili traders or the Portuguese colonial authorities. The most common form of Indian cloth was *kaniki*, a blue cloth produced in Gujarat specifically for the African market (although there were other varieties produced in various parts of South Asia and the Middle East). Probably due to the corruption of local Portuguese colonial officials in league with traders, the quality of the Indian cloth supplied by Portuguese East Africa was poor and expensive, especially when compared to cloth that could be procured from Angola.²⁵

Ordinary people did not wear such expensive imported cloth because of the robustness and quality of local production of woven materials. To be sure, the levels of production never reached that of areas of West Africa, especially in cotton cloth.²⁶ Nevertheless, there were alternatives to foreign imports. For example, the Luba on the margins of the equatorial forest produced and traded raffia cloth.²⁷ Skins provided warmth – and those of carnivores such as lions and leopards adorned political elites. The Bisa, long active in international trade, prided themselves on their manufacture and wearing of bark cloth.²⁸ Other specialised traders, the Yao, had an old tradition of cotton cloth production, especially for elites, even while ordinary people wore bark cloth.²⁹

This would change when cheaper international cloth became available. Partly due to British pressure to end the Portuguese trading monopoly in

²⁴ Gamitto, *King Kazembe II*, 197–8.

²⁵ Corruption and the poor quality of cloth are reported in 'Journal of Lacerda', 56. The Governor of Rios de Sena dispatched the *pombeiros* in 1811 with inferior Indian cloth, claiming that cloth from Tete could not be of that of Angola, 'Baptista's proceedings at Tete', *Lands of Cazembe*, 237. Gamitto reports on the poor quality and expensive cloth that the royal treasury obtained from Banyan traders. The royal treasury then distributed this cloth to the various administrative centres, see Gamitto, *King Kazembe I*, 27.

²⁶ For pre-colonial West African production see, C.E. Kriger, *Cloth in West African History* (Lanham, 2006).

²⁷ See the market in Viramba raffia cloth described in Hamed bin Muhammed, *Maisha ya Hamed in Muhammed el Murjebi yaani Tippu Tip Kwa maneno yake*. Supplement to the East African Swahili committee journals 28:2 (July 1958) and 29:1 (January 1959), 83–91.

²⁸ In 1798 Lacerda reports on 'not an inch of cotton cloth', 'Journal of Dr. Lacerda', 88. Bisa women may have worn a small piece of cotton in the 1830s. Gamitto, *King Kazembe I*, 202, 205, and accompanying illustrations. Baptista reports that these loin cloths were manufactured by the Bisa, 'Baptista's report of a journey', *Lands of Cazembe*, 228.

²⁹ Liesegang, 'Import and export trade', 493.

their African possessions, but probably mostly due to the industrial manufacture of cloth, new and cheaper cloth became available. From the 1820s and especially in the 1840s and 1850s, cloth of superior quality produced in New England, in the United States of America, became popular and replaced Indian cloth.³⁰ American boats went directly to Mozambique, and sold their cloth for set prices, undermining the old Portuguese mercantile system.³¹ With American cloth, which originated from the industrial mills of Lowell and Waltham, Massachusetts, and was transported through the port of Salem, an industrial commodity replaced a mercantile one. The variety of patterned textiles gave way to a standard, but fine industrial cloth, used not only by elites but also by ordinary people.

By the late 1860s descriptions make it clear that such imported cloth was not only widespread but that its uses were also far more quotidian. International cloth was no longer a luxury item. Only in remote areas or among very poor subjects and slaves did people wear locally produced cloth and skins, and even then the desire for imported cloth was always present – despite having little to exchange for it, they were desperate for imported cloth. ‘All are eager for calico’, David Livingstone observed, ‘though they have only raw cassava to offer.’³² Along the trade routes, cloth, including attractive blue calico (*kaniki*) and the *Merikano* white cloth (sold by the trader named after the commodity, Juma Merikano) was ubiquitous and used as a daily form of exchange.³³ To be sure, cloth still had ritual and political functions, especially in trading negotiations. Traders gave finely woven cloth and silk to leaders to secure alliances and open up trade.³⁴ But the consumption and use of cloth now extended beyond elites: industrial production in New England facilitated mass consumption in Central Africa.

³⁰ Gamitto, *King Kazembe II*, 197. Towards the second half of the nineteenth century, especially during and after the United States Civil War (1861–4) Indian manufactures began to mimic the production of American cloth – and thus the popular *Amerikani* cloth found across the region, could have come from Indian manufactures. Jeremy Prestholdt reports on Indian *Amerikani* cloth imported into Zanzibar in, Prestholdt, ‘Global repercussions’, 773. Also see Liesegang, ‘Import and export trade’, 457. For an indication of mid-nineteenth century Salem commercial interests in Central Africa, see Burton, ‘Introduction’, *Lands of Cazembe*, 13.

³¹ J.M. Gray, ‘Early connections between the United States and East Africa’, *Tanganyika notes and records*, 22 (1946), 55–86.

³² D. Livingstone, *The last journals of David Livingstone in Central Africa from 1865 to his death*, Volume 2 (New York, 1875), 491, 19 February 1873.

³³ Livingstone, *Last journals*, Volume 2, 357–8, 13 February 1871, 419, 1 May 1872.

³⁴ For example, see the trade relationships between Giraud’s party and Chitimukulu and Kazembe, in *L’Afrique Équatoriale*, 270, 379.

By the 1860s and 1870s cloth had become, as David Livingstone put it, 'a universal article of barter throughout the greater part of Africa' – a type of currency.³⁵ For one day's labour or portage, for example, Livingstone paid about one yard of cloth; compensation for a damaged tobacco patch cost one yard; a pot of honey and four fowls cost two yards; and hoes were priced at two or three yards of calico each.³⁶ The most important trade of all, the slave trade, became closely tied to the trade in cloth. A small boy could be bought for four yards, while his mother cost two yards; elsewhere the given price was eight to ten yards of calico per slave.³⁷ East of Lake Malawi, where murdered and starved slaves littered slave trading routes, Livingstone passed 'people who are so well supplied with white calico by the slave trade from Kilwa, that it is quite a drug in the market: we cannot get food for it.'³⁸ The oral testimony confirms Livingstone's impressions: in addition to guns, slaves and ivory were universally exchanged for cloth.³⁹

The widespread demand for imported cloth meant that old forms of select clientage gave way to extensive debt, dependency, and even enslavement. The vocabulary used to refer to slaves indicates the relationship of trade and indebtedness to slavery.⁴⁰ Payment from a master to a subject led to a dependency that was conceived as a form of slavery, at least until

³⁵ Livingstone, *Last Journals, Volume 1*, 182.

³⁶ Livingstone, *Last Journals, Volume 1*, 31, 34, 39, 216.

³⁷ Livingstone, *Last Journals, Volume 1*, 182, 278.

³⁸ Livingstone, *Last Journals, Volume 1*, 62–64.

³⁹ Interview Macpherson with Headman Nythande Chirwa, Petauke Boma, 17 March 1975; Interview Macpherson with Chief Chipepo and councillors, Chipepo, 13 October 1975; Interview Macpherson with Kamushini Mpona, 26 November 1974; Interview Macpherson with Patson Chipili, Mukupa Katandula, 27 November 1974; Interview Macpherson with Simon Ngulube, Chief Mbuluma, Feira District, 4 September 1974; Interview Macpherson with Ponkeni Mpanga, Kazembe, 11 September 1973; Interview Macpherson with Lukwesa elders, Lukwesa, 16 September 1973, Boxes 2–3, CSCNWW.

⁴⁰ In Chibemba, the language of several important slave and ivory raiding and trading polities west of the Luangwa Valley and east of the Lunda heartland (most notably among the Bemba, Bisa, and eastern Lunda), slaves were termed *abasha* [singular: *umusha*]. The term may have derived from the same word (but in a different noun class), *musha*, meaning "debt" (more commonly used in the plural form: *misha*). The term for manumission (*-lubula*, to redeem or pay debts) supports this derivation. A *mushapôle* was a female slave without relatives able to reclaim her and thus completely subjected to her master. A child of such a slave woman, a *musha musana*, was known as the most loyal child, presumably since he or she had no alternatives. There were terms for this debt-based system of slavery, *ubusha*, and for the process of enslavement, *-lobelela mu musha*. These words and phrases were used extensively in the Chibemba transcriptions of the Macpherson interviews. All the terms are also listed in White Fathers, *Bemba-English Dictionary* (Ndola, Zambia: Mission Press, 1991. Orig. Lusaka: Publications Bureau, 1954).

the slave could repay the debt.⁴¹ In one recorded example from the mid-nineteenth century, an impoverished man, Chibanti, sold himself into slavery for three 30-yard pieces of cloth. He used two of the pieces of cloth to purchase a woman and child, and the remainder to invest in what would become a prosperous trading business.⁴² The connection between cloth, dependency, and enslavement was symbolised in the 'breaking of a *mitete*', when cloth was torn by a vulnerable dependent who was to be enslaved.⁴³ Demand for cloth contributed to the sale of dependents, or even the sale of oneself, into slavery.

Like cloth, guns held ritual and ceremonial functions before the 1850s. The few guns found at the courts of Luba and Lunda elites were fired during court rituals. Warriors and hunters preferred spears and bows and arrows. Through the latter half of the century, guns became a normal feature of raiding and warfare, however. Ovimbundu, Swahili, Chikunda, and Nyamwezi traders used guns to unprecedented degrees to capture people. Those who did not have guns learned quickly of their importance – for example, when Hamed bin Muhammed, also known as 'Tippu Tip', probably after his firearms, defeated the Tabwa ruler, Nsama, in 1867. Or shortly after, when during a short encounter, his gun-wielding followers massacred approximately 700 Luba warriors and captured 1,000 women.⁴⁴

As the Atlantic slave trade came to a slow end in the mid-nineteenth century and the Portuguese royal monopoly over African products in 1834–5 ended, exports deemed legitimate by British abolitionists experienced a boon. The local price for ivory increased, in part due to the availability of industrial goods, the value of which declined in terms of the high and remarkably stable international price for ivory.⁴⁵ The increased local value of ivory had profound impacts on the South Central African political

⁴¹ For example, see the recruitment of Chikunda military slaves, Allen Isaacman, 'The Origin, Formation, and Early History of the Chikunda of South Central Africa,' *Journal of African history*, 13:3 (1972), 443–61, esp. 451. Also see Gamitto, *King Kazembe II*, 145.

⁴² The story of Chibanti is described by David and Charles Livingstone in *Narratives of Journey to Zambezi and its Tributaries* (London: J Murray, 1865), 49.

⁴³ Gamitto, *King Kazembe II*, 145.

⁴⁴ A. Roberts, 'Firearms in North-Eastern Zambia before 1900', *Transafrican journal of history*, 6:2 (1971), 3–21, especially 6. For more on Tippu Tip's conflict with Nsama, see Hamed bin Muhammed, *Maisha ya Hamed*, 47–55. For another account of the conflict, see Livingstone, *Last Journals*, 173–81. For the Luba massacre, see Hamed bin Muhammed, *Maisha ya Hamed*, 95.

⁴⁵ R.W. Beachey, 'The East African ivory trade in the nineteenth century', *Journal of African history*, 8:2 (1967), 229–90, especially 278. For the quadrupling of the local price in the Congo basin and its impacts there, see R. Harms, *River of wealth, river of sorrow: The Central Zaire basin in the era of the slave and ivory trade, 1500–1891* (New Haven, 1981), 24–7, 99–108.

economy. Ivory became the symbol of the new ruling class, the most prestigious and valued trading item. Warlord chiefs demanded all or a significant portion of ivory from the hunt or employed their own hunters to procure tusks. Indeed, the definition of chieftaincy revolved around the ability to impose claims for tribute in ivory.⁴⁶ 'If you had a male slave, you sold him', claimed Chief Mailo, 'However, ivory was obtained from chiefs.'⁴⁷

Guns were used to procure both slaves and ivory. But it was especially with the ascendance of the ivory trade that guns became a necessary factor of production. Guns were increasingly used to hunt elephants. The hunting of elephants had previously been undertaken by brave men organised in guilds with specialised techniques that included trapping, poisons, and specially manufactured spears. But this changed in the second half of the century. Renowned Chikunda and Bisa elephant hunters gained access to or began to manufacture primitive guns and abandoned their old hunting techniques.⁴⁸ They had little choice if they were to compete with the gun-wielding followers of coastal caravans. When, for example, Tippu Tip's followers encountered herds of elephants, they could slaughter 'countless numbers' of elephants.⁴⁹

But the use of guns to kill elephants was only one aspect of the connection between guns and ivory. The export of ivory became linked to a violent regional trade in slaves. Although exhausted and famished slaves were not effective porters for ivory, the slave and ivory trades developed together as predominantly male ivory hunters desired slaves, often women, as workers and as concubines. The Lunda – Chokwe in the west of the region, for example, purchased female slaves from the Ovimbundu caravans that reached the interior and had previously supplied slaves for the Atlantic trade. In exchange they sold ivory destined for international markets. Farther north, the Kuba purchased slaves for ivory.⁵⁰ Chikunda hunters in the east also purchased slave women to expand their lineages.⁵¹

⁴⁶ In a similar fashion to the Equatorial Congo River, where village 'guardians' received the tusks of any elephant killed in their territory, see R. Harms, *Games against nature: An eco-cultural history of the Nunu of Equatorial Africa* (Cambridge, 1987), 36.

⁴⁷ Macpherson Interview with Nansala Manteta Mwenda (Chief Mailo), Nansala Village, 15 October 1973.

⁴⁸ Isaacman, *Slavery and beyond*, 98–9. For the Bisa, see S.A. Marks, *Large mammals and a brave people: Subsistence hunters in Zambia* (Brunswick NJ, 2005; Orig. University of Washington, 1976), 63–4.

⁴⁹ As they did in the Bemba areas, see Hamed bin Muhammed, *Maisha ya Hamed*, 77.

⁵⁰ J. Vansina, *Being Colonized: The Kuba Experience in Rural Congo, 1880–1960* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2010), 11–8.

⁵¹ For Chokwe traders, see Miller, 'Cokwe trade and conquest'. For Chikunda, see A. and B. Isaacman, *Slavery and beyond: The making of men and Chikunda ethnic identities in the*

Local rulers also encouraged gun-wielding coastal traders to raid rivals: they would acquire slaves and the coastal traders the stockpiles of ivory.⁵² The wealthiest, with plentiful guns, could even buy professional elephant hunters as slaves.⁵³ The ivory trade thereby consolidated the economic and military power of those who had access to guns – or who worked in alliance with those with guns.

Other 'legitimate' export commodities played a similar role. With the boom in rubber in the late nineteenth century, the Chokwe purchased slaves with rubber.⁵⁴ The Ovimbundu also found a market for slaves on plantations in coastal Southern Angola, where they worked on plantations or were exported as 'contract workers' to São Tomé and Príncipe (where they produced cocoa).⁵⁵ From the east coast, the expansion of clove plantations run by Omani elites and financed by south Asians led to a similar demand for slaves.⁵⁶ Armed Swahili caravans searched for slaves deep in the interior by forming alliances with existing or new African elites. Even after the slave trade was outlawed, the sugar-producing plantations of the British-administered Mascarene Islands demanded slaves – and a considerable number were smuggled there.⁵⁷ In all cases, guns were increasingly used for, or indirectly connected to, the procurement of the labour required for the export of legitimate commodities.

Through the late nineteenth century the ivory trade became linked to raiding and warfare rather than trade. Swahili and other outside traders demanded tribute in ivory. If not forthcoming African rulers were raided. Even powerful chiefs were threatened: Tippu Tip defeated Nsama and

unstable world of South-Central Africa, 1750–1920 (Portsmouth, NH, 2004). For the general connection between ivory and slaves during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries towards the East African coast, see Alpers, *Ivory and slaves*.

⁵² An arrangement often used by Tippu Tip, for example, see Hamed bin Muhammed, *Maisha ya Hamed*, 93.

⁵³ As Tippu Tip did with his purchase of four Yao elephant hunters, see Hamed bin Muhammed, *Maisha ya Hamed*, 77.

⁵⁴ For Chokwe ivory and rubber trade, see J. Miller, 'Cokwe trade and conquest', 175–201.

⁵⁵ For the Ovimbundu slave trade, see L. Heywood, 'Slavery and forced labor in the changing political economy of Central Angola, 1850–1945', S. Miers and R. Roberts (eds.), *The end of slavery in Africa* (Madison, 1988): 415–36.

⁵⁶ A. Sheriff, *Slaves, spices, and ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African commercial empire in the world economy, 1770–1873* (London, 1987).

⁵⁷ For the demand from the Mascarene Islands, see R.B. Allen, 'Licentious and unbridled proceedings: The illegal slave trade to Mauritius and the Seychelles in the early nineteenth century', *Journal of African history*, 42:1 (2001), 91–116. For further the growth, see G. Campbell, 'Madagascar and Mozambique in the slave trade of the Western Indian ocean, 1800–1861', W.G. Clarence-Smith (ed.), *The economics of the Indian ocean slave trade in the nineteenth century* (London, 1989), 166–93.

other Arab-Swahili deposed Kazembe, both strongmen who had raided others, and stole their ivory stockpiles. He implemented a protection racket through much of the eastern part of Central Africa, insisting on payment in ivory.⁵⁸ Only through military strength could ivory supplies be protected. By the 1880s this process intensified when Europeans raided Swahili traders alongside African rulers for ivory (often using the excuse of 'pacification' or of combating the slave trade).⁵⁹ Thus, since ivory was increasingly raided, and not traded, from the interior, it fuelled demand for guns and gun powder.

All the major polities of the region relied on guns by the late nineteenth century. The Kololo supplemented traditional weaponry with guns acquired from Angolan traders to raid for people and cattle, often alongside Luso-African traders.⁶⁰ By the 1860s, young and ambitious Kololo subjects procured guns from international trade and deployed them in a successful anti-Kololo uprising.⁶¹ The polity they established, renamed the Lozi kingdom, shared the Kololo's orientation towards international trade. They even expanded ivory and rubber sales to Griqua and English traders from the south for more effective guns.⁶² When caravans of

⁵⁸ On Tippu Tip's raiding of Nsama's and Kazembe's ivory, see Hamed bin Muhammed, *Maisha ya Hamed*, 47–55, 79. Many examples in this memoir refer to Tippu Tip's insistence on payment in ivory in exchange for his military support and protection.

⁵⁹ For an example of the early British South Africa Company occupation of North-Eastern Rhodesia, see National archives of Zambia, Lusaka (NAZ) A1/1/1 Ikawa collector, J.M. Bell to P.W. Forbes, Administrator Blantyre, 3 August 1896, Drysdale, Report on Arab slave caravan, 1 September 1896; NAZ A1/1/1 Ikawa collector, J.M. Bell to Harney, 24 April 1896. Administrators of King Leopold's Congo also used attacks on 'slave traders' as an alibi for ivory raiding. See also, Beachey, 'East African ivory trade', especially 278.

⁶⁰ For the Lozi version see, A. Jalla, 'A history of the Lozi', 22. Manuscript in United Church of Zambia archives, 17–3 Lozi history. Manuscript version of *The story of the Barotse nation* (Lusaka: Publications Bureau of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland). In 1851 Livingstone witnessed 'Mambari' traders from Angola who traded guns for captives (preferably young boys) with the Kololo; in 1853, he claims clothing was exchanged for slaves and notes the permanent Portuguese presence at Katongo (Mongu?), where two Portuguese stockades had been built with the Portuguese flag displayed; Livingstone, *Livingstone's private journals*, 42–43, 204–5, 226; also see Mainga, *Bulozi*, 85. Sebitwane assumed Livingstone had come to trade guns and that their 'teaching was chiefly the art of shooting.' Livingstone, *Livingstone's private journals*, 16–7. Also see Livingstone, *Missionary travels in South Africa, Volume 1* (Santa Barbara, CA, 2001, Orig. New York, 1858), 207.

⁶¹ W.T. Kalusa, 'Elders, young men, and David Livingstone's 'civilizing mission': Revisiting the disintegration of the Kololo kingdom, 1851–1864', *International journal of African historical studies*, 42:1 (2009), 55–80.

⁶² L.H. Gann, 'The end of the slave trade in British Central Africa, 1889–1912', *Rhodes Livingstone Journal*, 16 (1954), 27–51, 39. George Westbeech was an English hunter and trader who came to play a prominent role in the 1880s, supplementing trade relationships from the West with those from the South; E.C. Tabler (ed.), *Trade and travel in early*

Swahili traders were reluctant to sell arms that might threaten the military dominance in the regions in which they travelled, warlords such as Msiri turned instead to the Ovimbundu who were willing to sell arms.⁶³ Msiri possessed between two thousand and three thousand flintlocks. His blacksmiths made bullets and repaired guns.⁶⁴ The Chikunda also offered guns in exchange for slaves and ivory.⁶⁵ Virtually unknown before 1870, guns became vital for Bemba warriors to sustain their military raids.⁶⁶ Chiefs were aware of the latest weaponry carried by European traders, and in one instance a chief insisted that the adventurer Carl Wiese give him the latest model of Winchester rifle.⁶⁷ Even the regiments of the Ngoni, which continued to prefer short stabbing spears (*assegais*) and large shields, had an estimated two to three thousand guns available for raids and wars by the late nineteenth century.⁶⁸

Guns became necessary for the production of slaves and ivory – and the protection of dependents, slaves, and stockpiles of ivory. Thus even while guns and gunpowder formed only a small proportion of the total value of imports, they became a component of political survival. Chiefs had to cultivate allies with access to guns, otherwise they would fall victim to increased violence. A system of extraction that relied on warfare drove the demand for arms and ammunition. South Central Africa advanced far into an arms race tied to production of ivory to be exchanged for cloth.

By the late nineteenth century, wealth was measured in terms of imported cloth. South Central Africans had become dependent on imports of cloth. And the most effective way to secure cloth was through the sale of ivory, which in turn required guns. Because of the widespread availability of opportunities to convert ivory and dependents into industrial commodities, such goods could not be monopolised by the old elites. This ‘illegitimate trade’, from the perspective of these old elites, led to political instabilities and to the fragile consolidation of power by an

Barotseland: The diaries of George Westbeeck, 1885–1888 and Captain Norman MacLeod, 1875–1876 (Berkeley, 1963); also see the description of Westbeeck's trade in Selous, *A Hunter's Wanderings*, 255–6.

⁶³ As reported in Yeke oral traditions, see Legros, *Chasseurs*, 119.

⁶⁴ Roberts, 'Firearms in North-Eastern Zambia', 9.

⁶⁵ Interview Macpherson with John Mwelwa, Chingombe Mission, 13 August 1974.

⁶⁶ Roberts, 'Firearms in North-Eastern Zambia', 10–12. Also, interview Macpherson with C.P. Muluka and Emmanuel Bwembya, Bwembya Village, May 1963; Roberts, *History of Bemba*, 204; V. Giraud, *L'Afrique Équatoriale*, 238. For details on the Swahili and Nyamwezi caravan trade in the Bemba area, see the correspondence in NAZ NER BSAC 1/132, Slave trade and pacification of Awemba.

⁶⁷ Wiese, *Expedition*, 253.

⁶⁸ Wiese, *Expedition*, 153–4.

ever-changing class of economic warlords in alliance with armed coastal traders. Imported cloth distributed to capricious dependents and followers was the currency of this violent political economy.

INSTABILITY AND WARLORDISM

The most effective way to secure power in this unstable political economy was through violence. Economic motivations for warfare became paramount – essentially the predation on weak and vulnerable polities to be raided for slaves and ivory, and to secure food and supplies, as bands that specialised entirely in militarised strategies abandoned cultivation.⁶⁹ Settlements changed from open villages surrounded by farmlands to defensive villages fenced in by palisades adorned with skulls. Travelling through Bemba, eastern Lunda, and Chewa territories in 1884, Victor Giraud provided illustrations of barricaded capitals and abandoned or scattered, hidden and heavily-defended settlements.⁷⁰ Warlord chiefs barricaded their villages and set up perimeters of barbed and thorny bushes to deter raiders.⁷¹ Vulnerable women and children slept in the bush to prevent capture in night-time raids.⁷² Farming was limited to small fields close the villages.⁷³ The settlements of the most powerful chiefs contained and protected thousands of inhabitants. Bunkeya, Msiri's capital, consisted of some forty barricaded sectors, stretching up to ten miles in length and two miles in width, and surrounded by farms that fed the city's population. Msiri's officials and wives administered the different sectors, which represented the different regions of Msiri's conquests.⁷⁴ Refugees from the surrounding wars chose the protection of chiefs, becoming their

⁶⁹ For the economic motives behind Yeke wars, see Legros, *Chasseurs*, 111. According to interviewees, Chikunda, especially Kanyemba, raided for food since they had 'hunger' in their land. Interview Macpherson with Albino Ngulube, Albezyo Ntawa, Michael Kanguma, Zarupango Village, Katondwe, 4 September 1974; Interview Macpherson with Tiki Mazyambwe Nguluwe, Natondwe Mission, 4 September 1974.

⁷⁰ In addition to the illustrations, Victor Giraud describes a fortified and hidden Lunda capital surrounded by equally protected villages in *LAfrique Équatoriale*, 253–5, 369–71, 531–2.

⁷¹ Interview Macpherson with headman Nythande Chirwa, Petauke Boma, 17 March 1975; Interview P. Lary with Machende and Chisambo, Mbereshi, 8 September 1973; Interview Macpherson with Chief Shaibila, Mkushi, 14 August 1974.

⁷² H. von Wissmann, *My second journey through Equatorial Africa from the Congo to the Zambezi in the years 1886 and 1887*, translated by M.J.A. Bergmann (London, 1891), 273.

⁷³ Interview Macpherson with headman Nythande Chirwa, Petauke Boma, 17 March 1975.

⁷⁴ Legros, *Chasseurs*, 99–100.

dependents, rather than face terror and enslavement at the hands of brutal strangers.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, military chiefs who monopolised international trade became the dominant form of settled territorial government. Msiri extended armed forays into neighbouring areas unwilling or unable to pay sufficient tribute, and traded with both Swahili to the east and Ovimbundu to the west, or sometimes with agents of prominent Portuguese or Luso-African merchants in Angola.⁷⁵ Every month, one or two Ovimbundu caravans arrived at Msiri's Yeke kingdom with several dozen to one thousand individuals, and left with 2,000–3,000 people, two-thirds of whom were slaves, carrying 100 tons of ivory (from 1,500 to 3,000 tusks).⁷⁶ In the 1860s, the Bemba had come under the rule of Chitimukulu Chitapankwa who usurped the throne from his uncle, and consolidated his military with the support of Swahili traders.⁷⁷ Other established kingdoms fared less well, however. Kazembe, positioned between the Bemba and Msiri's Yeke, and subjected to the attention of Swahili traders, found that he could not maintain his trading monopoly and became indebted and vulnerable to the interference of outsiders and entrepreneurial upstarts.⁷⁸

Outside of such territorial militarised kingdoms, mobile warlords, essentially bands of warriors, conquered established kingdoms and decentralised polities alike. From the south, the Kololo under Sebitwane overcame the existing Lozi ruling elite, and set up their own centralised polity, the Barotse Kingdom. Farther north, Chokwe marauders with arms from Angola overran Lunda principalities. The Ngoni under Mpezeni, coming from the south east, raided vulnerable peoples in the Zambezi and Luangwa Valleys, killing men and capturing women.⁷⁹ If the subjects of acephalous Zambezi polities escaped the Ngoni, they could be captured by the Chikunda military slaves of Portuguese *prazos* who turned their attention from the hunting of elephants to the capture of slaves in the

⁷⁵ For the Ovimbundu and Chokwe in West-Central Africa, see Miller, 'Cokwe trade and conquest', 175–201; for the Ovimbundu, see Heywood, 'Slavery and forced labor', 415–36. According to one interviewee from Western Zambia, the Ovimbundu bought one slave for three baskets of salt or eight slaves for one cow. Interview Macpherson with Mwanampwaya Nkali, Baambwe court, Namwala, 30 May 1973.

⁷⁶ Legros, *Chasseurs*, 120–2.

⁷⁷ Roberts, *History of the Bemba*, 125–63.

⁷⁸ Macola, *Kingdom of Kazembe*, 136–60.

⁷⁹ For the segmentary system of the Ngoni and their detailed history, see Barnes, *Politics in a changing society*, 1–106.

Zambezi area.⁸⁰ North of the Zambezi and east of Lake Tanganyika, armed Swahili caravans unsettled the rule of local leaders, executing those who refused to pay them the requisite tribute and capturing their followings.⁸¹ Luba sacred royalty, weakened by Yeke and Swahili incursions from the east, finally collapsed due to heavily armed Ovimbundu traders from the west.⁸² These are only the best known examples of a general system of mobile warlordism that spread across the region.

In this militarised form of rule, hegemony was fragile: a competitor with better access to guns through coastal traders could overcome a rival and capture his people and his ivory. In the Luba case, trade with Swahili and with Msiri led to the rise of conquest chiefs, *mfumu wa bakalanga* who replaced the rule of the *mulopwe*, the sacred kings.⁸³ Swahili traders like Tippu Tip made their lack of respect for local monopolies over trade abundantly clear.⁸⁴ Ovimbundu traders and mercenaries backed rival factions at the Luba centre as did the Chokwe at the Lunda court, where rivalries intensified due to the declining control over trade as caravans from the west simply overrode networks of Lunda chiefs.⁸⁵

Military leaders differed from earlier political and religious leaders such as the clan elders or shrine priests who had authority at the village level, the title-holders and overseers who were associated with the Luba and Lunda, or the big men and elders who enjoyed status by virtue of their wealth, age, or lineage.⁸⁶ Warlords derived the substance of their authority from control over international rather than regional trade. While they employed ideological strategies, the substance of their power was coercive. It rested on an alliance with coastal traders, the accumulation and arming of mercenaries and hunters, and a forceful subjugation of other dependents. When Chief Mailo, who claimed to be around 110 years old when interviewed in 1973, was asked whether 'ordinary people' appreciated trade or suffered because of it, he replied, 'We were very happy as *chiefs* [my emphasis] because they had brought riches (...) [and] left

⁸⁰ Isaacman, *Slavery and beyond*, 234–80.

⁸¹ For the massacres witnessed by Livingstone, especially among the Maniema, see Livingstone, *Last Journals Volume II*, 125–39.

⁸² Reefe, *The Rainbow and the Kings*, 159–92.

⁸³ Reefe, *The Rainbow and the Kings*, 169.

⁸⁴ Hamed bin Muhammed, *Maisha ya Hamed*.

⁸⁵ For the Ovimbundu and the Luba, see Reefe, *The Rainbow and the Kings*, 183–92; for the Lunda, see Miller, 'Cokwe trade and conquest', 195–8. For the declining control over trade and intensified rivalries, see Hoover, 'Seduction', 353–5.

⁸⁶ A vocabulary which is broadly shared but rendered in Bemba orthography as wealthy big men, *abakankâla* or elder, *abakalamba*.

behind what they had brought with them (...) We exchanged slaves and ivory for the goods they brought.’⁸⁷ South Central Africans referred to the new chiefs as *mfumu* and to the system as *bufumu* governance, a term which had pre-Lunda and Luba origins, and over time and in different places had referred to a wide range of forms of authority. In the nineteenth century *bufumu* came to represent the rule of political violence facilitated by economic accumulation through contact with coastal traders. Luba and Lunda title-holders declined in importance relative to the coercive authority of the *mfumu* chief.⁸⁸



Fig. 2.1 A Lake Mweru Chief, probably of the Kazembe Kingdom. Elaborate cloth was used to indicate prestige, wealth, and political importance. From, Dan Crawford, *Thinking Black: Twenty-Two Years without a Break in the Long Grass of Central Africa*. New York: George H. Doran Co., 1913.

⁸⁷ Interview Macpherson with Nansala Manteta Mwenda (Chief Mailo), Nansala Village, 15 October 1973.

⁸⁸ The best example is that of coercive *bufumu* chieftaincies replacing *bulopwe* sacred kingship in Luba areas. See Reeve, *The Rainbow and the Kings*, 46. For many meanings of ‘chief’ and *mfumu*, and the imprecise way that they have been used, see W. van Binsbergen, *Religious change in Zambia: Exploratory studies* (London, 1981), 121–2. For the pre-1600 origins of *fumu*, see Vansina, *How societies are born*, 241–4.

By century's end, the indebted military elites of South Central Africa could no longer rule beyond the few barricaded villages that recognised their authority. Unable to ensure the regular payment of tax and tribute or to mobilise enough force to protect their territories from neighbouring warlords, they became dependent on the patronage of outsiders. Even the most powerful warlord, Msiri, succumbed. King Leopold's mercenaries who, promising guns and gunpowder in exchange for Msiri's recognition of Leopold's sovereignty, assassinated him during negotiations.⁸⁹ Mostly African and South Asian mercenaries employed by a few European entrepreneurs subdued these despotic but dependent warlords with relative ease.⁹⁰

CONCLUSION

The increase in the availability of cheap industrial goods and the number of armed, coastal traders undermined previous monopolies exerted by South Central African rulers, the basis upon which international trade had contributed previously to the consolidation of their polities. Instead, rulers desperately attempted to control those export commodities that held value in the international market – ivory, and to a lesser extent, slaves. To do so, they needed guns; and to acquire guns, they needed alliances with coastal traders, for which they needed slaves and ivory. Meanwhile, since guns gave coastal traders decisive advantage, they offered cloth instead, which was connected to a regional political economy of patronage, consumption, and fashion. As cloth became a mass commodity desired by all, South Central African traders and political leaders needed to acquire more cloth to maintain existing patronage networks. They also sought finer quality cloth, with unique designs, which would maintain value. African leaders became indebted to and dependent on those who had access to such international commodities, a chain of intermediaries that led to the industrial economies of Europe and America.

European colonialism only further accelerated these nineteenth century transformations. At first raiding became red rubber collected by

⁸⁹ See the diaries of Dan Crawford in G.E. Tilsley, *Dan Crawford: Missionary and pioneer in Central Africa* (London, 1929), 196–201. Also see the published account of the Stairs' expedition's doctor, J.A. Moloney, *With Captain Stairs to Katanga* (London, 1893), 171–94.

⁹⁰ For example, only 1,200 mostly African and Indian soldiers and orderlies conquered North-Eastern Rhodesia; Gann, 'End of slave trade', 46. Also see NAZ NER BSAC 1/132 Slave trade and pacification of Awemba.

forced labour, and then this morphed into wage labour paid for in European-controlled specie. Copper replaced ivory as the region's most valuable international export. Demand for industrial goods, prominent among which remained cloth and clothing, still drove debt and dependency that challenged local sovereignties. In light of this longer history, global trade and the consumption of foreign-produced industrial commodities appears to transform Central Africa's political economy in predictable ways.⁹¹



Fig. 2.2 Illustration of Msiri, a nineteenth-century warlord and importer of guns and cloth, along with one of his wives. Note their elaborate dress. From G.E. Tilsley, *Dan Crawford: Missionary and Pioneer in Central Africa*. London: Oliphants, 1929.

⁹¹ For the post-colonial instability and warlordism due to such weak states and open economies, see W. Reno, *Warlord politics and African states* (Boulder, 1998).

THE ROLE OF FIREARMS IN THE SONGYE REGION (1869–1960)

Donatien Dibwe Dia Mwembu

Bunduki, sultani ya balabala (The gun is the master of the road), the Arab-Swahili traders used to say.

Before colonisation, anyone who possessed a firearm was a master in areas where the people had only edged weapons such as arrows, spears, knives, etc. Tippu Tip, the Swahili Arab freebooter in the Congo, described the devastating effect of firearms in contest with the arrows of African warriors:

... He (the African chief Samu) had posted many of his warriors in ambush. Ignoring this, we went ahead; we were about twenty men, along with a dozen carriers slaves, and I myself walked ahead. When we arrived, suddenly, three arrows whistled around me; two reached me, the third only brushed against me. A young man, Said ben Sef el-Maamri, was hit; luckily the wound was not serious, but two slaves, also injured, fell dead instantly. Fortunately our guns were loaded with lead and scrap. The warriors formed compact groups and each discharge of guns mowed them like flocks of birds. When the guns fell silent, more than two hundred men lay on the ground, dead; others were kicked by being trampled on by those who fled wildly. Within an hour, there were at least a thousand deaths. On our side, we had only two slaves killed and two wounded, including myself.¹

INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth century, Central Africa in general, and the Songye region in particular, was located between two groups of arms traffickers. From the west, the Portuguese, through the Ovimbundu, created the Luso-African area. From the east, from the island of Zanzibar, the Arabs and the Arabised made their way into the heart of Central Africa. Both of these groups were primarily concerned with long distance trade whose products were, first and foremost, ivory and slaves. The arrival of these Portuguese and Arab-Swahili traffickers marks a decisive turning-point in the political, economic, social and cultural history of Central Africa as they led to

¹ François Bontinck, *L'autobiographie de Hamed ben Mohammed el-Murjebi Tippu Tip* (ca. 1840–1905), Académie royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer (1974), 51.

the fall of the old kingdoms to be replaced by new powers whose possession of firearms was the basis of their might. The new leaders – M'siri, Mukenge Kalamba, Ngongo Lueteta, Mpania Mutombo, Lumpungu, etc. – became powerful through the possession of firearms and their long-distance trade. They challenged traditional leaders and thus changed the political map of the region.

Many studies on the region have discussed the birth, the development and the decline of the slave trade, the Luba and Songye kingdoms, or the political organisation of chief Lumpungu's kingdom, but not the role guns played in the Songye community. The objective of this paper is therefore to study the different roles that firearms played in the Songye region between 1869, the time of their introduction, and 1960, the year that the Democratic Republic of Congo became an independent internationally recognised state. On the basis of such written sources as are available and of oral material collected in Lubumbashi, in the city of Kabinda, the capital of Kabinda district, and in the urban centres of Lubao and Lubefu, this paper attempts to answer the following questions: What are the sources from which the black population got their firearms? What was the impact of the coming of firearms into the Songye region, on the political, economic, social and cultural levels? And finally, what were the strategies set up by the Belgian colonisers against the circulating of guns in the black communities?

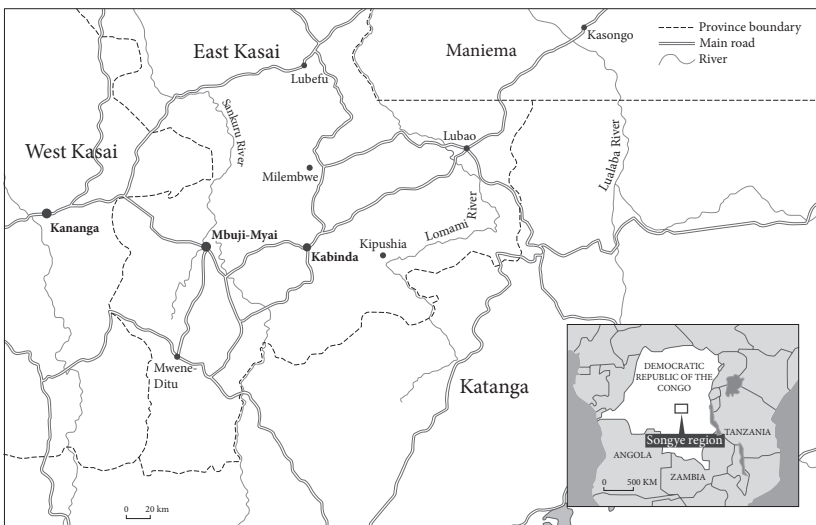


Fig. 3.1 Map of the Songye region

THE SONGYE REGION

The Songye settled in the region between the 5th and 6th south parallel; between the Sankuru and the Lomami Rivers, and even beyond that. Because of the arbitrarily drawn provincial borders from colonial times, the Songye currently find themselves divided between the jurisdictions of East Kasai, where a majority of Songye currently occupy the territories of Kabinda and Lubao,² Maniema and Katanga. The West Kasai contains a small fraction of Songye among its population, descended from fugitives from the repeated Lumpungu attacks who took refuge under the leadership of their chief Nsapu Nsapu in Kananga. These areas were subjugated in the second half of the nineteenth century by the armed bands of Mpanya Mutombo in the north, the Ngongo Letete in the east and Lumpungu in the south. Before the rise of Lumpungu the Songye formed a somewhat loose society without a strong central organisation. The various political groups were independent of each other and ruled by chiefs, whose power was hereditary. However, Lumpungu was able to use firearms to conquer all these groups, and bring them together into a centralised state structure.³

Lumpungu was born, sometime in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, possibly as early as 1852, possibly as late as 1866,⁴ as Ngoyi Mafula, and later acquired the nickname Lumpungu. Two versions give the origin of this nickname. The first version associates the name with that of a fetish with whose help Kibala, the barren wife of Kaumbu ka Ngoyi, had a child. The couple thus gave the child the name Lumpungu in memory of the fertility fetish.⁵ According to another version, the nickname Lumpungu was used to describe a person of great charisma, imposing and hard to

² The most important groups in the Kabinda territory are the Ben'Eki, the Bena Milembwe, the Belande, the Basanga, the Bakankala, the Bena Majiba and the Bena Mpaze. The Lubao territory includes the Bekalebwe, the Balaa, the Bena Ngungi, the Bapina, the Baembe, the Bena Ebombo, the Basonge (Bena Sala, Bena Kafuma, Bena Kahuwa, Bena Mukungu, Bena Muumbo, Bena Bwabe, Bena Muo, Bena Sangwe, Bena Kibumbu, Ben'Eshadika, etc.

³ For a study of Songye pre-colonial history with special reference to Lumpungu, see: Nancy J. Fairley, 'Mianda ya Ben'Ekie: A history of the Ben'Ekie', (unpublished PhD thesis, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1978).

⁴ For varying opinions on the date of his birth see H. Von Wissmann, *Second journey through Equatorial Africa*, London, (1891), 188; Tshikutu Tshibambe, 'L'archétype du chef: cas de Lumpungu 1er. Kabinda, 1852–1919', *Annales de l'ISP Kananga*, 1 (1994), 294 (290–310); A. Delcommune, *Vingt années de vie Africaine*, T. II, (Brussels: 1922), 91.

⁵ Interview with Yando Kabundji, Kabinda, March 2002.

manage. This nickname was given to him long after his birth, during his glory years.⁶

THE NAMING OF GUNS

In Kisongye, the gun is known as *mputu*. This name is confusing in that it means 'Europe'. In Lingala, one speaks of *Mpoto* when we want to designate the European continent. It even seems that the word *mpoto* comes from *mpurtugeshi*, a distortion of the term 'Portuguese'. Therefore, *mputu*, the gun, would mean an article of European origin. So the question we could ask ourselves is to know why all the other articles coming from Europe are not designated under the same name *mputu*. Many Songye have said that the term *mputu* comes from the noise made by the gun when firing a shot: 'mpuu tuu', meaning a double bang; 'mpuu' first and 'tuu' after that. In everyday language, the Songye say: *abakupila mputu, ayo kudila ashi mpuu tuu*. (They fired a weapon and a mpuu tuu sound was made.) Thus the gun was called the *mputu*. This term is similar to the term of *poupou* (the sound of the double detonation or the double bang) in local slang which also happens to mean 'gun'. This second explanation turns out to be true if one considers that with the Baluba Lubilanji, a people neighbouring the Songye, the gun is called the *tshingoma* because of the noise it makes when a shot is fired, this noise resembling that of a large tam-tam (*ngoma*).⁷ But as the noise made by the gun is much louder than that of a big tam-tam (*ngoma*), it is called *tshingoma*.

THE SUPPLY OF FIREARMS

The Arab-Swahili Traffickers in the East

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Songye region was invaded by Arab-Swahili traffickers. These traffickers, acting under Tippu Tip whose headquarters was in Kasongo on the Lualaba (a tributary of the Congo River), sent armed gangs into the Songye region to look for slaves and ivory. According to Nestor Kapenga,⁸ Lumpungu was not the only one

⁶ Interview with F. Yamukoko Kalunga, Kabinda, 22 March 2002.

⁷ This is a summary of interviews collected in Kabinda and in Shofa, between October 2009 and February 2010.

⁸ Interview with Nestor Kapenga (1937), Songye of Tshofa (Kabinda) in Lubumbashi, 28 August 2009.



Fig. 3.2 The Songye Chief Lumpungu A Kikolo (1866–1919) (Source: Archival Project Memories of Lubumbashi)

in possession of firearms. Many Songye chiefs, in order to escape from the attacks, allied themselves with the Arab-Swahili traffickers and became themselves hunters for slaves and ivory. In return they were given firearms and also gun powder (*builu* or *nfwanda* in Kisongye) in order to carry out their work. The Songye chiefs did not use guns themselves. They entrusted

the guns to warriors who in turn concentrated on hunting slaves. In order to continue their supply of ammunition, each chief gave a few slaves to the traffickers. At this time it was difficult to obtain a gun in other ways. However, of all these Songye allies, only Lumpungu, of the Kaumbu ka Ngoyi family, was able to distinguish himself from the rest and became the most powerful ally of the region.

But, how did the Kaumbu ka Ngoyi family emerge? After one version of the oral tradition, everything started with a war called *Ngoshi ya Konyi ka Mukuku* (the fight over a Cuckoo),⁹ a war which opposed two tribes: the Bena Tshofue and the Bekalebwe. It began, so the tradition claims, in a dispute about the hunting of a bird:

The mwikalebwe hunter picked up his prey and put it in his basket. The Mwina Tshofue who fired the first arrow claimed his part, but in vain. A quarrel started and was quickly transformed into a full blown battle between the Bena Tshofue and the Bekalebwe. An important Mwikalebwe called Kabengiele died. The Bekalebwe looked for revenge. A few days later, Malangu, the nephew of the deceased, and certain members of his family killed a Bena Tshofue woman *Ndalamumba* and her company whilst they were visiting a Bekalebwe village. Following this assassination, the Bena Tshofue declared war upon the Bekalebwe.

The Bena Tshofue, placed under the protection of Mpibwe Kitengie, claimed victory.

The Bekalebwe suffered heavy losses amongst their fighters. Ya Kilengiela, descendant of Mudimi-a-Kapenga and privileged witness of the defeat of the Bekalebwe, called his friend Kaumbu, from the village of Makonde. The two men met through their economic activities: Kaumbu traded locally manufactured salt for parrots which he sold to Arabs based in Isangi, there where the Lomami river joined the Congo river. Kaumbu realised the sheer scope of power held by Arabs who had guns when faced with a population that only had arrows. So Kaumbu helped his friend and was thus involved in the war against the Bena Tshofue. As the latter were as always very strong, Kaumbu brought along Arabs for reinforcement, the most famous of these being Juma Merikani. The Bena Tshofue, defeated, were pushed beyond the Lomami river, to the place which is today called Kipushya and that was called *Kipushya maboko*, which means swinging one's arms in a gesture which means freedom.

After Songye custom in general and that of the Bekalebwe in particular, the guest ally was always rewarded after a war as a means of recognition. The Bekalebwe offered to Kaumbu women, slaves, goats, sheep, pearls, etc. But Kaumbu who, since a long time already, harboured the ambition to one day become Ya Kitenge Kwibwe, declined the offer and declared that he would rather prefer to be offered a part of Bekalebwe territory. And so, in

⁹ Probably the Jacobin cuckoo, *Clamator jacobinus*.

order to prevent other unnecessary violence his request was granted. Kaumbu settled in the Ehata as the Ya Kitenge-Kwibwe (Chief). The Bekalebwe gave him this title in exchange for peace. But he did not live for very long, and he died of a dysentery epidemic. He was succeeded by his son, Lumpungu-Kaumbu.¹⁰

This narration shows that at first, Lumpungu's family's power was not established as a birthright. Helped by the Arabs, Kaumbu ka Ngoyi took advantage of the weakness of the Bekalebwe who asked for his assistance in order to impose themselves. In exchange Kaumbu asked for a chief title as a concession. He thus acceded, albeit with the help of Arab-Swahili traffickers, to the Bekalebwe royal family, and this against their will. When he died after an illness, he was replaced by his son.

Lumpungu succeeded his father and became Tippu Tip's vassal. Nestor Kapenga tells us:

The great leader Lumpungu (A kikolo¹¹) was very insightful. When the Arabs came in search of goods or wealth, they needed someone who could facilitate their task. As this particular Songye leader was not afraid, he succeeded in establishing a solid trade relationship with the Arabs. The latter, finding that he had courage, began supplying him with weapons and from this moment onwards they established relations of vassalage. The same thing happens to someone who arrives in a foreign village for the very first time, he will seek to ally himself with or to have a good quality relationship with the village clairvoyant, the one who knows how to express himself, who has a solid knowledge of how things work. It is in this way that Lumpungu was appreciated by the Arabs. The very first guns that chief Lumpungu had in his possession came from his Arab masters and were called *Mbouledima*. These were short rifles that had found their way to where we were.¹²

These Arab guns, *Mbouledima* were weapons with 'three rings'. Their echo was heard from afar, several miles away. These guns took a measure and a half of gunpowder (*kitchoko ki mune na kipindji kia nfwanda*). After inserting this powder with the help of an iron rod, first a bunch of raffia was inserted into the barrel, to prevent the powder from spilling, and then the balls, *masashi*. When a shot was fired, the large quantity of gunpowder meant that even during a hunt, the game could not escape.

¹⁰ Interview with Kamanya Ya Ngoba (1928), former employee of the Ngoyi Tshofue High Court (1925), former agent of the Kankieza Mukomba public administration (1927), former fighter, in Kabinda, 22 March 2002.

¹¹ Kikolo means the chain by which animals or slaves are tied. Here, we can say that Lumpungu had chains to tie slaves with. He chained people. The expression *Lumpungu a kikolo* can also be interpreted as Lumpungu the slave driver, the one who chains people.

¹² Interview with Nestor Kapenga (1937), Songye of Tshofa (Kabinda), Lubumbashi, 28 August 2009.

The *Mbouledima* gun was very powerful and easily killed big game, including elephants, buffaloes, etc. It was the Arabs that brought the name of *Mbouledima*.

All things considered, Lumpungu was obliged to bring to his master Tippu Tip a heavy tribute in ivory, slaves and *madiba* (raffia fibre cloth). The area occupied by Lumpungu was part of the Arabised zone of influence. The desire to amass even greater wealth, that is to say more slaves and more ivory, inspired Lumpungu and Mpania Mutombo, slave to his father, to conquer more land in the direction of the Ben'Eki territory in 1886.¹³ The first contingents of slaves were made up of people of difficult character, amoral and rebellious children considered as a potential public danger, who therefore their parents had decided to sell. (Certain parents currently prefer to get rid of their difficult children by sending them to the army.) These children had mostly come from the Luba Kasai families. The Songye refused to send local children into slavery. Amongst the slaves they sold, were also prisoners of war. The Arab-Swahili traffickers also brought some slaves themselves.¹⁴

The Ovimbundu and the Tshokwe in the West

The second source of supply of firearms was towards the west. Here, Lumpungu had come into contact with the Ovimbundu and the Tshokwe. The Ovimbundu were ominously described:

The Ovimbundu made up the most notorious caravans and sold guns and powder to the Songye chiefs such as Lumpungu, Pania Mutombo and Zappo Zap in exchange for slaves. The collapsing of prices intensified the slave trade. And in May 1887, Saturnino saw a piece of ivory of 92 pounds paid for with 54 Songye slaves.¹⁵

Many Songye recognised the provenance of firearms from the west, specifically through the Tshokwe, but oral testimonies further allude to a war that Lumpungu and Ngongo Leteta waged against a certain Tshokwe chief called Kelendende. The Songye apparently chased him right back into his original territory. Martin Kitenge tells us:

It was these very guns (from the Arabs) that enabled the chiefs Lumpungu and Ngongo Leteta to defeat Kelendende, the big Tshokwe chief. These two

¹³ R. Timmermans, *Art. Op. Cit.*, J. Vansina, *Kingdoms of the savannah*, (Madison: 1966), 239.

¹⁴ Interview with Jean Kabwika, Lubumbashi, 2009.

¹⁵ 'Le Potentiel' journal.

warriors laid siege to the Tshokwe right up to Angola. Some Songye stayed on and are responsible for what is today the enclave of Kabinda.¹⁶

We are dealing here with popular memory. Anyhow, what is interesting and important is that popular memory tells us that the Tshokwe came into contact with the chief Lumpungu in the context of the long-distance trade, based on slaves and ivory which were exchanged for firearms.

Having become powerful through the acquisition of firearms, the Tshokwe became masters of present southwest Katanga, dominating their Lunda neighbours for about ten years. They began their advance northward, towards the kingdom of chief Kalamba, of the Lulua, whom the importing of guns was making more and more powerful. With the arrival of the Belgians in this region towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Tshokwe established contact with Lumpungu around 1890, and also with the Luba Kasai of the region. It is at this moment that the Tshokwe joined Ngongo Leteta in the Kasai and exchanged rifles for slaves and ivory.¹⁷



Fig. 3.3 Rifle used by the Tshokwe in the Luso-African area (Property of the National Museum of Lubumbashi).

¹⁶ Interview with Martin Kitenge, Lubumbashi, November 2009.

¹⁷ J. Vansina, *Les anciens royaumes de la savane*, (2nd edn., Kinshasa, 1976), 168–71.

COLONIAL ERA

The Start of Colonial Occupation

At the beginning of colonial occupation, the colonisers were neither numerous enough nor well armed enough to control the Congolese people or to suppress their revolts and their attacks. At the end of 1891, the *force publique* had at its disposal only 60 officers, 60 non-commissioned officers and around 3,500 black soldiers divided amongst the seven districts of the Congo Free State (*État indépendant du Congo*, E.I.C.) at this time.¹⁸ Therefore the Free State had to resort to the services of African chiefs who lent them their warriors in order to conquer and systematically occupy other Congo territory. Thus in Katanga, after the assassination of Msiri (1891), his son Mukanda Bantu, who became an ally of the Belgians, used his warriors in order to control other hostile tribal chiefs and thus extend Belgian influence in Katanga. These warriors fought alongside soldiers commanded by the colonisers. In these conditions, the Belgians had become another source of firearms supply for those Congolese warriors recruited as militia leaders.¹⁹ As for the Busongye, Lumpungu's submission to the E.I.C. allowed the *Force Publique* to benefit from both his warriors and from around a thousand piston guns.²⁰ This was not only a matter of the African chiefs supporting their newfound allies. The militia leaders also had remarkable autonomy. Thus, when chief Katombe of the Luba-Kasai was attacked by the rebels of Luluabourg, Katombe called his friend Lumpungu who offered him his help and with his warriors proceeded to defeat the rebels.²¹

After joining the E.I.C., Lumpungu assisted the *Force Publique* in their campaign against the Arabs. Indeed, on 22 and 23 November 1892, he participated with his warriors in the battle of Tshinge against the Arab chief Sefu who wanted revenge against Ngongo Leteta, who was considered as having betrayed the Arab cause by joining the E.I.C. In December of the

¹⁸ État Major de la Force Publique, *La Force Publique de sa naissance à 1914. Participation des militaires à l'histoire des premières années du Congo*, Gembloux (ed.) Duculot, (1952), 208.

¹⁹ État Major de la Force Publique, *La Force Publique de sa naissance à 1914. Participation des militaires à l'histoire des premières années du Congo*, Gembloux (ed.) Duculot, (1952), 210.

²⁰ État Major de la Force Publique, *La Force Publique de sa naissance à 1914. Participation des militaires à l'histoire des premières années du Congo*, Gembloux (ed.) Duculot, (1952), 217.

²¹ État Major de la Force Publique, *La Force Publique de sa naissance à 1914. Participation des militaires à l'histoire des premières années du Congo*, Gembloux (ed.) Duculot, (1952), 363.

same year, Lumpungu once again took part in the battle of Lusunsu against his former Arab masters.²² Three years later, on 4 July 1895, the 'Batelela' revolt erupted in Katanga. The rebels, en route to Ngandu, passed by and plundered Kabinda. Lumpungu did all he could to spare his kingdom. Thus he fought alongside station chief Bollen, who was killed.²³ Moreover, Lumpungu reinforced the 150 soldiers under Brasseur by a hundred of his warriors in a military campaign organised by the E.I.C. against Chiwala, an Arabised sultan established on the Luapula left bank.²⁴

The Songye chief therefore appeared in the colonisers' eyes as an essential force in the territory's occupation and administration. He was a faithful ally. To strengthen their domination through their ally, the colonialists organised police operations against those who showed themselves hesitant towards Lumpungu.²⁵ Apparently, the colonisers were in favour of the new type of power installed since the mid nineteenth century. Thus, each side (Lumpungu and the Belgians) used the other in order to meet their needs. The Belgians wanted to keep the status quo, because otherwise it would be too difficult to effectively control the population.

The Belgians' behaviour changed gradually as the colony of Congo was effectively occupied and as the state militia became so numerous that it was able to effectively maintain law and order and successfully defend the territory of Belgian Congo. It is in this context that the colonial authorities began to undermine Lumpungu's authority. On the political front, Lumpungu's overlordship was broken up into several sub-chiefdoms whose leaders took orders directly from the colonisers. Lumpungu became more and more politically isolated. In the military, militias of African leaders had been abolished. They were either demobilised or integrated into the *Force Publique*. Under the pretext of freeing blacks and fighting against slavery, the Congo Free State intended to wipe out the slave trade by first eliminating firearms trafficking. Thus we can understand why, in the late 1910s, the colonisers no longer tolerated the militias of African chiefs and were no longer their source of firearms.

Local Blacksmiths

Local blacksmiths were another source of firearms. Long before the arrival of the Arab-Swahilis in the Busongye, in Milembwe, the presence of iron

²² S.L. Hinde, op.cit., 128; F. Flamment, *La force publique de sa naissance à 1914*, (Brussels, 1952), 225.

²³ 'The Luluabourg troubles' in: *La Belgique Coloniale*, 1895–1896, 5.

²⁴ F. Flamment, op. cit., 180.

²⁵ A.S.R.K., *Political report of the Lomami district*, 1st trimester 1918, 4.

(called *Kabanda*), which was discovered and extracted from the ground and then treated in forges, the blacksmiths, *sendwe* started making axes, machetes, arrows, spears, knives etc. The presence of iron in this region and the manufacture of knives made the indigenous population formidable warriors. Even today, the Bena Milembwe are called 'the Germans' by the other Songye tribes because of their strength. With the advent of Arab-Swahili traffickers, the Milembwe blacksmiths began manufacturing pipes and other gun parts and imitating the gun model. Over time, they were imitated by other Busongye blacksmiths. 'In good memory', Nestor Kapenga tells us:

I remember someone like Mwana Nsangwa coming from Milembwe, who at this time lived in Kabinda, and other blacksmiths who manufactured guns in our presence. These guns were an imitation of the guns received by Arabs. By having used them for so long, the blacksmiths mastered the guns to the point of being able to make them. Over time, the other blacksmiths mastered the 12 gauge model of Belgian manufacture. These blacksmiths started taking apart these guns and found that there were actually not that many parts and that they were rather easy to manufacture. The young blacksmiths only needed a galvanised 0.5 growth pipe, conveniently used in the water supply of the Regideso. The other parts were surprisingly easy to make.²⁶

It must be noted that locally manufactured guns were very few and were used for hunting and personal defence purposes.

Legislation on Carrying Guns in the Busongye

It is difficult to talk about the legislation on carrying guns in the Busongye region. In fact, the legislation concerned the whole country, but enforcement varied from one region to another, given the degree of occupation of the country. Once the effective occupation of territory was completed, the colonisers tended to turn against their former allies in order to weaken them and to remain the sole masters. The first strategy usually used was the demilitarisation of warriors or their integration into the regular army. This demobilisation was accompanied most often by a prohibition to carry firearms. In the context of combating slavery, that is to say the slave trade, the colonial administration, as we have noted, devised strategies which were both coercive and persuasive in order to stop the slave trade by the elimination of firearms trafficking. Legislation had restricted the carrying of firearms amongst the civilian population, but did not end their

²⁶ Nestor Kapenga, cf note 12 *supra*.

circulation in the Congolese society, given the different roles that the gun played.

Already on 10 March 1892, the colonial government enacted a decree on the use of firearms in the Congo Free State.²⁷ Many other decrees were put into place, including that of 30 April 1887 and 27 April 1889²⁸ in the context of supervising the population, both white as well as black, in the use of firearms. By his order dated 26 March 1900, the vice-governor general E. Wangermée granted to officers in the finance department, in their capacity as police officers, the authority to sanction and to enforce the law on transport, traffic, and the possession of firearms and ammunitions.²⁹

Many settlers received authorisation to carry firearms in order to defend their trading establishments, ships and trading capital. However, there were a huge number of firearms which were not registered by the colonial administration. In addition to this, there were many firearms permits that were out of date and this was never reported to the competent authorities.³⁰ As a result, the Congolese authorities considered that firearms constituted a problem of insecurity to people and their property. Also, in the same spirit, the colonial administration forbade firearms owners to sell or donate their weapons without authorisation to blacks, including their servants. The transfer of a firearm from one person to another would require special permission from the Governor-General of Belgian Congo.³¹ Up to this time we are dealing with mainly hunting rifles. But, given the need of the population for game meat, the colonial administration was brought to supply teams of Congolese hunters with shotguns which were specifically required to provide game meat. These black hunters had to live at the colonial station or a camp. The hunting over, they had to return the gun and the ammunition and justify their use.³²

In 1910, the introduction and trade of firearms, ammunition and powder in the Belgian Congo was governed by inconsequent rules. In fact, the introduction and trade of firearms were banned in certain areas and allowed in others. The Songye region is situated in the zone where the introduction and trade in firearms (flintlock and piston rifles) were allowed. However, this held only for expatriates such as traders, agents and servants of the colonial state for their personal defence or hunting.

²⁷ Official Congo Bulletin, (1892), 14.

²⁸ Official Congo Bulletin, (1887), 40; (1888/9), 87.

²⁹ Belgian Congo, *Recueil Mensuel 1900*, 37.

³⁰ Belgian Congo, *Recueil Mensuel 1900*, 67.

³¹ Belgian Congo, *Recueil Mensuel 1903*, *Circulaire du 27 juillet 1903*, 110.

³² Belgian Congo, *Recueil Mensuel 1909*, *Circulaire du 19 juillet 1909*, 183.

No reference was made to blacks.³³ It must be said that in the early 1910s, the issuing of a permit to carry a weapon was still subject to the approval of the Governor-General or, from 1912, the district commissioners and local heads. The goal was always twofold: the defence of officers and servants of the colonial state or the traders and hunters during the authorised period. The indigenous people were excluded totally and could not afford to ask permission.³⁴ First, they would not be granted permission anyway; secondly, the protocol of obtaining it was unknown to them. Moreover, did giving the indigenous people the opportunity to acquire guns and ammunition also mean giving them the chance to rebel against colonial authority or to start a war? In addition, who was there to defend themselves against since the administration guaranteed them their security? In short, indigenous people were seen as people with bad character whom the issuing of a firearm would make into a danger for the public at large. For hunting weapons (rifles and pellet guns), the issuing of a firearms permit was conditioned, at least for the whites, on the possession of a hunting permit. Even then, the district commissioner needed convincing about the real intentions of the gun owner. The permit cost at least two hundred francs, an astronomical amount for a Congolese.³⁵ Moreover the gun as well as the hunting permit had an expiration date and had to be renewed each time.

Urban centres at this time resembled the Wild West as the whites always carried their guns and did not hesitate to shoot at the slightest problem. The Governor-General thus said:

A lot of staff members and employees, have the fatal habit of unnecessarily wearing weapons or leaving them lying around, when they should be kept locked up or hidden. These weapons thus become toys that are manipulated with no caution and no concern for danger; at the slightest provocation or excitement they are taken in the hand, so under these conditions there are always accidents; their consequences are often serious and sometimes irreparable.³⁶

³³ Belgian Congo, *Recueil Mensuel* 1910, 172–4.

³⁴ Following the *Acte Général* of the Brussels Conference of July 1890 and related royal decrees, the only firearms that private traders could legally import into the Congo Free State and sell to black Africans were *fusils à silex non rayés* (flintlock muskets). In 1912 even for flintlock muzzleloaders gun licences were introduced (see *Bulletin Officiel du Congo Belge*, 15 January 1912). After 1912, officially, every weapon in African hands had to be licensed.

³⁵ Belgian Congo, *Recueil Mensuel* 1912, 199.

³⁶ Belgian Congo, *Recueil Mensuel* 1912, 301.

Moreover, it was necessary to regulate the circulation of firearms, especially amongst people who were not white. In fact, the decree signed 9 January 1913 in Boma, states that the spread of sophisticated firearms to blacks should be strongly prohibited.

By that I mean, he adds, not only natives but also Arabs, Balouchis, Indians, Zanzibaris, etc. As a result these people could hold only non-striped flint guns, unless they had a special permit. So if some of these people had enough guarantees, appropriate officials may authorise a weapon to be carried. It is important to observe closely the decree of November 22nd 1912, which determines the limits within which gunpowder can be consented to the locals.³⁷

In 1918, the deputy Governor-General, L. Bureau, reminded the civil servants of the official ban on giving as gifts or selling guns to blacks.³⁸ If the occasion arose when it became necessary to provide an African with a gun, the greatest caution was applied.

To summarise, the carrying of firearms has a history. It should be noted however that over time, according to our informants, the Belgian colonisers allowed the sale of firearms in certain circles and in appropriate stores. Their rules, it would seem, were not enforced 'Many Songye', Nestor Kapenga tells us:

fuelled their guns at Yenga Yenga's in Mpanya Mutombo. Every adult Songye, aged above 40 and eager to have a gun, had to go and take his permission to purchase a gun with the state services. It is only with this document in hand that mister Anton Lard consented to sell a gun to a black man. Even gunpowder was also sold in stores. It was there that everyone went to when they needed a recharge of gunpowder. At this particular moment in time, guns and rifles were almost everywhere. My own, to give an example, I paid for in 1958. Those guns brought by the Belgians were called *Katulushi*. This second type was found in the shops owned by Anton Lard (called Yenga Yenga) until 1962. The name given to certain guns *Pupu* is a Swahili word that means a rifle for which powder needs to be used. These *pupu* are not popular anymore and are now replaced by 12 gauge guns because of the scarcity of powder on the market. For sizes 12, we easily find 00 bullets in shops even today at it is these bullets that are used for hunting. Other weapons of war such as mausers did not exist with the Songye until this day because of the difficulty of finding appropriate bullets.³⁹

³⁷ Belgian Congo, *Recueil Mensuel* 1913, 7.

³⁸ Belgian Congo, *Recueil Mensuel* 1918, 185.

³⁸ Belgian Congo, *Recueil Mensuel* 1912, 301.

³⁹ Interview with Nestor Kapenga, cf. notes 12, *supra*.

*The Impact of Firearms*⁴⁰

There is no doubt that the advent of firearms was a turning point in the political history of Central Africa. As we have noted, certain states disappeared in favour of others and small groups saw their territory grow and invade that of others because their warriors now had firearms. Lumpungu embarked towards the Ben'Eki territory, chief Mwana Kankieza having called him. Lumpungu made a new alliance with the chief of the Ben'Eki and with the Belande in south-west Busongye.⁴¹ It is thus with the Belande and the Ben'Eki that Lumpungu resumed his incursions and enlarged his kingdom, of which he made Kabinda the capital. It is from Kabinda and with the help of other chiefs who were faithful to his cause that Lumpungu started making incursions to conquer neighbouring tribes, which also had to make a tribute payment to him. This was the beginning of the conquests that gave birth to his state and that allowed it to spread in all directions. So he was able to influence even the Lulua in the north of Katanga.⁴²

With the guns obtained from his various allies (1869–1892) Lumpungu managed to carve out a vast territory and restructure its political aspects. Songye political structures changed due to the implantation of a new type of power. Lumpungu, after taking control over Songye groups, managed, with Arab-Swahili help, to form a society that had a centralised political system. Setting himself up as the grand chief of Songye, Lumpungu eliminated all rebellious traditional chiefs and opposed any investiture of new chiefs. He undertook to ennoble all those committed to his cause. He created a supreme council made up of the representatives of the subjected leaders.

The social and political structure established by the new type of power had a pyramidal shape with Lumpungu on top, followed by the heads of the subjected groups, heads of villages after that and ordinary subjects at the base. Each leader, at his level, was surrounded by a council. What resulted was the coexistence of new power introduced by Lumpungu and traditional power, given that most traditional leaders were kept at the head of their respective groups.

With the coming of colonisation, Lumpungu's kingdom practically covered the current areas of Kabinda and Lubao. The Belgians, in order

⁴⁰ This section is based on a qualitative field survey among people from the two Kasai provinces (West Kasai and East Kasai) living in Lubumbashi, from Katanga and East Kasaians in the urban centre of Kabinda.

⁴¹ H. Von Wissmann, *Op. Cit.*, 200.

⁴² S.L. Hinde, *The Fall of the Congo Arabs*, (London, 1897), 93.

to make Lumpungu assist in the effective occupation of the territory, pretended to consolidate his power and even gave his kingdom the title of the Lumpungu Chiefdom. Later on they began to undermine his power, starting by splitting his chiefdom into sub-chiefdoms, the leaders of which no longer answered to him, but to the colonisers. In the end the sub-chiefdoms became independent chiefdoms. Lumpungu's authority, by the time he died in 1919, was limited to the confines of the capital, Kabinda.

On the economic level, Lumpungu created a national currency, the *Mitunda*. He made the domestic slave a merchandise just like ivory or the *madiba* (pieces of raffia cloth), and claimed a tribute payment from all his subjects. Just like other great leaders he monopolised the trade in slaves and ivory and integrated the Songye society into the Arab-Swahili trade. On the other hand the city of Kabinda, the Busongye capital city, maintained other trade relations with the Katanga kingdoms from which he obtained copperware, known in the Kisongye language as *miyinga*. Lumpungu traded slaves, ivory, raffia cloth, etc. against guns, gunpowder (*nfuanda*) and other manufactured items such as clothes, shoes, hats, blankets, etc. Kabinda, because of its dual political and economic role became a major centre with a population, in 1891 and 1906 estimated at 15,000 and 20,000 inhabitants respectively.⁴³

Firearms were not only used for military purposes, wars and conquest of territory. Gun owners also used them to get game meat. Leonard Bukasa tells us:

Concerning the dowry, if the recipient of the gun, that is to say the parent of the woman (spouse) is a hunter, this gun will help him obtain meat regularly. If he doesn't know how to handle the gun, a connoisseur will show him. Sometimes the parent can lend his gun to hunters who bring him meat after a hunt. The gun was also lent for mourning purposes to those who did not possess one.

Hunting could be individual or collective:

Any villager who went to the field always had a bladed weapon (knife, machete, axe, arrow, etc.). A man does not walk like a woman. He must know how to defend himself when attacked, and so that he can kill a snake or lizard or small animal and bring some meat home. It is the same for women. For those who have guns, it sometimes happens shots are heard in the forest or the savannah. In the evening, we hear they are selling meat. He was alone in the bush and had the chance to kill game he stumbled upon. During the

⁴³ A. Delcommune, Op. Cit., 92; L. Frobenius, 'Explorations du Kasai', *Movement géographique*, (1906), Col. 392.

dry season hunting is done in groups. This takes place in the savannah. Hunters arrive with their dogs and surround a space they think might have game. They light a fire and place themselves in the direction of the wind. In this way the fire is fanned by the wind and moves towards the hunters, animals fleeing from the smoke. So the hunters shoot the animals escaping the fire. Some die instantly, but a lot are merely wounded and it is the dogs that finish the slaughter. There are discussions to determine who killed, or most importantly who first shot the animal. The village chief settles these quarrels. Those without guns use spears.

Group hunts also take place during the rainy season when we can detect traces of game such as the wild boar. The boar is still tracked by many hunters. A group of people make a lot of noise and the frightened animals head in the opposite direction, into the arms of the hunters ahead. I tell you all this to show you how those who had guns were always envied. It is why a lot of people demand a gun amongst dowry objects.⁴⁴

Unfortunately, disorderly hunting has resulted in the scarcity of wild animals in the Songye region, especially in the savannah. The colonial government therefore created numerous decrees to regulate hunting in the whole colony in general, and the Busongye in particular.

In Songye culture, the gun is used in various situations: in bereavement (death), or a new birth; whilst hunting or when one wants to defeat an enemy. In certain Congolese communities the gun is one of the objects constituting the dowry. Several factors justify this. Firstly, guns are very important in societies where hunting is a major economic activity. You are either a hunter yourself or you lend your gun to someone who then gives you a piece of meat. With the Bazela, the gun is an object that the in-laws claim as compensation after the wife dies because of a husband's bad treatment, for example. As the gun is a scarce and therefore expensive commodity, it is an important element of compensation. The gun is a means of defence against the personal or the group enemy (family, tribal or ethnic). Whoever has a gun is feared in the village. 'The gun is used to scare people. As soon as anyone pulls out a gun, even if they do not know how to use it, everyone flees', Kapenga Funkwa tells us.

A village that had a large number of gun-owning hunters also frightened its surroundings. It was hardly ever attacked by another village. With the Ruund, for example, no dowry was complete without a gun. The Ruund were long dominated by the Tshokwe, and so having a firearm protected them against Tshokwe attacks.

⁴⁴ Interview with Jean Ngoie Lukumbi (aged 45), lecturer at Kabinda University, Tshofa, January 2010.

During the funerals of great leaders, shots are fired in the air. In certain tribes such as the Kete, shots are fired at funerals of the rich or the wisest of the group or the region. Over time, this practice has been used even at the funerals of common people. When, for example, the son-in-law fires into the air when his father or mother-in-law dies, it greatly elevates the social standing of the deceased. At the same time, he is upgraded with his in-laws by this gesture because he is seen to have shown genuine grief. Gunpowder is scarce in rural areas and therefore expensive, therefore to fire shots in the air is considered both a luxury and a prestige. With time, shots were fired at funerals not only to grieve the father or mother-in-law, but the aunts and uncles of the spouse as well. When a great leader died, his sons, grandsons, close friends and notables joined in this practice in order to spend on the person who was dear to them.

No dowry (bridewealth) was complete without a gun. Bukasa, talking about the Luba Kasai culture, declares:

Before the dowry ceremony, the father of the bride inquires with his family about the requested dowry objects on the part of the girl's fiancé. Amongst the objects frequently asked for are goats (*Mbuji*) for the two parents, clothes (*Bilamba*) for the mother and father, the dowry (*Biuma*) in cash and of course a gun (*Tshingoma*). At this time the gun was a rare item and one had to spend much for it. The father-in-law used it for mourning, hunting in the bush, and even in conflicts for self-defence. If the father who asked for a gun did not know how to use it, he was obliged to learn from someone who was already familiar with hunting. Currently, the gun is replaced by the sewing machine, bicycle and other valued goods.

Over time, because of modernisation and the influence of other cultures, the gun asked for in dowry became less and less important, especially in urban areas, and was crowded out by other useful goods such as a radio or a bicycle. Who needs a gun in the city? Instead, the bride's father asked for a sewing machine with which he could make clothes, a bicycle for moving around and transporting goods or a radio to listen to the news and uplift the home atmosphere.

In the same vein, and speaking of the Songye, Kapenga Funkwa adds:

At the time, the gun had a huge importance that remains to this day. Nowadays, the gun is substituted for the bicycle, because in time, if you own a gun, this gun will get you meat. It is to this fact that the importance of the gun is accorded by the Songye. The gun is like merchandise that generates money. In areas where there are large animals present, the gun obtained with a dowry enables you to kill an elephant, a buffalo, etc., and this is simply priceless.

The gun was also used a communication tool just like the *tshondo* (drum), the whistle (*kapudi* for the Songye, *kashiba* or *lushiba* for the Luba Lubilanji), etc. When someone dies, their in-laws are required to give either gunpowder or the cash equivalent. This powder is used in the crackle of weapons to break the news of bereavement to the surrounding villages. For those who already knew that this person from that village was suffering, the shots announce his death. Here, just like the drum, the gun is a means of communication.

Opinions differ on this point. Some informants report that shots fired at the death of a person cannot be seen as means of communication in the sense that they have often been preceded by the drum (*tshondo*) to announce the news. In this case, the shots confirm the relatively high social status of the deceased. The shots fired are then a clear sign that the deceased has a family of his own, that he was 'well mourned', that he was a part of a dignified family and was not mourned like 'a chicken' that no one regrets the death of, since no one cries after it. This is why shots are not fired only at the moment the deceased passes away, but also at night, at sunrise, at sunset and at the funeral, to show that the deceased was well mourned.

Jean Kabwika illustrates the role of communication played by the gun in his region:

In the case of mourning, there is what we call the *ku bula* (the advertisement). When a woman married far from her village dies, her in-laws or her husband send a messenger to announce the sad news to her family. This messenger should be very clever because sometimes messengers are beaten by the dead wife's family. Among the signs brought by the messenger are official mourning clothes, another sign according to custom or gunshots fired by the messenger when entering the deceased's village, after which he runs for his life. These are various signals that announce news. When there is good news such as the investiture of a chief or a birth, the messenger is anointed with kaolin and brings white hens, etc. In case of aggression, the messenger is dressed in war gear. In short, there are external signs for each event.⁴⁵

Lumpungu Kasongo Ntambue notes that the shots, followed by the quivering noise of women, mark the start of mourning, after the exposing of the deceased's body. If the quivering noise of women can be interpreted as a wish of a safe trip addressed to the deceased, the gunshots, on the other hand, not only announced mourning, but also chased the spirit of the

⁴⁵ Interview with Jean Kabwika (aged 63), shopkeeper, Lubumbashi, 15 January 2010.

deceased (the Songye did not wish to see return the spirits of those infertile, witches, lepers, the hanged, etc.) and chased away death. These signs, i.e. the shots and the quivering noises of women, inaugurated the period of mourning.⁴⁶ Gunshots were forbidden in the case of a man struck dead by lightning. Public opinion considered lightning as the gun of witches.⁴⁷

Kalonda Ntambwe points out that the shots fired during mourning were not free of interest:

Say that, for example, your wife loses her father or her mother, and you are accompanied by your friends and brothers who take along their guns and powder to mourn your wife's parent. Having arrived, you surprise the crowd by a few gunshots. This can go up to ten shots. Those inside the house will want to know who is firing. When they are told that it is the husband of this or that woman having come to mourn his in-laws, all will exclaim: "Behold a man, a real man! He has come to mourn his wife's parent." As soon as the shots are over, the wife's family should offer a goat to their son-in-law. A meal will be prepared that the son-in-law will share with all who came with him to mourn. If, after these shots, the in-laws make no gesture, the wife concerned will be humiliated by her husband each time she makes a small awkwardness at home. She will always be reminded of the fact that her family did not 'pay' the shots fired when one of her parents died. This practice is observed in the whole Busongye region.

When, in the surrounding villages, people ask why these many shots were fired, they will be told who had died. So, in turn, the messengers of these villages will use the drum, called *Ngoma* or *Lunkumbi* (a kind of *lokolé*) to inform other far away villages of the death. The *lukumbi* is like a telegram. When a woman dies, we send the following message: "*Mwana mukashi kibamba na nkole basamba nsala batekie takuisamba shi na mpusha nsala, teka.*" This literally means: "when a woman is hungry she does not say she is hungry but lights her fire and makes her meal." When a man dies, the messenger uses the following code: "*Kalume kakwatshile milumbu, milumbu ibidi kabende ku mutamba mutamba wa finga finga*", which means "the one who died is a man, he is called a man, he left for the forest of finga finga", meaning he left for the hereafter, in the bowels of the earth. When a message like this is sent, the name of the deceased is also given.⁴⁸

The slave trade involved men and women who were strong, vigorous, younger, at the age of procreation, useful in the process of development of Africa in general and the Busongye in particular. The slave trade, causing the mobility of peoples, also exposed the concerned areas to diseases that

⁴⁶ Kasongo Ntambue Lumpungu, *Les rites funéraires chez les Songye. Cas de Ben'Eki*. End of study thesis, Institut Supérieur Pédagogique of Kananga (West Kasai), (1990), 19.

⁴⁷ Kasongo Ntambue Lumpungu, *Les rites funéraires chez les Songye. Cas de Ben'Eki*. End of study thesis, Institut Supérieur Pédagogique of Kananga (West Kasai), (1990), 22.

⁴⁸ Interview with Ntambwe Kalonda (1925), Retired, Lubumbashi, 16 May 2010.

were imported or not, diseases that were poorly treated because they were unknown to the local populations and therefore had disastrous consequences on demographic growth. The Songye population was no exception to this.

The coming of firearms plunged Central Africa into a cycle of unprecedented violence, causing a large amount of victims, but also causing some to flee their territory. The German explorer H. Von Wissmann who crossed the Songye region of Ben'Eki in 1884 found it to be prosperous and well cultivated. But when he passed three years later in 1887, he found it completely devastated after the raids of Arab-Swahili traffickers.⁴⁹ It is after the raids led by Lumpungu that a relatively important fraction of the Ben'Eki (the Sappu Sappu) left the Busongye and took refuge in the region of Luluabourg. (This is now Kananga, the capital of the West Kasai province). The slave trade undermined the socio-cultural system of the Songye, abused its population and made it less prolific.

The slave trade made the Songye population heterogeneous. The Busongye thus became a multiethnic and multicultural area with the massive influx of the Luba-Kasai slaves. After having ended relations with Arab-Swahili traffickers, and for security reasons, Lumpungu was forced to obey the Congo Free State, whose military was now much more powerful. Had he not assisted a crushing defeat of his powerful ally Ngongo Leteta? An important question to pose is the reason behind the large numbers of the Luba Lubilanji in the Busongye.

One explanation would be the policy of the transplantation of the Luba Lubilanji populations which occurred in two stages, the violent and the persuasive. It seems that during the submission of Lumpungu and his ally Mpanya Mutombo, J. Dhanis and P. Le Marinel, respectively Lusambo District Commissioner and Inspector of State, granted these two Songye chiefs sovereignty over the Luba Lubilanji territory: Lumpungu extended his influence to the south whilst Mpania was assigned the space in the north. They were recognised the right to protect and organise these territories, to impose tribute and gather recruits for the police force.⁵⁰ Thus in late 1892 or early 1893 Lumpungu went to the Baluba Lubilanji in order to procure slaves. He operated his slave hunts with the Bakwa Tshihene, Bakwa ndoba, Bakwa Kande, Bena Tshitolo, Bakwa Kalonji. According to the sources, these captured slaves no longer served the slave trade, but

⁴⁹ H. Von Wissmann, quoted by François Renault, Serge Daget, *Les traites négrières en Afrique*, (Paris, 1985), 205.

⁵⁰ A. Van Zandijck, *Les Baluba dans la tourmente*, Archdiocèse de Kananga (1989), 31–2.

were needed for repopulating Busongye, which Lumpungu and his Arab-Swahili allies had devastated. This policy of transplanting the Luba Lubilanji population would continue in more subtle ways. Indeed, in order not to attract the attention of the colonial administration, Lumpungu changed his tune. He no longer used violence to get slaves, but persuasion. He would send his delegates, that is to say his well dressed slaves, to convince the Baluba Lubilanji that the Busongye offered good living conditions: that one ate well there, dressed according to the latest fashion and that it was worth moving to live there. It seems that those Baluba Lubilanji who feared famine in their own region went there gladly.

Many Baluba Lubilanji were thus settled around Lumpungu's residence in Kabinda. This was also the case with the Kamukungu district and the villages Swedi, Kileta, Mbunda, Kitengye and Kalenga ka Mwembo. In the Bekalebwe territory, Lumpungu settled his Luba Lubilanji slaves on all the lands stolen from the Bena Tshofwe during the war they fought against the Bekalebwe. These Baluba Lubilanji formed the villages Musangie, Kiungu, Kasongo Mula, Mpiani Kasongo, Kalenga wa Mposo, Kamwama, Kampengie, Kalondakanyi. Many other Luba Lubilanji slaves were sent to Eshaadika, the village of Lumpungu's father. Many Luba-Kasai were found on Songye territory because Lumpungu rewarded his Songye warriors by offering each of them a slave if they caught three or more slaves.⁵¹ In any case, these spaces would have been the nurseries for the repopulation of the Songye region devastated by the Arab slave trade. If this hypothesis were true or justified, could one consider this gesture as a kind of compensation for the wrongs done by Lumpungu to the Songye people? Or could these slave villages be considered as reservoirs of labour serving Lumpungu and his various lieutenants?

Other sources believe that these cities hosting Luba Kasai slaves served as transit centres before the slaves were exported abroad. This trade and transport of slaves would have failed with the coming of colonisers who were fiercely opposed to the slave trade. In time, Luba Kasai slaves were eventually freed and integrated into Songye society. Many female slaves were married by their former owners (masters) and bore their names. Many male slaves were also integrated as full part members by the families that had brought them. Thus Songye families were demographically enriched by these foreign contributions.

⁵¹ Interview with Samuel Lumwanga Ngoyi, teaching in ISP Mbuji mayi, Lubumbashi, 2 February 2010.

CONCLUSION

The coming of firearms was a decisive turning point in Busongye history. Firearms caused profound changes on the political, economic, social and cultural level. The Busongye found itself integrated into a new political and economic interregional environment imposed both by traffickers (Arab-Swahili and Ovimbundu Tshokwe) and by colonisers. The advent of firearms led to the emergence of a new type of military power that imposed itself on traditional power structures. This new type of power has, in turn, inserted itself between traditional power and modern rule by foreigners.

Guns have played many roles in the daily life of the Songye population. Apart from being an instrument of personal or group defence, guns were used for hunting and as an instrument of communication during bereavement, and even as a deterrent against evil spirits and death.

The legislation dealing with the carrying of firearms established by the colonial and even the post-colonial administration restricted the movement of firearms throughout the colony of Belgian Congo and especially in the Busongye region. Anyhow, the gun is a luxury article and thus an indication of wealth and prestige within the Songye village society.

PART II

MIGRANCY, MOBILITY AND INNOVATION

*SIPILINGAS: INTRAREGIONAL AFRICAN INITIATIVES
AND THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN
KATANGA AND ZAMBIA, 1910–1945*

J. Jeffrey Hoover

Firearms had obvious importance in refashioning political and economic entities in Central Africa in recent centuries, as seen in the Yeke economic-political empire of M'siri or the Zanzibari Swahili caravan operations of Tippu Tip, without speaking of European colonisation itself. Cell phones have revolutionised the Democratic Republic of Congo in the past decade. Whether the 'word' in the end proves mightier than the 'sword', the spread of new technologies means no Kinshasa government can control the flow of information as under the Mobutu regime, and Congolese political life has changed in significant ways.

This chapter will look at the 'word' instead of the 'sword' but in quite a different context. While other chapters focus on a material history of relations between the Central African Copperbelt and its hinterland, my contribution flows from research in connection with the 125th year of Methodist missionary activity in Congo and the centennial of continuous Methodist work in the Katanga/Zambia area. It speaks less of material aspects, far less salient in the sources currently available, but sheds light on the widespread circulation of Africans, especially young males, throughout this region in the early twentieth century. Not that 'stuff' will not appear in this chapter. However, the attraction that books exercised on young migrant Africans is complex. Even though the role and value of new imported goods of any kind might not be the same in African eyes as in those of the expatriate storekeeper who sold them, we will see books at times associated with the non-materialistic options before young African migrant labourers.

THE BACKGROUND TO METHODIST MISSIONS IN THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

To understand Methodist mission personnel in Katanga during the early twentieth century, a bit of 'pre-history' is useful. United Methodist churches in the southern part of Congo, as those in Liberia, Angola,

Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and many countries outside Africa, trace their origins to the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC), the major, original Methodist body in North America. The MEC was organised in 1784 in the wake of the American Revolution as the first Methodist body outside the Church of England, receiving John Wesley's reluctant blessing due to the refusal of the Anglican Bishop of London to ordain priests for American rebels. A British Methodist denomination only appeared after Wesley had passed from the scene and could no longer prevent the breach. Even then British Methodists scrupulously avoided potentially conflictual usage of Anglican terms such as church, bishop, vicar, diocese, or pastor without rejecting their theological validity, whereas the American church consciously took the place of both the Anglican church and the Wesleyan movement inside it. Wesley proposed a hymn book, a body of church law, and an abridgment of the Anglican 'Thirty-Nine Articles' but never approved of the Americans calling their church officers bishops. The episcopal model, in any case, was of a collective superintendency rather than diocesan 'princes of the church'.

The MEC was never a purely United States church, having congregations in Canada and other parts of British North America, and one of its two original bishops (Thomas Coke) spent more time outside than inside the United States. African-American freedmen carried Methodism to Sierra Leone (although once there, as political exiles they connected rather to the British Wesleyan Conference) and to Liberia. Whether in North America or internationally, the MEC generally spread through lay members migrating into new areas, supported by itinerant preachers ('circuit riders') who themselves were often laymen rather than university-trained clergy. Other Methodist bodies which established missions in Central Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had either seceded from the MEC (as the Methodist Episcopal Church, South [MECS] in Central Congo or the Free Methodist Church in Kivu, Ruanda and Urundi) or were descended from the Wesleyan Conference of Great Britain (Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists in the Rhodesias). Many Methodists also served in 'non-denominational' agencies such as the London Missionary Society. Wesley and his followers were pragmatists, seeking what worked rather than pure theories.

The coming of the Methodist Episcopal Church to Katanga via Northern Rhodesia was a delayed effect of 'Bishop Taylor's Self-Supporting Missions'. Due to a half-century of internal problems in Liberian Methodism, largely as a result of tensions between Afro-Liberians and Americo-Liberians—the MEC was the only significant church body working among the entire

population—the 1884 General Conference elected an assigned ‘Bishop for Africa.’¹ Who would accept assignment to such an area of frightful mortality? Why not William Taylor? As a young pastor, Taylor had followed the 1849 gold rush to California and organised Methodist churches in what was then a Mexican province. When he sought to return home to Maryland and Virginia after decades in the west, he responded to local invitations on the way, stopping over as an evangelist in Australia, New Zealand, India, and South Africa. He had considerable impact on the development of Methodism in each of these countries, receiving little or no support from the United States during this extended journey. Taylor quickly found the conflicts within the Liberian church baffling and petty and turned toward a much larger vision: Africa. At a time when many missionary societies were taking up Livingstone’s challenge to address human needs in Central Africa, Taylor planned a chain of missions from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. The authority conferred on him by the General Conference came with no funding; the Methodist Foreign Missionary Society was autonomous from the church structure until becoming a general agency as the Board of Foreign Missions at the turn of the century. Although the society had sent workers to Liberia for half a century, its means were too limited to satisfy Taylor’s plans.² Taylor launched a charismatic appeal for volunteers, raising funds to transport them overseas (eventually to Latin America and India as well as Africa) where they would support themselves by their trades.

Taylor sent scores of volunteers to the Atlantic coast south of the equator from 1884, but his first major interior destination was the south-north section of the Kasai River, now the border between Angola and the Congo. He later took over a mission and one family of missionaries from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABC) near Inhambane in Mozambique as the eastern anchor to his chain. With the British Baptists already established among the Kongo-speakers around the mouth of the Congo River and the ABC and Canadian Congregationalists among the yet-independent Ovimbundu in the Benguela hinterland, Taylor directly braved the Portuguese colony and Luanda. By 1886 Robert Summers, one of his physician recruits, had settled at

¹ Methodist bishops derive from a concept of ‘general superintendency’ and are collectively responsible to the General Conference with specific duties designated for four-year terms, thus the term ‘Bishop for Africa’ rather than ‘Bishop of Africa’.

² The first official missionary who was sent outside of North America was Melville Cox. He died in 1833 after less than four months in Liberia, a pattern which was followed by most of his successors before the late nineteenth century.

Malindi (old Luluabourg) on the Kasai River well north of the current Angolan border on what Von Wissmann had called the 'Lunda Plateau'. By then the Von Wissmann expedition had shown that the Kwa and lower Kasai Rivers made a much easier west-east approach to the middle Kasai than by foot from Luanda, so Taylor began his own chain of missions, parallel to the British Baptists and the Livingstone Interior Mission, from the Congo estuary to the navigable rivers of the Congo Basin at Kimpoko upstream from Kinshasa. This was to be the main route to the 'District of Lunda'. These missions were often identified only in reference to Bishop Taylor without acknowledging that he represented the Methodist Episcopal Church.

However, the self-support model did not work as well in Africa as in India and Latin America, and not as well for many of the enthusiastic volunteers as for Taylor himself. Mortality was high; other volunteers were invalidated home or left Africa frustrated after months of hunger. Some were able to support themselves: for example, teachers attracting children of the Portuguese elite in Luanda eager to access British suppliers independently of Lisbon, medical doctors dealing with an African population accustomed to paying healers, the cosmopolitan Swiss Héli Chatelain who served as honorary consul in Luanda for several governments, translating for many, and carrying out linguistic and folklore research among the Mbundu. Most were forced to live as traders, putting them in economic competition with those they were attempting to reach with their Christian message. The number of new arrivals soon failed to replace those who died or otherwise departed. Taylor's movement was just that: no administration, little in the way of financial accounting and no fixed headquarters.

In 1896 the General Conference retired Taylor and elected a new bishop for Africa, a pastor with long experience working with former slaves in Louisiana: Joseph Crane Hartzell. Hartzell negotiated with the new Board of Foreign Missions to take the remaining Taylor missionaries under salary in return for full-time service to the church. He concentrated all the remaining missionaries from the Atlantic side in Luanda and the Angolan highlands, where mortality appeared lower; on the east side of the continent, he purchased the second-hand town of Old Mutare from Cecil Rhodes (whose Beira-Salisbury railroad had passed on the other side of Christmas Pass), intending to replace the malarial Mozambican coast as a mission field.

Helen Emily Chapman was a Taylor volunteer in the Congo Independent State, arriving in Vivi in the same group as a Danish colleague, Wilhelm

Rasmussen, who returned after medical evacuation. They became one of the first couples legally married under the colonial regime, with the Governor-General conducting the civil ceremony, but they were forced to evacuate by acute malaria. After their return and with the next round of malaria, Rasmussen and his sister (also a recruit to the Taylor mission with her Danish husband) died. Helen Emily Chapman Rasmussen and her brother-in-law returned to Denmark; after a time she returned 'permanently' to the United States with her young son. After losing the boy to diphtheria in New Jersey, Helen became an early volunteer to help Bishop Hartzell exploit the dozens of permanent buildings at Old Mutare. However, she still wondered about her original call to the Congo.

Another Old Mutare recruit was John McKendree Springer, son of a pioneering Methodist preacher and superintendent on the Dakota frontier, himself a preacher since his college days. He met Hartzell while at Northwestern University for a masters degree, where he read all the Central African explorers and felt pulled to establish a mission among the Lunda of the *mwant yav*. During their five-year terms at Old Mutare, John and Helen shared their respective Congo dreams, became husband and wife as well as colleagues, and decided to return to America in 1907 via the Lunda capital to see if such a mission would be feasible. The Board of Foreign Missions, still struggling to sustain the diverse Methodist initiatives its predecessors had initiated, was emphatically not in agreement with their trip, ordering them rather to return to New York by the most direct route. Their travel was also rescheduled to the beginning of the rainy season when such a trip would become most difficult. Ironically, a string on the globe showed that the most direct route from Old Mutare to New York passed across Central Africa and not that far from the Lunda capital.

John and Helen Springer were well received in Northern Rhodesia, with Rhodes' 'Cape-to-Cairo' railroad having just reached the Broken Hill lead-zinc mine. While waiting for the rains to end, they organised the first church there, with day and night schools. Once things dried out, they moved on to the Kansanshi copper mine near the Congo border, a base from which to consult Belgian officials in Kambove and Ruwe. They later spent time with the Plymouth Brethren medical missionaries at Kaleñ Hill in the far northwest, as troops from the 1895 Luluabourg mutiny still caused problems northwest of Ruwe, preventing the Springers from continuing to visit the *mwant yav*. Back in the United States, it took most of three years to win approval, first from Bishop Hartzell, then from the Board of Foreign Missions, to return to the Rhodesia-Katanga border.



Fig. 4.1 First Methodist Church on Avenue Moero in Élisabethville, 1914



Fig. 4.2 Second Methodist Church on Avenue Limite-Sud in Likasi, 1917

This time it was to 'reestablish the Lunda District' of the West Equatorial Africa conference 'in the eastern Angolan interior'. The Springers and their bishop in Cape Town certainly understood that the Lunda capital was by now within the borders of the Congo Independent State, but it was in their interest not to be totally clear in their geographical or colonial references with American board members with little mastery of the vast distances involved. The Springers left the United States as soon as they obtained their go-ahead, perhaps so that the committee might not have second thoughts, but this put them late in the dry season again when they reached Broken Hill. They set up camp for the rains in an abandoned British South Africa Police camp not far from the Plymouth Brethren mission at Kaleñe Hill and a kilometre or so from the Congo border.

The result of these assorted events was the arrival of two experienced missionaries on the Rhodesian-Congolese border in 1910, convinced of their call, dedicated to working in a highly connectional church (most definitely not a congregational or individualist system like the Plymouth Brethren) having a long tradition of lay Christians serving when trained clergy were not available. And, incidentally, financial resources were all but non-existent and certainly not comparable to other MEC missions, as the Springers had promised to operate five years with no financial support from the Board of Foreign Missions. Their first expatriate recruits were single individuals or young couples with promises of help from individual congregations, conference youth groups (the case of Dr. Piper in Kapanga), etc., all on the fringes of the Methodist connectional system. The MEC had turned its back on Taylor's self-financing mission experiment, but Springer could not ask for support from the Board of Foreign Missions before 1917,³ although the board would recruit for the Congo mission. As Congolese say: "Article 15: Débrouillez-vous!"⁴

THE SPRINGERS AND THE SIPILINGAS

John Springer was appointed superintendent, first as a district of the West Equatorial Africa Mission (now Angola Annual) Conference, and from 1916 as an autonomous Congo Mission Conference.⁵ Although his younger

³ J.T. Copplestone, *Twentieth-century perspectives* (New York, 1973), 112.

⁴ This is the mythical fifteenth clause of the Congolese labour contracts: 'Make do with what you have'.

⁵ The mission became a self-governing annual conference within the cooperative framework of the General Conference in 1955, well before Congolese independence.

colleagues would vote the Springers off the mission as unrealistic and incompetent (John and Helen were reassigned by Bishop Johnson to Southern Rhodesia for two years until their colleagues asked for their return), Springer generally served as the head of the mission until his retirement in 1944. He was elected in 1936 as the fourth Bishop for Africa (by then no longer including Liberia, Algeria, or Tunisia), based for four years in Old Mutare, then in Élisabethville after the merger of the MEC and the MECS in 1939 made him responsible for the large former MECS mission in Central Congo. After retirement he settled at Mulungwishi. One of his great satisfactions was baptising the first *mwant yav* to join a Christian church in 1960.

It is now commonplace to stress that missions operated on the ground largely through indigenous evangelists and catechists. Given the Springers' background and previous experience, one would expect them to be more effective than the average founder of a new mission. However, their financial realities meant that they were even more eager to develop African leadership in the place of missionary colleagues they could not realistically expect to receive in the structured world of Methodist missions. 'Indigenous' is also a misleading term for many of their African co-workers, a very cosmopolitan group.

The Springers were visited by Kayek Changand while camped at Kalulwa, opening the training school that would move into Congo as soon as the rains stopped. Enslaved as an adolescent in the Sandoa area, he had been permitted to study at an ABC mission in the Ovimbundu highlands. After abolition, he served as an agent bartering for wax, ivory, and rubber in the interior for the account of a Portuguese merchant at Bié. Longing for missionaries among the Lunda, after hearing of the Springers, he sought them out to offer his services as soon as he had settled accounts with his employer and brought his family. The Springers created a temporary base in Congo in 1911 across the Lukoshi River from the *kazemb*, a local Lunda overlord who was the successor to Kayek's father. That year's task was to formalise agreements with the Belgian colonial government. Steps begun in 1907 and 1910 from Kansanshi across the border. The Springers' trip to the *mwant yav*'s capital came in 1912, holding services and negotiating plots with the chief and colonial authorities. It was Kayek and a German-American volunteer, Herman Heinkel, who had earlier worked with the Springers at Old Mutare, who opened the Methodist mission in 1913. When the first official missionaries, Dr. Arthur and Maude Piper, arrived in 1914, they could report to the Angolan annual conference that there was a functioning local church with 75 full members and 250

catechumens. This was the work of Kayek and other freed slaves returning from Angola, for Kapanga became the first stopping point in Congo for caravans to Katanga and south-eastern Kasai.

Another key to the development of African personnel in the Methodist mission was the opening of a second front in the Copperbelt mining camps. The Springers realised that the Plymouth Brethren, who had arrived at the capital of Msiri's empire in 1886, were little interested in working with 'detribalised' Africans working for the *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* (UMHK). Springer already had experience organising the first church in Broken Hill in 1907–8, for which he had been roundly criticised by the bishop and mission board as outside his scope of work. He had visited officials in Kambove in 1907 and again in 1910, although the Belgian Congo was then in the process of transferring provincial headquarters to the new city of Élisabethville, now Lubumbashi. During his 1912 visit to the Lunda *mwant yav*, he offered the chief a choice of missionaries: doctor, pastor, or teacher. With Dr. Walter Fisher of the Plymouth Brethren at Kaleñe Hill known at Kapanga, the *mwant yav* requested the physician. The Springers could have served as teachers or pastors, but this meant both a search for a physician and that they would settle elsewhere in 1913, in the occurrence Kambove. In 1914, the year that Springer sent the delayed first full missionaries to Kapanga, he responded to a petition from a group of 24 Nyasalanders to organise a Methodist church in Élisabethville, although no missionary was available for assignment to the provincial capital before 1917. The flagship church in Katanga thus began with an African pastor, Joseph Jutu. The missionaries who later lived in Élisabethville worked in other fields (accounting, correspondence, government relations, etc.), assisted in constructing purpose-built buildings to replace the rented mud-and-wattle store in 1917 and again from 1922 to 1932, organised evangelism in other parts of the city, and worked with the English/French-language congregation of whites.⁶ Until 1917 Springer himself visited Élisabethville from Kambove for Protestant weddings and baptisms, and well into the 1920s the Methodists had an arrangement with the travelling Greek Orthodox priest for use of the Methodist church building for services during his visits, while Methodist missionaries provided urgent pastoral care to his flock during the priest's absence.

⁶ J.J. Hoover, 'To build an institutional church: La construction de la Wallace Memorial Church (1922–1932); International colloquium 'Lubumbashi, cent ans d'histoire: Littérature, cultures urbaines, débats intellectuels', Université de Lubumbashi, 9–11 September 2010; in press, P. Halen, M. Amuri & D. Dibwe dia Mwemba (eds.).

The Methodist mission largely avoided the identification with a particular ethnic group that ensnared many Protestant missions and Catholic congregations through the geographical and linguistic division of mission fields. While Kapanga and Kabongo, the eventual third pole in the mission's development, were rural centres and the capitals of major African chiefs who had reigned over extensive pre-colonial entities, at Kapanga the large numbers of freed slaves who stopped over in Kayek's village on their return home made the Kapanga African community very cosmopolitan and heterogeneous during the 1912–20 period. Caravans of over a hundred would arrive; smaller groups would set off for points further east and north after checking the news.

In the mining cities, English initially dominated as the working language among Westerners, Bemba dominated among Africans, and 'kitchen kaffir' or Fanagalo between whites and blacks on the mines. The UMHK was a creation of Tanganyika Concessions Ltd. of London, only passing under Belgian domination after the First World War. Into the 1920s some 60% of African labour in Élisabethville was from North-Eastern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi), where Protestant missions had been established since the 1870s. English-speakers predominated among non-African employees: Brits because of Tanganyika Concessions' home base, Americans because industrial copper technology had developed first in the United States in the large mines of Arizona, Montana, and Utah. Experienced mining technicians and lower-level managers were available on the Witwatersrand. Most Belgians were Flemings with little love for the French language, although Walloons were increasingly dominant as one moved up the politico-administrative hierarchy. After the pioneer phase, when any other expatriate seemed a godsend to scattered colonials, and after the stressed conditions of the First World War, Belgian policy became increasingly hostile to 'Anglo-Saxon' influence and to the English language through the 1920s. It is significant that Methodist schools taught both English and French, responding to the great demand for English in the Copperbelt African community and to a vision of opening horizons for the mission's constituency. This was a time when most Catholic and Protestant schools favoured ethnic vernaculars and often avoided teaching any Western language to Congolese.⁷ Clearly, while Springer initially favoured English as a far more useful language for a church (and church members) with an international vision, more than because of his personal linguistic

⁷ For detailed information, see J. Fabian *Language and colonial power* (Cambridge, 1986) and B. Fetter, *The creation of Elisabethville, 1919–1940* (Stanford, 1976).

shortcomings, the church adopted French as the primary international educational language and Swahili as a non-tribal African language, in following the lead of the larger community.⁸

The Springers themselves served in Kambove, Élisabethville, and Likasi/Jadotville. Since other Protestant missions in Katanga were rural (Plymouth Brethren along the Northern Rhodesian border to Bunkeya and beyond as far as Lake Mweru; Pentecostals among the Luba of North Katanga and a different British Pentecostal group among the Bembe of north-eastern Katanga), Springer became the *de facto* spokesperson for Protestant missions with the Belgian authorities. The Methodists also had the highest level of Protestant schools east or south of the Presbyterians in Kasai, attracting ambitious students from a wider area beyond their own missions.

Crawford Young introduced the term ‘colonial trilogy’ in speaking of the three powers of the Catholic Church, State, and Big Business in the Belgian Congo.⁹ In Katanga, the UMHK was clearly the top dog, and usually the Catholic church had more weight than the state. Springer’s Catholic counterpart in the Copperbelt was Jean-Félix de Hemptinne, an illegitimate son of Léopold II who shared much of his father’s physical appearance and temperament.¹⁰ Like Springer, he arrived in Katanga in 1910 as head of a new mission carved out for the Benedictines determined to block Protestantism, defeat Anglo-Saxon economic dominance, and establish monasteries. Catholic schools (but not religious programmes) were financed by the state, but Protestant schools received no subsidies until the 1950s when socialist governments agreed, on condition that

⁸ ‘The missionary occupation and history of the Katanga Copperbelt’, report prepared for J. Merle Davis visit from Geneva for the International Missionary Council, 16 March 1933. General Council on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church, Madison NJ, (GCAH) Missionary Files (MF): John M. Springer and Helen Emily Springer.

⁹ C. Young, *Politics in the Congo* (Princeton, 1965).

¹⁰ The UMHK needed educated and skilled workers, but de Hemptinne was most interested in elite literary education for European children. The Salesian order was brought in to operate schools, and later churches, for Africans, having a tradition of work with disadvantaged young people. Soon a new vicariate was carved out of Benedictine territory, up to the edge of white Élisabethville. The Salesian leader, Mgr. Sak, had memorable conflicts with de Hemptinne in the first years; Methodist archives do not speak negatively of the Salesians, and I am told that Mgr. Sak likewise referred to Springer as *le brave* (Personal communication by Rev. Verhulst during the centennial colloquium for the Archdiocese of Lubumbashi, 19–22 April 2010). Neither the Methodists nor the Salesians shared de Hemptinne’s total identification with the Belgian colonial agenda; both were committed to the development of Christian African leadership as rapidly as possible and apparently were aware of their common values despite denominational rivalry and former Catholic doctrines of Protestant heresy.

they follow the 'national' (i.e. Catholic) curriculum and send personnel through Belgian teacher-training programs at the *Institut Colonial* in Antwerp. Protestant school diplomas were thus not recognised for decades by the state or major Belgian colonial companies, which hired Catholic graduates, although smaller entrepreneurs often expressed preference for Protestants in terms of pragmatic philosophy, work ethic, and knowledge of English. One of the preeminent church historians of Congo, François Bontinck, estimated that it was only around 1940 that the number of Catholics surpassed that of Protestants despite the blatant discrimination.

It was not necessarily choosing the easy road to go to Protestant churches or schools. It is small wonder that any Methodist, even any Protestant, was known on the Copperbelt as a *Sipilinga*, for Springer was the icon of Katanga Protestantism.¹¹



Fig. 4.3 Second Methodist Church on Avenue Limite-Sud in Likasi, 1917, with the parsonage in front

¹¹ Personal communication at Makwanza Batumanisa thesis defence, Université de Lubumbashi, 1985.

WHO WERE THE SIPILINGAS?

Kayek Changand has already appeared in the text as an African associate of Springer. His contact with the *kazemb* (successor to his 'father', whether biological or sociological) on the Lukoshi River north of Springer's 1910–11 rainy season residence at Kalulwa in British territory, was determining in Springer settling there until permanent land concessions were obtained at Kapanga and Kambove. When Kayek returned to Angola at the end of his trading mission, he not only brought his own family to the new Kapanga mission but was accompanied by scores of other freedmen desiring to make the journey into the unknown in groups and with some institutional protection at a staging point to check things out. Another contingent were Ruund, clustered around the hospital at Kaleñe Hill in North-Western Rhodesia. In effect, Kayek was chief of a *cit  extra-coutumier* adjoining the mission housing hundreds of repatriates, many not of Ruund origin.¹² Dr. Arthur and Maude Piper arrived in Kapanga as the first official missionaries in late June 1914,¹³ followed by the Danish nurse Marie Jensen in 1916 and Rev. Thomas and Anna Brinton, to care for schools in 1918. Piper's first report to the annual conference to meet in Angola in mid-1915, undoubtedly written many months in advance for the sake of the mails,¹⁴ spoke of a functioning church with 60 members and 75 students regularly in school.¹⁵ In 1915 Maude Piper wrote of caravans as large as 124 persons arriving in Kayek's settlement.¹⁶ Her husband talked of 120 students enrolled less than two years after their arrival.¹⁷ Deserting porters had forced Piper to leave much of his baggage en route with a Belgian administrator at Kinda,¹⁸ not receiving it for several years, and thus Piper devoted much time initially to educational work and evangelism rather than to medical practice. It is nevertheless clear that the repatriate community is responsible for the kick-start of the Kapanga mission and for such

¹² Villages named Kayek still exist adjacent to the Methodist properties in Musumb (Kapanga) and at Mwajinga (rural Sandoa).

¹³ GCAH: MF: Piper, Arthur L. Piper (ALP) to Frank Mason North (FMN), 13 July 1914.

¹⁴ Springer's report to the 1911 annual conference in Angola was actually written from Kansanshi in mid-1910.

¹⁵ A. Katwebe M.M., 'La Mission M thodiste au Shaba: facteur d' mancipation religieuse et socioculturelle', unpublished PhD thesis (Brussels, 1986), 109. The available copy does not cite the source of the figure, apparently the minutes of the West Equatorial Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church for 1915.

¹⁶ GCAH: MF: Piper, Maude G. Piper (MGP) to FMN, 15 October 1915.

¹⁷ GCAH: MF: Piper, ALP to FMN, 1 April 1916.

¹⁸ GCAH: MF: Piper, ALP to FMN, 13 July 1914.

impressive statistics for a new mission. Kayek would later co-found the Mwajinga mission outside Sandoa with Thomas and Anna Brinton, and Kayek again became head of a Christian village near the mission, introducing cattle husbandry to the area. Piper's letters indicate that Kayek was criticised by local church members for speaking more Mbundu than Ruund, but by Congolese independence he had become the icon of Methodist work in western Katanga, a twentieth century Ruund hero.¹⁹

Kaluwashi was another returnee from Angola, who came to check before bringing his family. He was a kiLuba-speaker who had gone to Angola with a caravan, not as a slave. He had an Ovimbundu wife and had settled near an ABC mission. Delegated by the Congolese community there to verify conditions in Katanga, he worked with Springer as a mason at Kambove, then brought his family in 1914. He asked Springer to send a missionary to his area, which was agreed if a providential donor appeared. When a Chicago businessman pledged \$1,000 a year for five years, plans began in earnest. In May 1917, waiting for the mission board to send a candidate, the Springers set out on a four-month trip to north Katanga to locate Kaluwashi, by then working with Pentecostals. They found that the population of Kaluwashi's area had moved due to sleeping sickness, and they sited the new mission instead near Chief Kabongo, one of the two contenders for the Luba paramountcy when colonial occupation froze the political/military stalemate. Wesley and Ethel Barlow Mueller, the couple chosen to open the Kabongo mission and take charge of evangelisation, were delayed by anglicising their name to Miller because of British and Belgian sensibilities in what would be the last year of the First World War. Springer delegated Roger and Constance Guptill, serving with the Springers at Kambove, to work with Kaluwashi and others to establish the mission.

When the Millers arrived in 1918, they were both inexperienced and unable to work with the African leadership who had pioneered successfully with the Guptills. Wesley Miller fired even Kaluwashi himself. Miller was also unable to work with other missionaries sent to Kabongo, in part to defuse tensions. First there were Rev. Coleman and Lucinda Hartzler, who came with the mission's central training school in 1919,²⁰ and then

¹⁹ See *Ngand Yetu* (notre pays) (Élisabethville, 1963) a collective work in Uruund organised by Anna Lerbak at the end of her three decades of service in Congo.

²⁰ Moving the central training school to such a centrifugal location was not simply due to the problems with Wesley Miller at Kabongo. Profiting from Springer's absence in the United States, de Hemptinne had obtained from the Vice Governor-General an order for the Methodists not to develop Mulungwishi, purchased from an Irish Catholic

there were Dr. William and Priscilla Berry, who opened medical work. Miller fell into a depression, emerging from his house only sporadically, with his wife carrying on as best she could along with caring for a sickly child. The Millers were not invited to return when their term ended in 1922, but the damage was done. Kaluwashi had moved from the area. Moreover, church planting around Kabongo did not advance as well as the educational and medical work, and certainly not in parallel with the Ruund area in western Katanga. The educational programme began moving to a more central location at Kanene in 1922, eventually back to Mulungwishi. Medical work was handicapped by the death from malaria of Dr. Berry, then the resignation of his replacement, Dr. Morton. By 1933 when the mission was forced to make the difficult choice of closing one station for lack of funds and personnel, Kabongo had become an isolated Methodist outpost in a Luba world largely occupied by the Pentecostal Congo Evangelistic Mission (CEM). The MEC voted to sell its property in Kabongo to the CEM. Although strong Methodist leaders had been developed during the fifteen years at Kabongo (David Ilunga, Joël Bulaya, Albert Mundele, etc.), the conflicts with and failure to empower African leadership during the Miller years bore considerable responsibility for the limited success at Kabongo.

We know the names of other Angolan migrants. Ngamba was a porter in Kayek's caravan, elsewhere identified as a slave purchased by another member of the caravan,²¹ Chyoka a Mbundu-speaker leaving his home for Congo, Kalinswik with the Springers at Kambove.²² Other returnees associated with the Methodist mission include Joseph Kapend Tshombe, father of 1960s political leader Moïse Tshombe and, through his wife of royal blood, father of four *ant yav* (plural of *mwant yav*) in the past half century. Tshombe was sent back to Congo while still a slave and he got into trade (*tshombe* being the tshiLuba term for manioc) after being given to a Belgian administrator as a domestic. Paul Mawaw was Joseph Kapend Tshombe's brother, another former slave, who became a successful entrepreneur.

businessman in 1917, as their replacement for Kambove where food was scarce and expensive for students. The reason given was that it was only 20 kilometres from Nguba, where de Hemptinne planned to develop a monastery. The younger, less experienced missionaries left to deal with the government felt they had no choice but to withdraw from Mulungwishi, given the mission's policy of cooperation, and hence Hartzler and the school had to be transferred somewhere. GCAH: MF: Congo Finance Committee, Minutes of Finance Committee, 24 October 1919.

²¹ J.M. Springer, *Pioneering in the Congo*, (New York, 2nd edn., 1927), 218, 294–5.

²² Springer, *Pioneering*, 79.

A second category of Methodist leaders came out of Springer's caravan experiences in 1907 and 1910, his lengthy Broken Hill sojourn during the 1907 rains, and shorter stays in Kansanshi on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt. The Springers left Old Mutare in 1907 with Helen's cook of a year and a half. Initially calling himself 'Fifteen', Helen Springer called him Mashamo, and he would eventually be called Benjamin F. Madziro or Madzilo.²³ He served as the Springers' interpreter at Broken Hill and Kansanshi, speaking to John in English or Helen in Shona. He carried no load but baked bread at dawn or in the evening. Another recruit was a 13 year-old with injured feet named Musondo or 'Kitchen' who hung around the Broken Hill camp and was recruited to carry water.²⁴ His 'brother' Songoro (perhaps only from the same village) was discovered at the Kambove mine on the Katanga Copperbelt; he joined and separated from Springer several times, eventually settling in Élisabethville and working outside the church. Jacob Mawene was a barely literate Ndebele in his 30s, a 'linker-in' on the railroad construction to Broken Hill in 1907, having attended mission school for six months a decade before.²⁵ He quit the railway for a chance for further studies and volunteered to teach in a night school when Springer organised the Broken Hill church. In 1907 Musondo, Songoro, and Mawene would walk with the Springers from Broken Hill to Luanda, along with another young man named James Lubona, who served with the mission until retiring by the year 1944.

When the caravan arrived in Luanda, the Springers enrolled the four in a Methodist school. In 1910 they cabled for them to meet in Cape Town to serve in the new mission. Songoro was torn between the desire to follow Springer or earn money on the Katanga Copperbelt, dropping out of the 1910 caravan to work at Kambove before rejoining Springer at Lukoshi. Mawene was sent to Kapanga with the Pipers. Helen Springer's was an excellent linguist who had published a book and articles on Shona, and Mawene made the first translation of Mark in Ruund under her tutelage. He would be among those who died in the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic.

²³ Springer, *Pioneering*, 9; J.M. Springer, *The heart of Central Africa* (New York, 1927), 58–9, 74, 106; H.E. Springer, *Snap shots from sunny Africa* (New York, c. 1909), 78–9.

²⁴ Springer, *Pioneering*, 13, 48–51; Springer, *Heart*, 11–13; GCAH: MF: Springer, P. Willis, 14 August 1913; GCAH: MF: Guptill, Roger S. Guptill (RSG) to FMN, 23 November 1918.

²⁵ Springer, *Pioneering*, 15; Springer, *Heart*, 13–14, 65–6; E.C. Hartzler, *Brief history of missionary work in the Southern Congo during the first fifty years* (Élisabethville, 1960); GCAH: MF: Piper, ALP to FMN, 18 August 1915; GCAH: MF: Piper, MGP to FMN, 15 May 1915; GCAH: MF: Springer, HES to H.P. Willis, 14 August 1913; GCAH: MF: Guptill, Roger S. Guptill (RSG) to FMN, 23 November 1918.

Not all Rhodesians came directly with the Springers. The most important of the recruits in the long term was Joab Mulela. A Shona who had converted around Bulawayo, he came to Broken Hill with the railway construction and met the Springers in 1907. He showed up to work with the Springers in Kambove in April 1914 on their arrival from Lukoshi, the railhead still nine miles from town. He both studied and taught other young men at Kambove but was sent to Kabongo in 1917 with the Guptills to start that mission, marrying a Kabongo woman. Later he became a graduate with his wife of the improved central school at Kanene in 1933, he was among the first ordained Methodist clergy in Katanga and a respected elder statesman in the church until his death in the 1970s, having served in many posts.²⁶

The founding of the 'Limite-Sud (now Jerusalem) Church' was due to Nyasalanders.²⁷ Springer had visited Élisabethville in 1911 to meet officials and returned in April 1914 to baptise a Belgian doctor's child. He had taken along Simon, a Kambove student, with books from Congo Book Concern to peddle in the labour camps. In Élisabethville he received a petition from 24 Nyasaland Christians for a Methodist church, as officials and employers feared their prayer meetings in the worker camps might be union activity. When the congregation was formally chartered in November, most of the full members had produced letters of transfer from the Scots missions along Lake Malawi or around Blantyre. They counted over a hundred countrymen with Presbyterian backgrounds in Lubumbashi at the time. Springer would not be able to assign a missionary to Lubumbashi until 1917 when he sent his volunteer secretary, Ray Smyres. The church was placed under Moses Kumwenda and Joseph Jutu, the younger and more dynamic leader employed by the Élisabethville newspaper, *L'Étoile du Katanga*.²⁸ Jutu's wife Maggie is also cited as a strong teacher, one of few references to women in the community (Another is to Lusati, an Angolan slave married to two men in the Kambove mine camp, who begged Springer in 1913 to be freed from slavery and from her double marriage).²⁹ The Jutus were also among the hundreds of victims of the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic, when the new church building on

²⁶ Springer, *Pioneering*, 9; Springer, *Heart*, 88; GCAH: MF: Ethel Barlow Miller to FMN, 24 January 1919; Edward Irving Everett to Thomas S. Donahue (TSD), date unavailable; ALP to friends, 7 March 1944; Christine Marie Jensen to friends, 18 May 1944; Coleman Hartzler to friends, 31 November 1944.

²⁷ Springer, *Pioneering*, 261–3. See also Fetter, *Creation*, 38.

²⁸ Springer, *Pioneering*, 9.

²⁹ GCAH: MF: Springer, HES to Crowther, 25 August 1913.

the north side of Avenue Limite-Sud was used as a hospital for both white and black.³⁰

Another cohort of recruits came from North-Eastern Zambia where the London Missionary Society had been established since the 1870s and the Plymouth Brethren closer to Katanga since the 1890s. The first African ordained in Katanga as a Methodist deacon, Nelson Brace Campempe, was among them, as were Kauseni (from Lake Bangweulu) and Malaya (from Lake Tanganyika).³¹ Campempe was appointed head of a new station at Chief Katanga's village in 1923 with the same authority as missionaries in other stations. However, during the financial difficulties that befell the missions after 1926 and in the face of Belgian hostility to Africans from British territory after 1920, Campempe returned home and thus was not the first African fully ordained as an elder (presbyter) after the required Methodist probationary membership of the conference after ordination as a deacon. In 1928 when the railroad was completed to Port Francqui (Ilebo) to connect with river boats to the capital, making it feasible for Katanga Methodists to participate in the Congo Protestant Council, Springer wished to send Campempe as delegate, since he spoke fluent French and English. In the end, Springer attended himself. The CPC continued to talk of the lack of Congolese with sufficient English and French to participate until the day, over two decades later, when the Katanga Methodists forced the issue, obtaining reluctant approval to send a Congolese alternate with Elwood Bartlett who promptly "fell ill" after arrival in Léopoldville.

Others students and leaders were quite diverse. Two Lozi brothers showed up to study at Kambove, Mubita and Yamba, the former having had six months' education with the French Reformed in Barotseland.³² Boniface Kabeya was a nurse trained at Lusambo by the American Presbyterians.³³ There were of course Katangese from all the major ethnic groupings of the province, though that is outside the scope of the current article.

While the sources used speak most of those in church employment, the MEC goal was to create a self-supporting African church with the great majority of members in secular employment. Through the missionaries' writings we learn about Wilton Gray, originally a student from the Blantyre

³⁰ GCAH: MF: Guptill, SG to FMN, 23 November 1918.

³¹ Springer, *Pioneering*, 292–3.

³² Springer, *Pioneering*, 201, 292.

³³ GCAH: MF: Piper, ALP to friends, 20 February 1939.

mission, whom Springer found working for a European trader in Bukama in 1917, having come to Katanga in 1911.³⁴ Edward Ngomberah worked for a shopkeeper in Kambove and taught others the ‘three Rs’.³⁵ Zakeya was a commercial farmer in the Sanga area, and Springer relocated a pastor of the same ethnic background (Ngoni?) to his farm when de Hemptinne had the UMHK exclude the Methodists from the Luishia mining camp.³⁶ Joseph Kapend Tshombe and his brother Mawaw were successful businessmen. Moïse Tshombe honed his political skills as an early African voting member of the finance committee of the mission after the Second World War and as the first conference lay leader. Other politically prominent Methodists in the 1960s included Patrice Lumumba, Jason Sendwe and Salomon Tshizand.

While this chapter focuses on Africans, there are parallels to the black *Sipilingas* among the European and American labour migrants to the Copperbelt who connected with the Methodist Church in one way or another. Although separate church facilities were never built, land was purchased in Élisabethville for such a project, but the combination of anti-Anglo-Saxon pressures after the First World War, diversion of funds for urgent needs in Likasi (replacing Kambove as a centre), and construction of a new ‘institutional’ church building on Avenue Limite-Sud for both communities made the question moot.³⁷ An English worship service continued into the 1970s. A flourishing English-medium congregation in Jadotville (Likasi), made up mostly of members from British Anglican and South African Dutch Reformed traditions, shared a building with an African flock, with the morning service in African languages and English in the afternoon. Springer attracted associates among whites as well as among Africans. A British Methodist named Frank Gifford, laid off from the Broken Hill mine during smelter construction, travelled with the Springers on foot and bicycle all the way to Luanda in 1907.³⁸ The American engineer who built and managed the Élisabethville and Jadotville smelters was a Methodist named Haas; his wife directed the English Sunday School with Helen Springer, attracting children of diverse nationalities before the government assigned education of white children, including religious

³⁴ GCAH: MF: Springer, JMS to J.M. Taylor, 23 May 1917.

³⁵ GCAH: MF: Springer, HES to Crowder, 25 August 1918.

³⁶ GCAH: MF: Springer, JMS to TSD, 30 January 1932.

³⁷ A worship service in English continued on Sunday afternoons into the 1970s before it disappeared. English-language services began again in Lubumbashi in the 1980s under ecumenical auspices.

³⁸ Springer, *Heart*, 73.



Fig. 4.4 Joseph Jutu leaving the church to sell books in the city



Fig. 4.5 Interior of the second Methodist Church in 1917, Note the presence of women and children.

education during the school day, to the Benedictines. Haas also contributed to the architectural design and did the engineering for Élisabethville's 1200-seat Wallace Memorial Church, the Élisabethville congregation's third building. Mrs. Bester ran the Sunday School in Likasi.³⁹ A number of whites, including a Swiss farmer at Mulungwishi named Hausmann, a Belgian Protestant named Vassamillet, and others worked full-time with the mission for periods without having missionary status. A number of the early missionaries had themselves been labour migrants to the United States, including Herman Heinkel (German), Christine Marie Jensen, John Bræstrup and Anna Lærbak (Danish), and Paul Hamelryck (a Belgian teaching French in a North Carolina college where he met his Cuban-American wife Ada).

THE POWER OF THE BOOK

Songoro was one of the four young Africans in the 1907 caravan, schooled in a Methodist institution in Angola, and called to join the 1910 journey in Cape Town. He represents the ambivalent Springer associate, leaving and rejoining the group several times, torn by the material attractions of working in a mining camp to purchase material things, as opposed to working with Springer who provided access to more education and perhaps new experiences in the wider world. There were many who left school for employment in the Copperbelt and never returned to full-time studies or work with Springer, and Springer and his associates would have considered this normal. Songoro was notable only for flip-flopping. The mission archives speak the most of those who made the decision to remain in school through the end of what was available and/or those who worked for the mission afterwards.

The book is one of the material benefits of coming to the Copperbelt, including the power to read and use it. Learning to read was clearly a sought-after skill in the early years, and the archives attest to the hunger of working Africans to come to night school and Sunday School to learn to read, as well as of the willingness to share their skills within or independently of Christian structures. The focus of Springer's first church in Broken Hill was as much the schooling that volunteers gave in leisure hours as the religious activities. Springer's first legal authorisation from the government listed education and evangelisation as the two purposes

³⁹ J.M. Springer, *I love the trail* (Élisabethville, 1952), 125–6.

of the mission.⁴⁰ Helen Springer wrote to supporters in Wessington Springs, South Dakota (home of the Dr. Fox after whom Springer's central school was named) of students' hunger for books in English and of a store clerk asking for multiplication tables as he was teaching others at night.⁴¹

In building at Kambove in 1913, Springer set up a printing press by September.⁴² He also opened the Livingstone Memorial Library to lend books to UMHK miners and any others at Kambove, white and black. In addition to religious literature, which was certainly present, there was a wide range of books on science, geography, geology, current events, etc. The library enjoyed a subscription to *Africa*, the journal of the International African Institute, for decades. It eventually became the nucleus of the library for the new theological college at Mulungwishi in 1951, now Katanga Methodist University. In 1914 Springer started the Congo Book Concern with two £5 gifts from German Jewish traders being sent to South Africa for internment during the First World War, attesting both to Jewish book culture and the wide community that Springer impacted. The decisive contact leading to the creation of a Methodist church in Élisabethville was through Simon, Springer's student who came along in July 1914 to sell publications from Congo Book in the labour camps.

Springer recounts another conversation after moving to Élisabethville in 1917:

Yesterday morning two young men stood at the door of my office, asking for Bibles which they wished to buy. 'What mission did you attend?' I asked. 'Livingstonia,' came the reply (...) 'What standard have you passed?' 'Standard five.' 'Have you been teaching?' 'Yes, we have been helping Mr. Moffatt for years among the Wisea [Bisa] people.' [Moffatt had spent the rainy season of 1907 in Broken Hill with Springer before starting a new mission for the London Missionary Society in North-Eastern Rhodesia] 'Where are you working?' 'We have been helping to build that house on the next lot. It is useless work.'

Springer interpreted this as meaning uninteresting and nonconstructive, as they sought work as evangelist teachers. Springer had been praying for such people to show up at his door. The two Nyasalanders had two weeks more of 'useless work', before their contracts expired and they could begin. Springer helped them record an oral letter to Moffatt with his business gramophone. They would first try out as night school teachers, going on

⁴⁰ 'Education and Christianising the population', *Bulletin officiel du Congo Belge*, 8 (1914), 721–2.

⁴¹ GCAH: MF: Springer, HES to Mr/Mrs. Hills, 13 August 1913.

⁴² GCAH: MF: Springer, JMS to FMN, 20 September 1913.



Fig. 4.6 Start of the construction of the Wallace Memorial Church.



Fig. 4.7 Placement of the cornerstone of the Wallace Memorial Church, July 1928.

the payroll by about Christmas, and would then bring their wives to Élisabethville.⁴³

⁴³ GCAH: MF: Springer, JMS to friends, 5 December 1917.

In a paper presented at the conference from which this book has originated, Jan-Bart Gewald quotes Dugald Campbell, a Plymouth Brethren missionary opposed to labour migration, talking of a Christian convert spending a month's salary in Katanga to buy a tshiLuba New Testament.⁴⁴ tshiLuba is not a Katanga language, but a language from those served by American Presbyterians since the 1880s a thousand kilometres to the northwest of Élisabethville or Kambove; it is not immediately clear how useful this would be for a Bemba-speaker from the Luapula, perhaps akin to a Brit picking up a Dutch Bible. Nonetheless, it was a New Testament, and it was in an African language with many similarities to his own.

The ownership of a New Testament was in itself a marker of desired status, as a modern young man, literate and Christian. It was proof that he had enjoyed access to money, just like the safety razors, phonographs, clothing, sewing machines, and other material goods being taken home: 'new things' that showed he was a 'been-to'. Nonetheless, other issues were important in these individuals' identity and interests, for the two Livingstonia graduates could buy far more goods working in construction ('useless work') than with the missionary, and serving as teachers would only delay the day when they could return to their families, show their new chattel and city sophistication, and then return with their wives and children to a stable, if sparsely remunerated position with the mission. The power of the word was both material and immaterial.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has emphasised international migratory flow as it appears in the life stories of early international Methodist adepts in Katanga, individuals commonly identified as *Sipilingas* because of John Springer's long-time service as Methodist superintendent and bishop in Katanga. This is not to say that there were no indigenous Congolese recruited during the early days who had never been outside the country's modern borders, but the number of migrants is striking and provided a first jump-starting generation of African leadership before local Congolese were trained.

One migratory flow was a backwash from the Luso-African slave trade, with individuals returning from the west with their families once slavery was abolished in Angola and the colonial regime established. Many transited through the Kapanga community, although not necessarily

⁴⁴ D. Campbell, 9 February 1907, 'Johnston Falls', *Echoes of service: A record of labour in the Lord's name*, 215.

Ruund or from the Kapanga area. Since this flow was already an intentional return, there is little in the record to suggest near-term movement back to Angola. Certainly there were people who returned to Angola, or rather returned to the Angola of their fathers or grandfathers, in the 1990s after the end of the Angolan Civil War.

A second migratory flow is the flux between Copperbelt mining camps and their hinterland throughout Central Africa. This would include the young men who joined the 1907 and 1910 Springer parties in Broken Hill and Kansanshi (such as Benjamin Mudziro, Musondo, Jacob Mawene, Ngamba, Andrew, indirectly Joab Mulela, etc.), as also those who became Methodist leaders in the Copperbelt cities of Kambove and Lubumbashi (such as Joseph and Maggie Jutu, Nelson Campembe, Moses Kumwenda, James Lubona, etc.). Some of these eventually returned to their home areas, particularly after Belgian policy became overtly hostile to British Africans and Protestants in the 1920s. The Rhodesian government was complicit with Belgian pressure on its subjects since the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt was developing and needed skilled workers.

Ironically, while one of the main forces behind this migratory movement was the greater access to education of young Africans in North-Eastern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, and Southern Rhodesia, it was the hunger for more education that brought many to Springer. Many references speak of comings and goings between Congo and their home areas: bringing back wives and children, visiting parents, etc. The Methodist Church also sent some of its best leadership candidates to Old Mutare for training which was higher than was available in Congo, particularly before the founding of the *École de Théologie* at Mulungwishi in 1951. While American Methodists never maintained permanent mission work in Northern Rhodesia after 1910–11, the Katanga church was a partner of the United Christian Mission on the Copperbelt, later a founding body of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ). The United Methodist Church (re)appeared in Zambia in the 1980s through lay people moving back and forth across the border who were dissatisfied with the functioning of the UCZ.

In passing, one notes that a conceivable migratory flow which does not show in the Methodist documentation is that of returnees from the Swahili slave trade to Zanzibar or Eastern African intermediate points such as Ujiji, Tabora or Bagamoyo. There were certainly large numbers of freed slaves on the Indian Ocean coast who did not assimilate into Muslim Swahili society, and Kenya's Coast Province displays conflicts between coastal Muslims and Christians who identify with ethnic groups of the interior, even if settled at Mombasa for generations.

'WALKING HOME MAJESTICALLY': CONSUMPTION
AND THE ENACTMENT OF SOCIAL STATUS AMONG
LABOUR MIGRANTS FROM BAROTSELAND, 1935–1965

Michael Barrett

Those who were doing piece work, they would go in front. You would come behind, very far from them, just with your walking stick, now enjoying majestically! With a pair of shoes!¹

Isha-Kashweka was born in the Lumbala N'guimbo area in eastern Angola – like many elderly members of the Mbunda ethno-linguistic group now living in Kalabo.² He was born in the early 1930s and came to Zambia with his parents when he was still a child. In the 1950s, Isha-Kashweka, together with scores of his contemporaries in Barotseland, heeded the call of the recruitment agencies and left for *chipalo*,³ labour migration, in the gold mines of Johannesburg some 1,800 kilometres away. He went and came back four times before retiring in a small village just outside Kalabo Town in 1966, the year before President Kenneth Kaunda declared labour migration to the white minority states prohibited. Today Isha-Kashweka is impoverished, supported by his children and the additional income he gets from supplying reed structures which the Catholic mission uses for constructing pit latrines in the district's loose Kalahari sands. But he still has some fond memories of South Africa, and a suit, which he proudly wears on special occasions. Although it was bought years after he came back from Johannesburg, the suit may still be regarded as a remaining material artefact of his youth, a reminder of the time when he was a young, smart and very popular returning migrant, who had his bright future as an adult set out before him.

¹ Interview with Isha-Kashweka ('father of Kashweka' in honour of his first-born child), a former labour migrant now living in Kalabo, about his return home after a first stint in the gold mines of South Africa in the early 1950s, 24–5 September 2009, Kalabo.

² On migration histories of Mbunda families in Kalabo, see M. Barrett, 'The social significance of crossing state borders: Home, mobility and life paths in the Angolan-Zambian borderland', in: S. Jansen and S. Löfving (eds.), *Struggles for home: Violence, hope and the movement of people* (Oxford, 2009), 85–107.

³ The word *chipalo* in Western Province does not have the negative connotations of 'forced labour' or 'slavery' associated with *chibaro* in the eastern part of Southern Africa, see for example C. Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African mine labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900–1933* (London, 1976), 104.

The history of labour migration in Central African societies has been analysed from an array of perspectives: in terms of agriculture and economic effects, micro-politics, gender and status change – but rarely has the role of materiality in relation to all these been placed at the centre of attention.⁴ This is part of a more general lacuna in the social sciences regarding the role of material practices in social life.⁵ To understand how long-distance labour migration to industrial centres became such a strong, durable and transformative institution in Southern and Central Africa, I argue that it is necessary to consider how its material manifestations (among other things, roads, vehicles, depots, consumer goods and food) resulted in tangible effects in the lives of the population. This was by no means a straightforward exercise in cause and effect, orchestrated by the colonial establishment. Some of the effects followed the intentions of powerful regional actors, like the South African Chamber of Mines (willingness to provide cheap labour), while some effects ran contrary to other actors' intentions, like those of the Northern Rhodesian colonial administration (unwillingness to adhere to notions of a stable 'tribal' social and economic model). Indeed, the case illustrates that '[s]ocial relations exist in and through our material worlds that often act in entirely unexpected ways that cannot be traced back to some clear sense of will or intention.'⁶

This chapter engages with the material aspects of labour migration and examines how new consumer goods were part of the transformation of local expectations of life, work, family relations and material standards and how they were instrumental in the creation of new tastes and beliefs in rural Central Africa. In the emerging small town of Kalabo and its

⁴ On the political and economic effects of labour migration in Barotseland, see B. Reynolds, *Magic, divination and witchcraft among the Barotse of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1963); R. Frankenberg, 'Economic anthropology or political economy? (I): the Barotse social formation – a Case Study', J. Clammer (ed.), *The new economic anthropology* (London, 1978), 31–60; L. van Horn, 'The agricultural history of Barotseland, 1840–1964', R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds.), *The roots of rural poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (London, 1977), 144–69. Some insights are provided by E. Herbert, *Twilight on the Zambezi: Late Colonialism in Central Africa* (Basingstoke, 2002). Wim van Binsbergen offers an analysis of the village micro-politics between different generations caused by labour migration. 'Labour migration and the generation conflict: An essay on social change in Central Western Zambia', 34th Annual Meeting, Society for Applied Anthropology (Amsterdam, 1975).

⁵ J. Law, 'Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics' (Lancaster, 2007), <http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law2007ANTandMaterialSemiotics.pdf>.

⁶ D. Miller, 'Materiality: An introduction', in D. Miller (ed.), *Materiality* (Durham, 2005), 1–50, especially 32.



Fig. 5.1 Isha-Kashweka, a Mbunda labour migrant (Photograph by Michael Barrett).

surrounding rural homesteads, the wealth and 'luxury goods' which migrants brought home from Southern Africa's industrial centres affected (and were indicative of changing) gender and generational relationships, especially as these played out in marriage arrangements. The material culture of the industrial world constituted a focal point in the social and

spiritual negotiations between men and women, old and young during these transformations. In particular, European clothes and accessories were the goods most coveted and admired. They were also the vital props through which migrants, partly by enacting ostentatious homecomings to their villages, signalled a change in their personal status. Based on archival sources as well as collected life histories from Kalabo District, this paper shows the pivotal role of the material in the social struggles brought about by labour migration in the period between 1935 and 1965.

LABOUR MIGRATION IN BAROTSELAND

During the first half of the twentieth century, the political economy of labour migration in colonial Southern Africa was shaped by two competitive relationships. On the one hand, the tensions between the labour demands of local colonial authorities and those of the larger colony were manifested in many localities throughout the territory that is Zambia today.⁷ On the other hand, the open competition between the main areas of labour demand, to begin with Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and the South African Rand, was often quite fierce.⁸ As far as Barotseland is concerned, this competition intensified when mining in the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt began in the 1920s. The constant negotiations between different levels of colonial administrations, labour recruitment organisations, commercial farmers and mining companies, are among the most obvious signs of the complex political economy of labour in colonial Southern Africa. Although labour policies, partly due to these conflicting interests, were often contradictory and temporary, the overall focus on obtaining cheap labour had many sustained effects on local ways of using land, and resources, as well as social relationships between young and old, and between men and women.

Western Zambia, like other rural areas, became enmeshed in this regional labour system at an early stage. The hunter George Westbeeck brought the first group of young Lozi labourers south to work in the

⁷ H.L. Moore. and M. Vaughan, *Cutting down trees: Gender, nutrition, and agricultural change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890–1990* (Portsmouth, 2003), 59; K. Datta, 'Farm labour, agrarian capital and the state in colonial Zambia: the African labour corps, 1942–52', *Journal of Southern African studies*, 14:3 (1988), 371–92.

⁸ See for example: D. Yudelman and A. Jeeves, 'New labour frontiers for old: Black migrants to the South African gold mines, 1920–85', *Journal of Southern African studies*, 13:1 (1986), 101–24, 108f.

Transvaal in 1888, but this seems to have been an isolated occurrence, which did not inspire many followers.⁹

The conventional historiography of Barotseland emphasises a combination of ecological, economic, and political factors as explanations why, a few decades later, young men throughout the region would leave Barotseland to find wage work elsewhere in the colony.¹⁰ In 1902, during the reign of the *Litunga* (Paramount) Lewanika, British interests, represented in the Barotseland Protectorate by the British South Africa Company (BSAC), imposed the 'hut tax'. To begin with, the inhabitants of Barotseland paid the taxes through selling their agricultural produce, but after the drought and bovine epidemic of 1915, the level of local income generation was insufficient to meet these demands. In other words, according to these scholars, the colonial labour regime established itself during the first decades of the twentieth century through the demise of the economic self-reliance of Barotseland, marked by the end of tribute and by ecological and epidemiologic disasters, as well as through the enforcement of taxes.¹¹ This aligns with studies from the wider region where colonial interests consolidated labour migration through various measures ranging from force,¹² the cooptation of local chiefs and the creation of recruitment monopolies,¹³ to price competition and sophisticated recruitment infrastructure.¹⁴

Eugenia Herbert, in her book about Kalabo District in the late 1950s, engages in tacit polemics with earlier scholarship on the region. She concludes that the incorporation of Kalabo District inhabitants into the colonial economy (by paying taxes, complying to European trade and transport monopolies, engaging in migrant labour) was effected with surprisingly little coercion or 'even the threat of coercion'.¹⁵ Herbert points to the prospect of adventure and income as the main impetus for becoming a migrant in Kalabo.¹⁶ Her view on the voluntary nature of international labour migration in the 1950s corresponds with my own findings

⁹ Herbert, *Twilight*, 68.

¹⁰ See Frankenberg, 'Economic', 49; Van Horn, 'Agricultural', 156f; L. Flint, 'State-building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi', *The international journal of African historical studies*, 36:2 (2005), 393–428.

¹¹ Van Horn, 'Agricultural', 156f.

¹² Datta, 'Farm Labour'.

¹³ T. Maloka, 'Review and commentary: Mines and labour migrants in Southern Africa', *Journal of historical sociology*, 10:2 (1997), 213–24.

¹⁴ Yudelman and Jeeves, 'New labour', 110f.

¹⁵ Herbert, *Twilight*, 51.

¹⁶ Herbert, *Twilight*, 71.

based on interviews in Kalabo District with former migrants, who had been active from the 1940s to the 1960s. As I will demonstrate, going to South Africa or Southern Rhodesia for long spells of wage labour had by then been fully incorporated into the expected life career of rural men.

However, Herbert's work and my oral histories do not necessarily indicate in what manner this life career had become so deeply ingrained in the region during the early colonial period. Some of the evidence for Lukona/Kalabo¹⁷ in the first decades of the 1900s, seems to imply that the participation of young men from the district in international labour migration did require, at least initially, a lot of effort in terms of persuasion, negotiation and even mild coercion from the BSAC and later Colonial Office representatives. References to labour migration and recruitment in the colonial records may be placed in broader discourses on the nature and purpose of the British presence in Central Africa. Apart from themes like the inevitability and righteousness of British domination, such discourses shaped perceptions of the social formations and peoples in the area, including the ethnic simplifications and behavioural stereotypes used to make sense of the complex social and cultural heterogeneity in Barotseland. These narratives created trustworthy subjects, heroes and villains among the different language groups as well as among individual *indunas* and subjects. Such judgements were largely based on the degree to which leaders and subjects complied with colonial attempts to monitor and count, control, tax and rule populations through the locally constructed (and fairly complex) administration, combining BSAC and Barotse neo-traditional administrative principles. References to labour recruitment in the official records are exclusively cloaked in the euphemism 'work' (as in 'going to work' or 'going out to work'), implying that the population was otherwise idle.¹⁸

The reluctant incorporation of the Nyengo people into this 'work regime' is a case in point. The Nyengo are Kwangwa-speaking groups who in the early colonial period were mostly living in the swampy but fertile western parts of Kalabo District, on the border between what today is Zambia and Angola. They were systematically described in the most

¹⁷ Lukona District was formed as an administrative unit in 1906. In 1920, the administrative offices were moved to Kalabo, due to its location along the Luanginga River, and eventually Kalabo became the name of the district.

¹⁸ For example, NAZ KSH2/1 Vol. 2, Kalabo District Notebook, for the years 1919, 1920, 1927, 1928. The speech written for the Prince of Wales's visit to the Lozi in 1925 may perhaps be viewed as a more articulate outline of the ethos of the British administration regarding labour, T. Ranger, 'Making Northern Rhodesia imperial: Variations on a royal theme, 1924–1938', *African Affairs*, 79:316 (1980), 349–73.

unflattering terms as both ‘uncooperative’ and ‘uncivilised’ by the British administrators; in 1915 the Native Commissioner labelled them:

a blot on the Lukona District. Originally of a bastard-Barotse type, they chose for their habitat the Nyengo N.D, chiefly, it seems, from its proximity of the Nyengo swamps, where they have island retreats, where they have shelters and grow food, and to which they clear in tiny little canoes, directly they hear of the approach of the official, or scent of a Barotse Induna. Broadly speaking, they have never paid tax, though censused for 5 or 6 years.¹⁹

In 1916, however, a contingent of young Nyengo men had gone to Southern Rhodesia: ‘[M]ost of them have returned with clothes, money, etc. & it is hoped that this will influence others to go to work as well.’²⁰ Why the previously unenthusiastic young Nyengo men decided to go for labour migration is not discussed in the official records. But later entries might indicate how this was achieved. Two years later, in April 1918 and again in August, meetings were held with the Nyengo *Induna* (Namakaya), many headmen and senior representatives of the Paramount Chief, after which ‘the Manyengo’ ‘agreed to send more of their young men for work.’²¹ This at least constituted a conscious strategy of mild coercion.²² While similar efforts were made to bring other minor ‘tribes’ like the elusive ‘Mawiko’ into line,²³ the majority of Lozi villages were sending young men for recruitment voluntarily already in 1915 (when the Kalabo District Notebooks were started) and there are no records of concerted attempts of persuading them. In sum, the evidence for exactly how the practice of labour recruitment was established in Kalabo District during the first decades of the twentieth century is not conclusive and more research should be done on the interplay between village dynamics and the colonial administration to throw light on the issue.

In terms of institutional and infrastructural aspects, recruitment was at first organised through the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB), which began its operations in the area in 1903, serving the farms and mines of

¹⁹ NAZ KSH2/1 Vol. 2, Kalabo District Notebook, 1915.

²⁰ NAZ KSH2/1 Vol. 2, Kalabo District Notebook, 1918.

²¹ NAZ KSH2/1 Vol. 2, Kalabo District Notebook, 1918.

²² That this ‘policy of persuasion’ was a deliberate approach adopted to instil trust was amply expressed in the District Notebooks, in which for example N.C. Ingram opposes a suggestion by the local administration to start arresting Nyengo tax defaulters, so as not to scare them away, NAZ KSH2/1 Vol. 2, 33, Kalabo District Notebook, entries for 1921 and 1922/23.

²³ NAZ KSH2/1 Vol. 2, 36, see for example the years 1920–1, 1923, 1924 in Kalabo District Notebook. Mawiko or Wiko is a Lozi term loosely denoting the ‘peoples of the west’, including Mbunda, Luchazi, Chokwe and Luvale.

Southern Rhodesia. During the 1920s and 1930s there were also several other agencies operating in Barotseland, represented by various independent recruiters, among them R.W. Yule, Soane Cambell, Williams & co., Parsons, and the local trader Dempster.²⁴ The recruitment was mainly for Southern Rhodesia, Elisabethville in southern Congo, and for Mazabuka farmers. When the Great Depression in the United States and Europe began to make its impact on the Central African economy in the early 1930s, young men from Barotseland were already deeply dependent on migrant wage labour for their income. Due to the discontinuation of RNLB (which was dissolved in 1933), there was, however, an abrupt interruption of recruitment between 1932 and 1935.²⁵ This had grave social and economic consequences for the region and forced thousands of young men into compensational menial labour or imprisonment for failing to pay their taxes.²⁶ Even local European businessmen, like the Susman Brothers, scaled down their businesses considerably during this period.²⁷

Soon after this economic crisis, when labour recruitment was resumed, as much as half of the male work force in Barotseland was absent from the protectorate at any given time. From a focus on agriculture, fishing, hunting and small-scale trade young men's attention had turned to long-distance migration for wage labour in industrial mines and on commercial farms. How was it possible that less than three decades of labour recruitment could transform the preferred male life career so profoundly?

In part, this had to do with regional economic opportunity and global trade: the recuperating labour markets after the depression and the rapid expansion in gold production.²⁸ Moreover, it was connected to the emergence of even more efficient recruitment organisations offering higher salaries, amenities, and faster transport.²⁹ The ethno-linguistic composition of Barotseland and the solidification of previously flexible 'Lozi' legal principles probably affected the form of local mobility through the

²⁴ NAZ KSH2/1 Vol. 2, 50–1.

²⁵ A similar organisation was not formed again until 1946, when the Southern Rhodesian government created the Native Labour Supply Commission (RNLSC), P. Scott, 'Migrant labor in Southern Rhodesia', *Geographical review*, 44:1 (1954), 29–48. However, recruitment for Southern Rhodesia was re-established in 1936 through the *Ulere* system (see below).

²⁶ G. Caplan, *The elites of Barotseland, 1878–1969: A political history of Zambia's Western Province* (Berkeley, 1970), 145–6.

²⁷ H. Macmillan, *An African trading empire: the story of Susman Brothers & Wulfsohn, 1901–2005* (New York, 2005), 118.

²⁸ D. Johnson, 'Settler farmers and coerced African labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1936–46', *The journal of African history*, 33:1 (1992), 111–28.

²⁹ Yudelman and Jeeves, 'New Labour'.

institutions of land holding. The acquisition of land was more difficult for the growing population of non-Lozi (Wiko) people.³⁰ This partly explains the over-representation as labour migrants of Wiko and recent migrants from Angola who (in the face of imposed Lozi *Indunas*) could not establish a resource base in the area and were thus prone to pounce at the opportunity of an income from labour migration.³¹

But the wider implications for local subjectivity need to be addressed. What was at the outset a deliberate strategy of the tiny local colonial administration to manipulate indigenous political and social systems in order to recruit labourers for the expanding regional economy, became incorporated into young men's (and their families') life- and livelihood decisions.³² *Chipalo* had become a masculine model of life which still affects the way young men envision their future in places like Kalabo. This was no small feat, considering the great social and micro-political effects in the rural universe created by the emergence of the labour migrant – a young but relatively wealthy man coming back after a long absence, dressing like a European, with new ideas and religious practices, acting like a *litukuka*, an elder (in Mbunda), conveying an audacious independence in relation to seniors and spouses. I do not wish to imply that the village universe in Central Africa prior to European colonialism in any way

³⁰ As my own fieldwork in Kalabo District shows, a recurrent problem in the province has been the attempts by 'true Lozi', on the grounds of autochthony, to seize or withhold land from Wiko villagers – the latter are in such contexts labelled 'foreigners', M. Barrett, 'Paths to adulthood: Freedom, belonging and temporalities in Mbunda biographies from Western Zambia' (unpublished PhD thesis, Uppsala University, 2004); M. Gluckman, 'The technical vocabulary of Barotse jurisprudence', *American anthropologist*, 61:5 (1959), 743–59.

³¹ Herbert, *Twilight*, 69. After 1919, there was a sharp increase in the number of Wiko inhabitants in the western districts of Barotseland, probably due to the harshness of Portuguese colonial rule, M. Gluckman, *Economy of the central Barotse plain* (Livingstone, 1968), 15; C. Perrings, 'Good lawyers but poor workers': Recruited Angolan labour in the copper mines of Katanga, 1917–1921', *The journal of African history*, 18:2 (1977), 237–59, 243. This is supported by claims of forced labour in Portuguese territory in oral histories from Mbunda families in Kalabo, see Barrett, *Paths*, 272.

³² Although the prevalence of women migrating to urban areas during this time has been largely a muted issue (Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting*, 155), the drastic control measures set up by the colonial authorities in collaboration with rural chiefs to prevent women from leaving the rural areas indicates that women did go in large numbers. This is true especially from the 1920s onwards, when the development of copper mining in Northern Rhodesia induced many women to migrate with their husbands or alone, J. Parpart, "'Where is your mother?': Gender, urban marriage and colonial discourse on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1924–1945", *Journal of African historical studies*, 27:2 (1994), 241–71. From the evidence of female life histories in my material, however, there were few Kalabo women migrating to urban areas before independence in 1964; or, rather, few that came back to Kalabo to tell the tale. This is obviously an area which requires further research.

constituted a static social equilibrium.³³ What I raise here are the radically new parameters introduced by labour migration in terms of wealth creation, status transformation, and the gendered division of labour within households.

RECRUITMENT AND THE GREAT JOURNEY

The increase of migrants from Barotseland to South Africa and Southern Rhodesia³⁴ once the global recession wore off, is connected to several background factors: the decrease in recruitment from the southern part of Northern Rhodesia due to a surge in labour demand on the line of rail,³⁵ the increase in gold prices in the 1930s, and the subsequent massive investment in infrastructure and administrative presence in Barotseland.³⁶ All three factors substantially increased the number of recruits from Barotseland. It is important to emphasise that while labour migration after the Great Depression intensified and recruitment became increasingly formalised in the hands of a few regional organisations, interviews with former migrants in Kalabo show a surprising variation in recruitment practices, travel arrangements, destinations and occupations. Some used the official forms of recruitment, others were privately recruited or found their own way; many flew in aeroplanes for a leg of the journey, while a substantial number walked long stretches on foot; some worked in farming, others in the mine sector; a few worked as medical staff or clerks, while most were labourers. In many cases, a person had, throughout his career, been both a farm hand in Southern Rhodesia and a mine worker in Johannesburg.

³³ On the contrary, evidence from historical scholarship on Barotseland (M. Bull, *Bulozi under the Luyana kings: Political evolution and state formation in pre-colonial Zambia* (London, 1973); G. Prins, *The hidden hippopotamus: Reappraisal in African history: The early colonial experience in western Zambia* (Cambridge, 1980); G. Caplan, *The elites*), as well as on the smaller and more loosely organised *Wiko* groups under consideration here (C. White, 'A preliminary survey of Luvale rural economy', *The Rhodes-Livingstone papers*, 29 (1959); Barrett, *Paths*), points to a deeply entrenched flexibility and changeability regarding livelihood, kinship reckoning, village organisation, political succession, gender, age and productive relations.

³⁴ In 1938, 43 per cent of the male taxpayers in the three Zambezi Plain districts in Western Province (Mongu, Kalabo, and Senanga) were absent on labour stints, Gluckman, *Economy*, 113. Twenty years later, in 1959, 40 per cent of the taxable males of Kalabo District had been away working. Many villages displayed figures as high as 79 per cent, Herbert, *Twilight*, 71.

³⁵ Scott, *Migrant labor*, 31.

³⁶ Yudelman and Jeeves, 'New Labour'.

ULERE

In 1936, Southern Rhodesia started operating their Free Migrant Labour Transport Service, locally called *Ulere* which means 'free' in Nyanja.³⁷ At first, the service did not attract so many migrants, but after the Second World War it became the dominant means of travel to the farms, mines and factories of Southern Rhodesia.³⁸ The success of recruitment for the southern colony had been made possible through a 1936 tripartite agreement (the Salisbury Agreement) between Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, and Southern Rhodesia.³⁹ Responding to the increasing labour demands at home and rising concerns from the Colonial Office about the disruptive effects of labour migration on local communities, the local administrations in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia wanted the agreement to curb and control long-distance labour migration. From the perspective of Southern Rhodesian interests, it was an attempt to counter competition (due to higher wages and better working conditions) from the expanding mining sector in South Africa.⁴⁰ In fact, *Ulere* was frequently used as a means of proceeding to and entering the Rand in South Africa and ending this 'abuse' of the service was a continuous preoccupation of the Rhodesian administration.⁴¹ Apart from offering free transport to Southern Rhodesia, *Ulere* set up a number of resting stations staffed by Africans on the southward routes providing food and shelter for migrants as well as their families. From Kalabo, the route went either by boat to Nampini, close to Victoria Falls, or over land by foot or with lorries via Mongu, Mulobezi and Livingstone. Once at the depots, migrants were free to choose their work place. Large employers of migrants from Barotseland were the tobacco farms around Karoi and the colliers like those operating in Hwange (Wankie).⁴²

³⁷ Often pronounced *Ulele* in Kalabo reflecting the interchangeability of 'r' and 'l' in many Bantu languages.

³⁸ In 1951, the service transported three-fifths of the 104,000 foreign workers coming to Southern Rhodesia.

³⁹ Scott, *Migrant labor*, 36.

⁴⁰ Johnson, 'Settler', 113.

⁴¹ Johnson, 'Settler', 113.

⁴² Scott, *Migrant labor*, 36; G. Pirie, 'Railways and labour migration to the Rand mines: Constraints and significance', *Journal of Southern African studies*, 19:4 (1993), 713–30.

⁴³ S. Rubert, *A most promising weed: A history of tobacco farming and labor in colonial Zimbabwe, 1890–1945* (Athens, 1998); I. Phimister, 'Coal, crisis, and class struggle: Wankie colliery, 1918–22', *The journal of African history*, 33:1 (1992), 65–86.

Mr. Maliti was born in 1928 in the Kalenga area of Kalabo District.⁴³ He completed basic schooling in the provincial capital Mongu, but had lived in Kalabo since 1951. In 2009 he was making his living as a brick layer in Kalabo town and was no longer in a polygynous marriage since the death of his first wife. Altogether, his wives had given birth to 15 children. In 1947, Mr. Maliti went to Southern Rhodesia together with many others from Barotseland who on their own accord travelled to seek work. Through *Ulere* they received free transport, using lorries from Kalabo to Victoria Falls before getting on a train to Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia – a journey that lasted one week. He stayed in Bulawayo for two years, working as an operator on a textile machine.

Mr. C was born in 1916 in Moxico Province, Angola and came to Zambia with his family when he was twenty years old.⁴⁴ It was during the war, in 1942, that he first travelled to ‘Zimbabwe’: ‘I went to Zimbabwe, to Salisbury, for work – some [of those who went with me] left for good. It was just many people that went for employment, so I decided to go too. *Ulele* were taking us there.’ In Southern Rhodesia he was working in agriculture, first in one (unknown) place where he was milking cows, after which he went to Salisbury where he was in charge of distributing maize and potatoes for a white farmer, Mr. Lundy, who also had four mines: ‘Mr. Lundy refused to go to war against the Germans so his mines were closed down. He didn’t mind much since he owned ten companies!’

As indicated above, however, a substantial amount of migrants made their way independently to their work destinations; this was known as going *muselfu* (‘myself’) and was part of the experience of most of my informants who had been migrants.⁴⁵ Some were even recruited directly by farmers, as was the case with the two close friends Harry and Isaac from the rural Lyumba area on the road leading to the Angolan border, 25 km west of Kalabo town.

After finishing standard six in 1963, Harry and Isaac decided to leave Lyumba in search of employment.⁴⁶ Born around 1940 and 1938

⁴³ Interview with Mr. Maliti, Kalabo District, 25 September 2009.

⁴⁴ Interview with Mr. C, Kalabo District, 26 September 2009.

⁴⁵ Interviews with migrants were carried out between 1998 and 2009 and reflect the experiences of the cohorts who were labour migrants between early 1940s to 1966. On *muselfu*, see also NAZ, I/KDE 10/1, 452, District Notebooks Mongu, 1950s.

⁴⁶ The life histories of Harry and Isaac (pseudonyms) are based on several informal conversations over the years, as well as on semi-structured interviews in May 2000 (Harry) and July 2003 (Isaac). They are two prominent elders in Lyumba. Isaac is a headman for the registered village in which they both live and a father of sixteen children, while Harry runs a community clinic. Harry has two wives and has fathered 20 children.

respectively, they were both unmarried and in their early twenties when they left. Their aim was to get to Lusaka. Already in Kalabo town, they came in contact with a white man, 'a certain Boer, by the name of Mr. Louis Naile', who took them to Mongu and told them, 'I'm going to give you a good job!' They agreed and left with him for Southern Rhodesia: 'He took us to his farm there (...) a tobacco farm (...) in the bush, Kaluvati Tobacco, at Karoi *Boma* in Southern Rhodesia.'

WENELA

Despite the measures set up by the Southern Rhodesian government to divert migration from the Witwatersrand in South Africa, the labour organisation *WENELA* (or *WNLA* – Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) began anew in 1936 to recruit men for the mines in Northern Rhodesia.⁴⁷ The large scale introduction of recruitment for the Rand by *WENELA*, the official recruiters for the South African Chamber of Mines, was preceded by long preparations and fierce negotiations with the rival colony.⁴⁸ In the end, the financial muscle of the South African Chamber of Mines prevailed over Southern Rhodesian attempts to monopolise the 'tropical labour reserves'. Not only could the South Africans offer better working conditions and higher salaries, the organisation of recruitment itself was far more advanced than what *Ulere* could muster. A sophisticated system of depots and offices all over Southern Africa allowed the deferring and remitting of payment. Furthermore, when the South Africans guaranteed that they would not employ northern workers who came independently to South Africa, it did much to convince Northern Rhodesian, Bechuanaland and Nyasaland governments to allow *WENELA* a foothold in their territories.⁴⁹

A major depot was developed at Kazungula on the border with Northern Rhodesia to tap the labour districts of Barotseland. Eventually northern Bechuanaland became a central corridor for *WNLA* operations extending into adjacent parts of Northern Rhodesia, Angola and South-West Africa (...)

⁴⁷ Recruitment for the Rand in Northern Rhodesian territory had been prohibited during 1913–32, Scott, *Migrant labor*, 31. The government of the Union of South Africa banned all recruitment from territories north of 22 degrees south latitude due to the high prevalence of pneumonia among migrants and the resulting massive mortality rate, S. Katzenellenbogen, *South Africa and Southern Mozambique: Labour, railways, and trade in the making of a relationship* (Manchester, 1982).

⁴⁸ Yudelman and Jeeves, 'New labour', 109–11; Reynolds, *Magic*, 4–5.

⁴⁹ Yudelman and Jeeves, 'New Labour', 111.

The Association's ubiquitous depots, its fleets of passenger lorries and network of airports gave the agency a presence in the region which overshadowed that of governments. New villages grew up along its routes; its motor lorries provided the only transport and mail service in many areas; to the recruits, its aircraft probably made it seem exotic, glamorous, rich and powerful.⁵⁰

It was not until 1972, eight years after independence, that today's Western Province of Zambia received a tarred road to the capital city Lusaka and hence achieved a symbolic break with the infrastructural bias towards the south – to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa – which *WENELA* (and to some extent *Ulere*) established. Such a southern orientation continues to haunt the region today and makes connections with central, northern and eastern Zambia difficult and expensive.

In Kalabo, or sometimes in Mongu, Isha-Kashweka and the other migrants would embark on lorries that took them to Kazungula or Katima Mulilo, after this South-west African town had developed into a transport hub and regional office for *WENELA*.⁵¹ It was from Katima Mulilo that the labour migrants would be put on an aircraft for the journey to Francistown in Bechuanaland, from where trains departed all the way to Johannesburg.

The scale and novelty of the transport system put in place by *WENELA* was a source of curiosity in the Barotse villages and provided the migrants with a connection to the modern and powerful world of the Europeans.⁵² The headman of one village in Lyumba, for example, took Fulai as his adult name, derived from the English word 'fly'.⁵³ From the end of the 1940s until independence, Fulai went to Johannesburg with *WENELA* twelve times (each stint lasting at least eleven months), where he eventually became an experienced 'machine boy'.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Yudelman and Jeeves, 'New Labour', 110–1.

⁵¹ W. Zeller, 'Danger and opportunity in Katima Mulilo: A Namibian border boomtown at transnational crossroads', *Journal of Southern African studies*, 35:1 (2009), 133–54. Judging by my informants, who all travelled via Katima Mulilo, it seems that after the Second World War Katima Mulilo had replaced Kazungula, farther to the east on the Zambezi, as the main recruitment depot serving Barotseland.

⁵² Initially, the *WENELA* quota was 3,500 men per year. In 1959, the agency was recruiting 5,000 people per year for the whole of Barotseland (Herbert, *Twilight*, 68), a number which had increased to almost 6,000 annually before independence in 1964 (Caplan, *The elites*, 206). The majority of these workers were 'Wiko' (e.g. Mbunda and Luvale) or Nyengo or Imilunga, but rarely 'true Lozi' (Herbert, *Twilight*, 69).

⁵³ Interview with Fulai, Lyumba, Kalabo District, May 2000.

⁵⁴ By some informants called *chipanela*, 'spanner boy' (*panela* derived from the English word 'spanner'), a term that today is used for young apprentices or assistants to mechanics, drivers or coxswains. In the mines, the *chipanela* would hold and direct the drill for the drill operator who made holes for the explosives.

WALKING HOME MAJESTICALLY: STATUS AS ENACTMENT OF MATERIAL SOCIAL PROCESS

Having introduced a range of experiences that labour migration offered to young men in Kalabo, let me now turn to how materiality was an ingrained part of these experiences. New material objects (in this case commodities from an expanding industrial world) may accommodate and express deeply seated values and personhood found in a particular social context.⁵⁵ But the use of commodities may also work to transform the local setting, inspiring new experiences, tastes, ideas; triggering new ways of being, comporting oneself and relating to others.

My Kalabo informants told of the popularity and utility of blankets, cooking utensils, bicycles, and sewing machines brought home from the south. Moreover, the urban environment in Salisbury and Johannesburg offered a multitude of new food and drink experiences. Isha-Kashweka, for example, narrates how the drinking of tea was a central concern in the daily work life in Johannesburg: Tea 'was almost like a job! Before doing anything, we had to drink tea and eat bread!' As a symbol of European power, the act and paraphernalia of drinking tea figured widely in the popular imagination of the African population, from the rowdy dancing at Salisbury tea parties,⁵⁶ to the diagnostic tools of regional healing cults like *Nzila* which originated and became fairly popular in Barotseland and beyond during the 1960s.⁵⁷ Although migrants from Barotseland encountered and acquired the taste for maize in South Africa, since maize porridge was the staple provided to the mine workers, this did not lead to an immediate change of diet at home. The shift to the now ubiquitous *nshima* made from maize meal did not occur until later in Western Zambia, where millet and cassava still predominated.

Yet, clothes stand out as the most desired commodities that the labour migrants brought home from Johannesburg and Salisbury. Garments and

⁵⁵ This may be compared to the 'capturing of diamonds and dollars' by Congolese youths in the 1990s. De Boeck shows how contemporary social and economic practices of artisan diamond mining and smuggling are perceived as analogous to historical hunting and perform similar transformative functions in the lives of young men. Central to his argument is the continuity of the symbolic forms that the social and cultural imagination takes in the border areas even when it is articulating new practices and objects of desire. F. De Boeck, 'Domesticating diamonds and dollars: Identity, expenditure and sharing in South-Western Zaire', *Development and change*, 29 (1998), 777–810.

⁵⁶ T. Yoshikuni, 'Strike action and self-help associations: Zimbabwean worker protest and culture after World War I', *Journal of Southern African studies*, 15:3 (1989), 440–68.

⁵⁷ P. Silverman, 'Local elites and the Nzila cult among the Lozi of Zambia', *Ethos*, 5:4 (1977), 379–87.

chitenge fabric had been available for a long time in European shops in places like Kalabo, but such items were fairly expensive and young people lacked the resources to purchase them. Isha-Kashweka relates how before, when living in Angola, they used to wear *matata* (bark) blankets and skins from water bucks and wildebeest and how prices for industrial goods in Kalabo were prohibitively expensive. In the southern metropolises, where goods were plentiful and cheap, buying clothes became a central concern.

- With the money you received in Johannesburg, what would you buy?
- Clothes!
- Only clothes?
- [emphatically] Clothes, only clothes! The first salary you have to buy a big suitcase [*pongisi ya kama*]. The other month, you go and buy some clothes and put them in. The next month, whenever you get paid you buy clothes, blankets, what and what, plates. Then you buy and buy until the suitcase is full!⁵⁸
- Where did you buy those things?
- In South Africa. It's a country! There are so many shops!⁵⁹ The owners of the shops in Johannesburg were Indians [*Masaami*]. They were good people, the Indians.

In Bulawayo, Mr. Maliti had similar priorities as Isha-Kashweka in Johannesburg.

We used the money for shopping, buying clothes. First, we used to buy a suitcase and then every month end when we were paid we would go shopping, putting in our suitcase, knowing that when the contract comes to an end 'I'm going to bring it home, as I go back.'

- What did you buy more specifically?
- We bought things of our choice: trousers, a pair of shoes, a shirt, anything that I wanted to go for I would buy and put in the suitcase.

During the second trip, he chose different colours to bring back home:

- Last time I bought black trousers, this time I bought white, red or blue trousers!
- Was it mostly clothes?
- Nothing else! I also came with money that I used to buy a bicycle here in Kalabo! The bicycle I just used for my personal transport. I bought clothes

⁵⁸ *Bithalo bene, bithalo!* ('clothes, only clothes!') *Ulanda ulanda kubanga bene pongisi mbe!* ('You buy and buy until the suitcase is full!').

⁵⁹ *Lifuti!* – 'country', meaning 'it is really a big area, there is everything there'. *Bintolo mubili biabingi. Kalikiliki!* 'Many shops are there, so many' (*Kalikiliki* – 'when something is highly concentrated').

for my wife, but also kitchen utensils, pots and plates. She was very happy, touching the ground!

Indeed, as Karen Tranberg Hansen notes more generally ‘preoccupations with the dressed body are of long standing in Zambia.’⁶⁰ When discussing the focus on dressing and clothes, widely reported to be displayed by the migrants in Kalabo, a central tenet was *thenga* – referring to ‘entertainment’, ‘pleasure’, ‘luxury’ as well as clothes and other imported commodities (it also means ‘porridge’ as in *thenga ya mashangu*, ‘millet porridge’). Moreover, it connotes being smart and handsome, traits that are attractive to the opposite gender. But this preoccupation with *thenga* had much wider implications than a desire to look good. As Hansen argues, the attraction of clothes ‘derives from the ability of the dressed body to mediate both individual and collective identities and desires.’⁶¹

When Mr. Maliti talked about how he was received at home after two years in Bulawayo (his first trip), he emphasised his changed status in the community.

People were very happy when we came back. Some would kill chickens and brew beer, set up a feast, people would come to celebrate! I was now a new man, I had come up with wealth, so life had changed! [I was] given more respect when coming back, [people would] even [be] touching the ground. Those that stayed [at home] would be questioned: ‘So many are going to find wealth, why are you not going?’ The respect was less.

Dress and clothing were the props through which migrants could display this changed status. Failing to do so was considered odd or even a sign of mental disturbance.

If a person goes out to work and does not come back with luxury goods [*thenga*] to show, then the people will not know that he has been out for work! No one came back with the same clothes as when they left. Such a person would be seen as strange.

What these quotes from Mr. Maliti illustrate, is the social transformation of the individual migrant from youth to adult, which was communicated by showing off clothes brought back from ‘the land of the Europeans’ (*kumukuwa*). However, it is in the intersection between personal and generational trajectories that historical change may be gauged. The transformative potential of objects/commodities thus becomes especially visible

⁶⁰ K. Hansen, ‘Fashioning Zambian Moments’, *Journal of material culture*, 8:3 (2003), 302.

⁶¹ Hansen, ‘Fashioning’, 303.

when we consider the attainment of adult social status (a process which entails new ways of being, behaving and relating to others in social contexts) as a generational achievement; a status that you acquire together with age mates using the resources available to you in the current historical moment. Moreover, it is a status that is expressed by contrasting your own generation and its material attributes to your parental generation and its attributes, in this case by wearing fashionable urban outfits. Such generational identification partly explains why manner and dress of the returning migrants were perceived as extravagant and audacious in the eyes of the older generations.⁶²

Another rapidly changing social field for the cohorts that went south to work was marriage and household formation; a field which has a direct bearing on attaining social adulthood in this region. Migrancy had a great impact on the practice and institution of marriage. First, not only did bride wealth become increasingly monetised in contrast to the previously common practice of bride service (reflecting the influx of money from the migrants and their limited time to perform extended duties for their parents-in-law), the cost of bride wealth was also raised substantially.⁶³ Second, many informants held that the responsibility to provide the cash part of the bride wealth was transferred from the bride groom's parents to the groom himself.⁶⁴ Third, migrants were simply valued higher as spouses than non-migrants, as they looked smart, had access to money, clothes and other goods and, as illustrated by Mr. Maliti's statement above, were perceived as 'active' in contrast to those who stayed at home.⁶⁵

Isha-Kashweka states: 'When I came back I was very smartly dressed, and many women would come after me!' Indeed, he got married soon after returning from Johannesburg for the first time: 'When I came back from Johannesburg, that's when I looked for a wife. I paid one head of cattle for the bride wealth.'

⁶² On the individual and collective aspects of how Ndembu (in the neighbouring Northwestern Province) generations expressed their uniqueness, see J. Pritchett, *The Lunda-Ndembu: Style, change, and social transformation in South Central Africa* (Madison, 2001).

⁶³ C. White, 'Tradition and change in Luvale marriage', *The Rhodes-Livingstone papers*, 34 (1962); M. Gluckman, 'Kinship and marriage among the Lozi of Northern Rhodesia and the Zulu of Natal', in A. Radcliffe-Brown and C. Forde (eds.), *African systems of kinship and marriage* (London, 1950), 166–206.

⁶⁴ Barrett, *Paths*, 221–2.

⁶⁵ It is still the case in Kalabo that a person who 'is just seated in the village' (*kutumama ngocho hembo*) is a most pitiful character. This refers to someone who does not try to make a living by using his or her initiative, but passively gets by in the village.

However, getting married is but one parameter of adulthood in the region, today as in the past. As I have argued elsewhere, convincing your family and neighbours that you are an adult entails striking a delicate balance between autonomy and voluntary interdependence – a balance that can only be acquired through experience and concerted social action.⁶⁶ Socially appreciated adults were often said to be unselfish, just and hard-working. In Mbunda social idioms, such a person would have *mangana*, ‘sense’ or ‘wisdom’. For returning labour migrants, to demonstrate *mangana* was almost synonymous with sharing wealth by distributing goods to spouses and family members. As Mr. Maliti said:

- I was buying [things] also for people at home: for my father, my mother, my sisters, nephews, sons and daughters and put them in the suitcase. Even some coats for the parents.
- How did you know what to buy?
- *Mangana!* Because I had sense! My wife, I have to dress her! My mother, I have to dress her! My father, I have to dress him! My children, I have to dress them! That’s a personal thing you have to do.

He added that apart from gifts, he also brought back a substantial amount of money, which was carefully shared among his close relatives. Still, Mr. Maliti was able to save some funds in order to buy his first head of cattle. Isha-Kashweka answered the question of what and to whom he brought back goods in a similar way:

First of all, your uncle, father, mother, sisters and brothers, your elders, you buy for them, so when you come, you just bring them these things. Even blankets, you also give them blankets. There were no orders pressed before, but it was a matter of thinking for yourself ‘these are my elders and juniors, where can they get such things? Nowhere!’

As I have shown, acquiring commodities and social adulthood was central to the social experience of labour migration in Central Africa. This was visible in a spectacular way in the homecoming events that migrants staged in rural areas. These were events in which the individual achievement and collective/generational identity were fused and celebrated simultaneously. Probably due to popular songs, paintings⁶⁷ and the evening stories told by migrants for their children and grandchildren, the

⁶⁶ Barrett, *Paths*, 172–87.

⁶⁷ E.g. the painting ‘Makumucha coming home from Johannesburg’ from 1994 by the legendary artist Stephen Kappata (1936–2006), reproduced in H. Macmillan, ‘The life and art of Stephen Kappata’, *African arts*, 30:1 (1997), 20–31; 93–4 (especially 25).

figure of the returning migrant is rather well-known among contemporary Zambians. The suit, the cane, the whistle and carriers were often important paraphernalia of such narratives.

Coming back from Bulawayo Mr Maliti paid for his own travel, since *Ulere* only offered transport on the way down to Southern Rhodesia.

We went by trucks, off-loading in Mongu and embarking on boats for Kalabo. From Kalabo to home, at the harbour, people were hired for piece work to carry the goods (...)

- I had one big suitcase, [also] pots, plates, a lot of things!
- Also a walking stick?
- [He laughs] I didn't bother to buy a walking stick. But I did have a metal whistle, this was a must. We used it for feasts and dancing. When coming back home, I was blowing the whistle to announce our arrival. My relatives all came out, even dancing. It was a feast now!

Returning from Johannesburg, Isha-Kashweka took advantage of the more generous arrangements provided by *WENELA*, which included return transport and half of the salary in cash deferred to the depot in Katima Mulilo.

- I had one suitcase, but very full! Also some buckets, cups, plates and three-legged pots (...)
- When coming to Katima, we were given the same [type of] transport as before. But when you arrive here in Kalabo, that transport is no longer available. So there will be other people coming and carrying these things now. That big suitcase, it would be given to someone who'll be carrying it as piece work, you pay him. And also that other bucket, with a lot of kitchen units. So for you, is just to carry a walking stick! [big laugh!]. We bought those sticks, specially made.
- Was that also something that made you look smart [*thenga*]?
- *Thenga, thenga, thenga!* Those that were doing piece work, they would go in front. You would come behind, very far from them, just with your walking stick, now enjoying majestically! With a pair of shoes!
- All those that came back had the same walking stick?
- All of them! Not one, but all of them!
- Did they have a suit and tie?
- Did they have on a suit and tie, oh yes!⁶⁸
- Did you give everything away, or did something remain for yourself?
- Those that had a wife, they would also shop for her there, and when reaching home you would give to the relatives. But you would also think of leaving something for yourself. Some used to buy animals.
- What did you use the money for?
- Eating!

⁶⁸ *Ma suit yachili, ma tie yachili!*

There is a wide and solid body of scholarship on the rise and fall of twentieth century labour migration in Central and Southern Africa. Very little of this work has dealt with the social history of labour migration from the point of view of personal life trajectories and how these interplayed with generational and material dynamics. Migrants' identification with a generation reaching adulthood, and the integral role in this process of new industrial consumer products, was pivotal in transforming life worlds of villages and families in rural areas like Kalabo. Together with the influence of missionaries and the colonial administration in 'radically rewriting the rules of polity and sociality' such transformations arguably set the scene for the political subjectivities leading to Zambian nationalism and independence.⁶⁹ Without overlooking the role which international labour migration played in incorporating Barotseland as a deprived and marginalised backwater into the colonial (and, in the longer perspective, post-colonial) economy, oral histories may help us to better understand the logic of this incorporation from the perspective of local society. While the legacy of labour migration in rural Zambia is unclear in the current moment – especially in view of neoliberal economic policy, high youth unemployment and a striking lack of formal jobs – it certainly played an important role in informing notions of the ideal male career model in the three decades following independence.⁷⁰ It remains to be seen how the commodities circulated in contemporary Zambia are intertwined with local, regional and international mobility as well as with the micro-politics of gender, generation and social status.

⁶⁹ J. Gould, *Localizing modernity: Action, interests & association in rural Zambia* (Helsinki, 1997), 4.

⁷⁰ J. Pottier, *Migrants no more: Settlement and survival in Mambwe villages, Zambia* (Manchester, 1988); Barrett, *Paths*, chapter 8.

RAILWAYS, RAILWAY CULTURE, AND 'INDUSTRIAL WORK DISCIPLINE' IN THE RHODESIAS

Kenneth P. Vickery

'The products of industrial technology'. The ultimate, quintessential product of industrial technology was the railway, the locomotive, the train. The railway symbolised like nothing else the industrial revolution itself, the advent of the industrial age. In Nicholas Faith's summation:

The modern world began with the coming of the railways. They turned the known universe upside down. They made a greater and more immediate impact than any other mechanical or industrial innovation before or since (...) [In speed] the railways represented the first quantum leap. All subsequent inventions—the motor-car, the aeroplane—are merely continuing a revolution which began in 1830 with the steam locomotive.¹

What began in Europe spread almost everywhere, of course. With memorable phrasing Ronald Robinson reminds us that 'industrialized Europe cast its imperial influence over much of a still agrarian world in the half century before 1914 by building railways in other people's countries.'² Lord Salisbury himself, speaking in this case of Uganda, provided a contemporary imperial echo: 'The completion of the railway (...) means the subjugation and therefore the civilisation of the country.'³

In Africa railways emblemised the material side of colonisation – colonisation precisely by Europe's maturing industrial powers—and dwarfed any other forms of material investment. Railways linked Africa's interiors with its coastlines and harbours far more efficiently than any previous transport mode. They thus facilitated—and again, symbolised—the transformation to export-oriented economies, the legacy of which arguably remains the continent's greatest economic reality. Years ago I wrote,

¹ N. Faith, *The world the railways made* (New York, 1990), 1.

² R.E. Robinson, 'Introduction: Railway imperialism', C.B. Davis, K.E. Wilburn and R.E. Robinson (eds.), *Railway imperialism* (New York, 1991), 1.

³ Cited in G.H. Pirie, *Aspects of the political-economy of railways in Southern Africa*, Environmental studies Occasional paper No. 24, Johannesburg: Dept. of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, 1982. n.p. Originally cited in E.S. Grogan and A.H. Sharp, *From the Cape to Cairo: The first traverse of Africa from South to North* (London, 1900), 318.

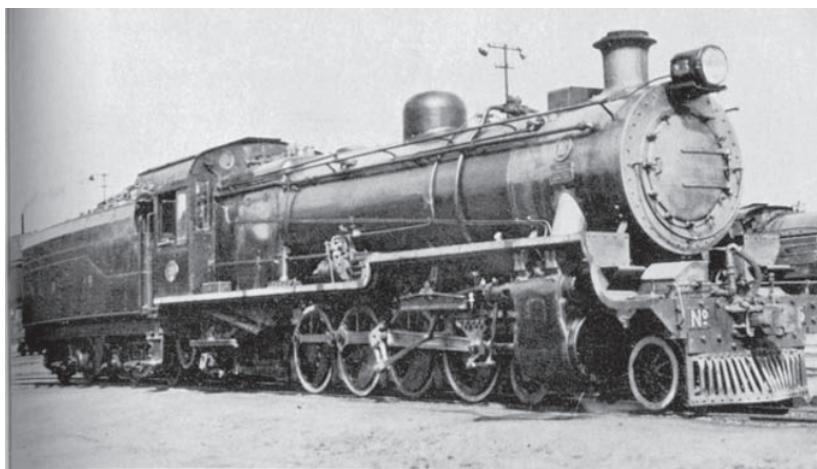


Fig. 6.1 Canadian-built Mountain at Bulawayo in 1949 (Source: A.H. Croxton, *Railways of Rhodesia*, David & Charles Publisher, 1973, p. 269)

concerning southern Zambia, that ‘construction of *injanji* (the rail line) was the most prophetic event in recent Tonga economic history, a harbinger and symbol of changes which reshaped Tonga life in fundamental and lasting ways.’⁴ I would stand by that statement, and extend it to many other African regions.

And yet, what do we know or understand of the ways Africans responded to, interpreted, or felt about these huge machines and these vast iron networks? About the ways in which Africans ‘consumed’ railways, as passengers, as customers in the sending/receiving of goods? What range of things have been said, sung, or written about railways? And finally, what of the experience of those most intimately connected with the new technology—the railway workers?

RAILWAYS AND CULTURE IN THE WESTERN WORLD

The comparative literature, orature, folklore, music, art, film, etc., from other parts of the world is vast, and suggests many prompts or leads which might be pursued in African cases.⁵

⁴ K.P. Vickery, *Black and white in Southern Zambia: The plateau Tonga economy and British imperialism, 1890–1939* (New York, 1986), 46.

⁵ For numerous references in the following brief survey of Western cultural ‘takes’ on railways I am indebted to members of The Dwights, an intellectual circle operating out of

As railways appeared and became a fact of life in the nineteenth century, they elicited a variety of reactions in the regions of their birth. On the one hand there was 'the popular nineteenth-century topos of the roaring, shrieking locomotive violating nature—what Leo Marx has taught us to call 'the machine in the garden.'"⁶ (The reference is to Marx's path breaking 1965 book of that name, subtitled *Technology and the pastoral ideal in America*). Charles Dickens, in *Dombey and Son* (1846–8), has a character observe an approaching train: 'a trembling of the ground and quick vibration in his ears; a distant shriek; a dull light advancing, quickly changed to two red eyes, and a fierce fire, dropping glowing coals; an irresistible bearing on of a great roaring and dilating mass.' Nothing less than 'the remorseless monster, Death'; and later, 'the triumphant monster, Death.' Indeed, the character meets his end by accidentally falling into a train's path.⁷ A new way of dying: Tolstoy's Anna Karenina commits suicide by throwing herself onto the tracks.

On the other hand, many celebrated the sheer wonder of the new machines, products of man but illustrating man's channelling of an almost divine creativity. Consider Wordsworth's 1833 sonnet 'Steamboats, viaducts, and railways':

Motors and Means, on land and sea at war
 With old poetic feeling, not for this,
 Shall ye, by Poets even, be judged amiss!
 Nor shall your presence, howsoe'er it mar
 The loveliness of Nature, prove a bar
 To the Mind's gaining that prophetic sense
 Of future change, that point of vision, whence
 May be discovered what in soul ye are.
 In spite of all that beauty may disown
 In your harsh features, Nature doth embrace
 Her lawful offspring in Man's art; and Time,
 Pleased with your triumphs o'er his brother Space,
 Accepts from your bold hands the proffered crown
 Of hope, and smiles on you with cheer sublime.

Yale University, including David Castronuovo, Jay Johnson, Tom Lennon, Ann Linden, Ellen Martin, David Post, Edward Rothstein, Jane Scott, and Doug Shaker. I thank them all.

⁶ G.P. Landow, 'Railways as image and plot device in *Dombey and Son*', The Victorian Web (website) accessed 1 August 2010.

⁷ Landow, 'Railways as image'.

The last word, 'sublime', in fact became the label for a whole literary/philosophical school of such celebration, usually termed 'Industrial Sublime' or 'Technological Sublime'. In his 1996 book 'American Technological Sublime' David Nye (a student of Leo Marx) devotes an entire early chapter to railways—the 'Dynamic Sublime'. (Wordsworth, his sonnet's enthusiasm notwithstanding, opposed extending the machine to his beloved garden of the Lake District in the 1840s—he was part of what Faith considers one of the earliest examples of NIMBY, 'not in my back yard').⁸

In the decades, indeed centuries, since the railways' Victorian beginnings, it is perhaps in popular song that we find their widest invocation, and the widest variety of symbolic usage. Trains can take us to good places, it seems. They are the vehicle leading to salvation in the Impressions' 'People Get Ready' and to Freedom in the Rascals' 'People Got to Be Free'. (Is it not striking that in the United States the antebellum escape routes from southern slavery—the network of safe houses, hiding places, sympathetic escorts, etc.—were collectively known as the 'Underground Railroad', even though it was of course not really a railroad at all?) Yusuf Islam, formerly known as Cat Stevens, gave us the *Peace Train*, while the O'Jays implored us to board the *Love Train*. It's not all peace, love, and freedom, though. Bob Dylan's *Slow Train Coming* is positively ominous, suggesting the approaching retribution (probably divine—it's from his Christian period) for our unrighteousness, stupidity and lack of spine. Van Morrison's *Fast Train* warns of the destructive consequences of fast living, a theme carried to further levels in Guns 'n Roses' *Night Train* and Soul Asylum's *Runaway Train*.

Trains bring your sweetheart to you (the Monkees' *Last Train to Clarksville*) or take her away (Doc Watson's *The Train That Carried My Girl From Town* or Taj Mahal's *She Caught the Katy [the Kansas-Topeka Railroad] and Left Me a Mule to Ride*). Trains take you to the big city, or, when you're beaten down by it, back to a simpler place in time (Gladys Knight & the Pips, *Midnight Train to Georgia*). Some railroad songs celebrate fictional heroes; equally some real ones, like John Henry and Casey Jones, have been elevated to mythical status by the popular songs named after them. *John Henry* concerns an African-American steeldriver (an important job in rail line construction) who defeats a steam-powered machine in a contest, but dies from exhaustion doing it; it laments the coming of the next

⁸ Faith, *World the railways made*, 53–6.

technology. Steve Goodman's *City of New Orleans*, does the same in a way, though this time what is being replaced is the railroad itself: 'this train's got the disappearing railroad blues.' Chronologically the two songs book-end the so-called 'Golden Age' of American railways—roughly, the 1860s to the 1960s. *The Ballad of Casey Jones* was based on a real engine driver who pushed his locomotive too hard, crashed and died, but saved others' lives with warnings. The Grateful Dead wrote a new version with him 'high on cocaine'—fast living again. Apparently the band was known to play both versions in concert.

The most fascinating work on the social and cultural impact of the railway in the western world may be Wolfgang Schivelbusch's *The Railway Journey*. Profusely illustrated, it offers at every turn provocative observations on how the railways differed from what went before, and how they changed people's perceptions. For instance, the railways combined the route (the rail line) and the means (the train), under one firm's control, forming a single 'machine ensemble'; a rather different relation from, say, a road-owner (including the state) charging a toll to an independent coach. Or: the way in which railways, aspiring to be Newton's 'perfect road'—hard, smooth, level, and straight – altered the natural topography of rise and fall, hill and vale, contour and curve, through cuts, embankments, tunnels, etc. The passenger thus did not 'feel' the landscape nearly so immediately as on foot, horse, coach, or even, later, the automobile. The landscape was experienced through a lens, as it were, the window, if you will. The book stimulates even when it strikes me as off-target, or plain wrong. Schivelbusch asserts that the reduction in travel time is so revolutionary in its 'annihilation of space' that 'that in-between space, or travel space, which it was possible to 'savor' while using the slow, work-intensive eotechnical form of transport, disappears on the railroads. The railroad knows only points of departure and destination.'⁹ He compares the trip to sending oneself as a parcel. I cannot agree, and I think generations of rail travellers would support me. Five hours instead of three days to get from A to B is indeed a radical reduction, but is still a palpable period of time, plenty of time to be more than a parcel. Stuff happens on railway journeys. To return to popular culture for a moment, in Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* two men—indeed strangers—plot the murder of one's wife and the other's father! In *Some Like It Hot* Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis

⁹ W. Schivelbusch, *The railway journey: Trains and travel in the 19th century* (New York, 1979), 44.



Fig. 6.2 The royal train heading for Victoria Falls, 1947 (Source: A.H. Croxton, *Railways of Rhodesia*, David & Charles Publisher, 1973, p. 220)

pursue (in drag, no less) Marilyn Monroe (no less), and hilarious set-in-a-railway-car highjinks ensue.

RAILWAYS AND CULTURE IN AFRICA

My point in tossing out these random examples and observations is simply to highlight the question of what might be out there in the experience of Africa, and Africans, with railways. I have only limited indicators at this point, but offer some of them to you now.

There is certainly one great novel out of Africa (there may well be more) which features the railway at its very centre. That would be the late Senegalese filmmaker and author Sembene Ousmane's 'God's Bits of Wood'. It is a fictionalised account of one of the turning moments in modern West African history, the strike on the Dakar-Niger railway in 1947–8. Published in the nationalist era's *annus mirabilis*, 1960, it is a novel of awakening, of the consciousness of popular power. Among other things, it is notable for the strength of its female characters. But it also registers the arrival of the industrial age with an artist's eloquence:

[The strike] was a time for suffering but for many was also a time for thought. When the smoke from the trains no longer drifted over the savanna they realised that an age had ended—an age their elders had told them about,

when all of Africa was just a garden for food. Now the machine ruled over their lands, and when they forced every machine within a thousand miles to halt they became conscious of their strength, but conscious also of their dependence. They began to understand that the machine was making of them a whole new breed of men. It did not belong to them; it was they who belonged to it.¹⁰

‘The machine ruled over their lands (...) their dependence (...) a whole new breed of men (...) who belonged to it.’ It seems overstated, but perhaps it captures the Nkrumah generation’s hopes/dreams/expectations of a great, catapulted leap to modernity.

In Southern Africa there arose, of course, a huge ‘labour empire’, based initially around the diamond and gold mines, in which rural-to-urban-and-back migrant labour arguably became *the* fact of life in the last century or more. While (from 1867) the Kimberley diamond fields took off in the absence of any significant railways—but stimulated the latter’s construction—a generation later, ‘the start of gold mining in southern Africa coincided with the dawn of the railway age in the subcontinent.’¹¹ The two grew up together. It is hard to make the link more explicit than Cecil Rhodes himself did; he once explained that he was proposing a further northerly extension of the rails ‘with the object of increasing, and thus of cheapening, the labour supply’ to the Witwatersrand and other southerly employment sites.¹² ‘More than any other mode of transport’ notes Gordon Pirie, ‘the railways in southern Africa contributed massively to shuttling migrants between countryside and the Rand.’¹³ By the second and third decades of the twentieth century, migrant gold workers were making something on the order of half-million to a million railway journeys each year. Since rail lines were typically constructed through European-held farm lands—to serve the white farmers’ needs and give them access to markets—the full migrant journey usually involved some other kind of travel to the railhead, by foot or bicycle, and later by motor vehicle and even airplane. Although many ‘voluntaries’ (unrecruited workers) bought their own tickets, a great many migrants boarded special fourth-rate *bombelas* (or *bombellas*) reserved for them—in reality, converted livestock trucks. At first, these were attached to mixed passenger/freight trains; later, there appeared ‘native labour trains’, or ‘recognised

¹⁰ S. Ousmane, *God’s Bits of Wood* (Portsmouth, NH, 1970), 32.

¹¹ G. Pirie, ‘Railways and labour migration to the Rand mines: Constraints and significance’, *Journal of Southern African studies*, 19: 4 (1993), 714.

¹² Rhodes House, Oxford, Rhodes Papers: Rhodes to Chamberlain, 28 April 1898.

¹³ Pirie, ‘Railways’, 728.

native trains', carrying only recruited migrants. A South African Railways official described a *bombela* in 1910 as:

a converted cattle truck, measuring about 30 feet by 7 feet, in which I have seen huddled as many as 40 to 45 natives. They [the trucks] are fitted with a narrow seat round the inside some 12 inches wide, and a bench down the centre of about double that width. The result is that not only are the trucks dreadfully overcrowded, but the Natives have practically no rest whatsoever,—being compelled, during the long journey, to sit and sleep bolt upright.¹⁴

The horrific conditions improved somewhat from the 1920s. Pirie suggests that the rails perpetuated the unusually high oscillation (back and forth) characteristic of the South African mines by making it 'practical and affordable' far more than foot or animal-propelled travel.¹⁵ One can see why it was cheap.

And Pirie insists, correctly, that the railway journey be considered a significant part of the migrant experience, not just a mechanical formality: 'Migrant miners were often treated as animals, or even worse, as pieces of cargo, but they were not unconscious.'¹⁶ What did they do, say, think on these journeys, what happened to them? As late as 1958, the rail trip to and from Nyasaland to the Rand took *six days*. Pirie wonders whether the appointment of gang leaders on the *bombelas* initiated social stratification, and whether the shared space and anticipation promoted solidarity, or bred disenchantment. He ends with a flight of prose connecting the journey to other notorious labour institutions, the middle passage and the compound, and to underground mining itself:

Boarding the enclosed cattle trucks signified a momentous plunge into an inorganic, noisy, dangerous world. The surface "middle passage" by train was a track to underground where existence and motion were similarly tunneled. The rolling compounds were a premonition and reminder of tremors, darkness, claustrophobia, regimentation and Spartan barracks. They foretold and echoed deep captivity, and a troglodytic existence submerged in artificial light, dripping water and smoke. The railway conveyed both men and meaning.¹⁷

¹⁴ R. Ellsworth, "The simplicity of the native mind: Black passengers on the South African railways in the early twentieth century," T. Lodge (ed.), *Resistance and ideology in settler societies* (Johannesburg, 1986), 77.

¹⁵ Pirie, 'Railways', 728.

¹⁶ Pirie, 'Railways', 729.

¹⁷ Pirie, 'Railways', 729–30.

A stunning piece of Southern African popular art which seems to answer some of Pirie's speculation comes from the renowned musician—trumpeter, flugelhornist, singer—Hugh Masekela. Masekela had a No. 1 hit in the United States in the 1960s (*Grazin' in the Grass*), lived in exile for many years, and for a time was married to the late, equally renowned Miriam Makeba. The title of his 1994 album is *Stimela*—the word in a number of southern Bantu languages for 'train' or 'coal train'; the root is borrowed, of course, from the English 'steam'. The title song is mostly instrumental, but begins with Masekela's growling, deathly, spoken introduction:

There is a train that comes from Namibia and Malawi
 there is a train that comes from Zambia and Zimbabwe,
 There is a train that comes from Angola and Mozambique,
 From Lesotho, from Botswana, from Swaziland,
 From all the hinterland of Southern and Central Africa.
 This train carries young and old, African men
 Who are conscripted to come and work on contract
 In the golden mineral mines of Johannesburg
 And its surrounding metropolis, sixteen hours or more a day
 For almost no pay.
 Deep, deep, deep down in the belly of the earth
 When they are digging and drilling that shiny mighty evasive stone,
 Or when they dish that mish mesh mush food
 into their iron plates with the iron shank
 Or when they sit in their stinking, funky, filthy,
 Flea-ridden barracks and hostels.
 They think about the loved ones they may never see again because they
 might have already been forcibly removed
 From where they last left them
 Or wantonly murdered in the dead of night
 By roving, marauding gangs of no particular origin,
 We are told. They think about their lands, their herds
 That were taken away from them
 With a gun, bomb, teargas and the cannon.
 And when they hear that Choo-Choo train
 They always curse, curse the coal train,
 The coal train that brought them to Johannesburg.

Many African railway passengers, of course, were not 'batch-registered' recruited migrants loaded in groups. They were individuals, families, small

groups of friends, etc., trying to get somewhere—to and from work, yes, but to any number of other destinations—on their own. To the early railway authorities in South Africa, they presented quite a headache; there were constant discussions of ‘irregularities’ involving African travel. These included endless and numerous incidents of Africans travelling with invalid tickets or none at all, taking the wrong trains and missing the right ones, or ‘overrunning’ the stated destination covered by their tickets.

Exasperated rail officials, like the SAR General Manager in 1933, chalked this up to ‘simplicity of the native mind.’ Needless to say, this fit comfortably with prevailing white notions of African irrationality or stupidity, particularly when confronted with the products and practices of the industrial world. Ronald Ellsworth has offered a convincing reappraisal, suggesting that in a great many instances the Africans committing these ‘dumb mistakes’—legally, petty fraud—were quite aware of what they were doing. They knew that the limited railway staff had a difficult time monitoring crowded trains, and took advantage of this—and of the fact that the mines and industries had pressured the railways to offer ‘special native fares’ in order to increase the flow of ‘voluntaries’. In theory these had to be used on the ‘native labour trains’: given the conditions we have seen aboard the *bombellas* it is hardly surprising that people constantly attempted to use the tickets to board third-class cars (which allowed non-whites) on regular trains, and evidently often got away with it. Not only comfort but speed was involved; in fact, Africans invoked the hated Pass Laws to justify their behaviour, claiming that under those laws they must reach home by a certain date. As one observer conceded, ‘time, under the circumstances, is everything to a native.’¹⁸ So much for a time-less African culture.

As Pirie postulates that railways made a high level of rural-urban oscillation feasible, so Ellsworth argues that railways facilitated urban segregation in South Africa’s large cities. The townships were surely not rural, but spatially far enough removed to make the rails critical to inter-urban movement. And in fact he gives us a rare glimpse into African use of rails for transport of goods, rather than people, in such a metropolis. The example involves none other than the fabled Zulu washermen (*Amawasha*) immortalised by Charles van Onselen some time ago.¹⁹ Forced from Johannesburg’s city centre in 1906 and relocated to Klipspruit, 13 miles

¹⁸ Ellsworth, ‘The simplicity’, 77.

¹⁹ C. Van Onselen, ‘*Amawasha*: The Zulu washermen’s guild of the Witwatersrand, 1890–1914,’ *Studies in the social and economic history of the Witwatersrand, 1886–1914*, vol. 2, *New Ninevah* (Johannesburg, 1982).

southwest, the washermen obviously faced quite a challenge serving their former customers. The railways offered a concessionary rate of 6d per 200 lb. bundle for a single washerman. Quickly there emerged a pattern of several different men's bundles being combined, and the weight somehow misrepresented—the record '200 lb. Bundle' came in at 513 lbs. Such was the demand for the washermen's services, however, that the railways largely turned a blind eye. In sum, Ellsworth argues that both regionally and locally, Africans' proclivity toward so-called petty fraud was a rational response to new, and decidedly oppressive, realities—realities the railways themselves symbolised. In any case, the problem was not 'backwardness'; quite the reverse, according to one station master: 'the Natives beat by far the White people in endeavouring to do the Department down, at least the Natives of Klipspruit who are an advanced set.'²⁰



Fig. 6.3 First train to arrive at Victoria Falls, 24 April 1904. Group includes Harold Pauling and his daughter Blanche (Source: A.H. Croxton, *Railways of Rhodesia*, David & Charles Publisher, 1973, p. 133)

²⁰ Ellsworth, 'The simplicity', 79.

CENTRAL AFRICAN RAILWAYS

Let us move the discussion back to Central Africa, to Zambia and Zimbabwe, the former Rhodesias. Consider the late Yvonne Vera's masterly novel *Butterfly Burning*. Although the railway is not so central as in Sembene's book, the story is set in the late 1940s in Bulawayo, the headquarters and absolute heart of the Rhodesia Railways system. It is about characters of an earlier generation, trying to find their way in the big city. In chapter eight Vera gives us a vivid and memorable account of getting to the city by train, and of the life of the station, the entry and exit point. The chapter opens:

Nothing has more music in it than trains.

The ease of movement, sweeping over the ground through the din and smoke and loud engines, the steam hissing into the sky and the fires blazing.

So they get on to a train and find themselves in the city. It is not possible to move freely through the closely guarded train and into the curtained coaches, through its entire wailing sound, the whistle blazing and tearing the air like paper. The stay in their Fourth Class coaches where there are golden brown benches fixed to the floor of the train, and where single mothers creep under the benches clutching their three-week-old infants whom they fold fondly on raised knees and bowed chests so they can suck some tenderness from their bodies. Whenever the train comes to an abrupt stop only the iron pedestals of the benches, and human feet, catch and hold them down. There is no light.²¹

It is a mixed train, carrying people, coal, oranges, cotton, sunflower seeds; 'the smell of tobacco rolled into massive bales, and cattle ready for abat-toirs. The smoke slides down the windows like a solid rain.'²²

Earlier, back in the countryside, there had been the decision to make the journey. At the siding, Salisbury is one way, Bulawayo the other:

The decision is not easy. It is best to watch the train for several days while it sweeps in both directions, first of course to find courage to get on it, watch it swing to and fro, then simply leap on it without checking which way it is now heading. Seeing it standing still with the doors and window open is enough to excite courage, and if it is morning, to turn the head back to see the dazzling tail of smoke blacken the sky is a miracle which makes you ponder, not what kind of sorrow is ahead, but what kind of sorrow has already died.²³

²¹ Y. Vera, *Butterfly burning* (Harare, 1998), 43.

²² Vera, *Butterfly burning*, 43.

²³ Vera, *Butterfly burning*, 44.

If for Pirie the train was a 'rolling compound', Vera expands the comparison: 'The city is like the train. It too is churning smoke in every direction, and when looked at closely, it too is moving.'²⁴ Her city is tough, but somehow irresistible. Like Masekela's migrants, 'they curse and blame the trains,' but 'then cling even more to the city.'²⁵ Even without prospects, 'getting back on the train in order to go back to an earlier safety feels like failure, like letting go.' Yet they sense that they will return home, someday, for 'they are here to gather a story about the city.'²⁶ They yearn for something concrete to take back home—the proof.

As Ellsworth's passengers illegally rode the trains, Vera's city poor illegally occupy the station waiting room. Periodically the railway guards flush them out, 'but [they] return one by one. They go to the edges of the city but come back. There is nowhere else but the waiting-room.'²⁷ If this rings a familiar bell, does it not sound like the urban sweeps of the old white regimes, or Mugabe's 'Operation Murambatsvina'? And again, darkness. At night there is no light in the waiting room except when trains pass, or in the wee hours, 'dangling like pendulums, hand-held lamps from the men inspecting the tracks, moving slowly, up and down, dancing like fireflies.'²⁸ Finally, Vera provides an echo of Dickens' monster:

Then the ground trembles like an earthquake as the train approaches. The hand placed flat on the floor of the waiting-room feels the ground pound like a heartbeat. The train finally is coming. And those who have not found a place along the benches soon learn to sleep through that frenzied beat. The nights are dark and stale with breathing and the congestion of unwashed and hungry bodies. Even here, a child is born.²⁹

In Northern Rhodesia/Zambia, there are some tantalising hints of the insinuation of railways into popular culture. The anthropologist Elizabeth Colson recalls seeing in Chona Village of Southern Province, around 1949 or 1950, a performance by a famous local woman dancer, 'Binacat', of a dance called *njanji* or *citima*. *Njanji* comes from the English 'engine', and *citima*, like Masekela's *stimela*, is an adaptation of the English 'steam' or 'steam engine'—both are Tonga terms referring to trains or railways. As recently as 2010 Colson encountered a woman in Chona who also 'remembered it [the train dance] vividly and what a wonderful dancer the woman

²⁴ Vera, *Butterfly burning*, 45.

²⁵ Vera, *Butterfly burning*, 44.

²⁶ Vera, *Butterfly burning*, 45.

²⁷ Vera, *Butterfly burning*, 47.

²⁸ Vera, *Butterfly burning*, 46.

²⁹ Vera, *Butterfly burning*, 46.

was.³⁰ The dance was an example of what in Tonga culture is known as a *masabe* dance. *Masabe* are alien spirits: 'an invading power or force that makes its victim ill until mollified by the performance of a dance drama in which the victim acts out the wishes of the invading spirit and comes to terms with it and is thereby cured.'³¹ Examples of *masabe* include 'a railway train, airplane, soldiers, ballroom dance, angels, Japanese, cannibals, or a species of animal.'³² Both Colson and Bonnie Keller note that *masabe* constitute a new spirit category, which arrived in the earlier twentieth century; in Keller's words they 'generally represented Tonga reaction to prominent aspects of colonial rule.'³³ And, we might add, a reaction to industrial technology, in the form of railways (and later airplanes), which of course were associated with colonialism. Colson also states that the Tonga word *masabe* is clearly a cognate with the Shona *mashave*, a similar spirit category, suggesting that possession by such alien things as railways had a wider currency in the region.

A more mundane danger from railways is reflected in a schoolchildren's song related by Friday Mufuzi of the Livingstone Museum.³⁴ Here is the song, which he learned in the Lozi language of western Zambia and Livingstone as a child, just after independence in 1964, together with Mufuzi's translation and commentary:

Balikani, Balikani, lukene sikolo (Friends Friends, let's go to school)

Leading voice

Kamuso lukataba (Tomorrow we shall be happy) Refrain

Mwana (The child) Leading voice

Yasakeni sikolo (Who does not go to school) Refrain

Mwana (The child) Leading voice

Uka nyandela mwabukuwa (Will suffer in an urban area) Refrain

Mwana (The child) Leading voice

Nyanji ikamupuma (The rail line will cut him) Refrain

Mwana (The Child) Leading voice

Ikamupuma Lizoho (It will cut his hand) Refrain

Wengu, wengu, wengu weeeee (Cut, cut, cut, Cutieeee) [This refers to the sound produced during the cutting process]. This part is sung by all while

³⁰ Elizabeth Colson, Personal communications, 30 November 2010 and 7 March 2011. I thank her.

³¹ E. Colson, *Tonga religious life in the twentieth century* (Lusaka, 2006), 57.

³² Colson, *Tonga religious life*, 58.

³³ B. Keller, 'Contemporary Tonga urban diviners', C.S. Lancaster and K.P. Vickery (eds.), *The Tonga-speaking peoples of Zambia and Zimbabwe: Essays in honor of Elizabeth Colson* (Lanham, Maryland, 2007), 159.

³⁴ Friday Mufuzi personal communication, 14 April 2011. I thank him.

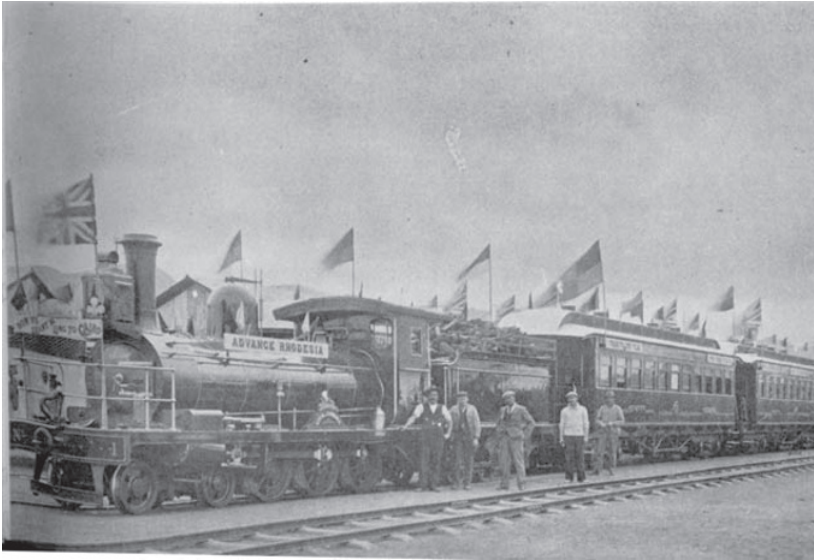


Fig. 6.4 First passenger train from Umtali on opening of Mashonaland railway to Salisbury in May 1899 (Source: A.H. Croxton, *Railways of Rhodesia*, David & Charles Publisher, 1973, p. 83)

each one moved his/her right hand to and fro on the left hand in reference to a sharp blade cutting the hand. End of song

It is interesting to observe, perhaps, that in the song one aspect of the 'new' reality—modern schools—is invoked as a defence against another—railways, and maybe urban life in general.

RAILWAYS AND INDUSTRIAL WORK DISCIPLINE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The industrial revolution was not just about machines, of course. It was about changes in the organisation and the experience of work. In many parts of the world the railways constituted the first sites of these new work cultures. As Walter Licht says of the United States, railwaymen were 'the first American workers in large-scale, corporately owned, bureaucratically managed work organizations.'³⁵ In scale, complexity, and geographical range, the railways' only real ancestors were large armies.³⁶

³⁵ W. Licht, *Working for the railroad: The organization of work in the nineteenth century* (Princeton, 1983), xiv.

³⁶ Licht, *Working for the railroad*, 4.

If in South Africa the Kimberley mines were the first large-scale, industrial age enterprise, and thus as de Kiewiet told us long ago 'the cradle and testing ground of [future] social and economic policy',³⁷ in the Rhodesias that honour fell to the railways. By 1930 the Rhodesia Railways employed around 4,500 white workers and over 18,000 blacks. Nothing else came close until the Copperbelt development from the 1930s onward. Even then, Rhodesia Railways remained the region's largest single employer; although the numbers above decreased for a time during the Great Depression, by the 1940s and 1950s they were even higher.

The issue of work discipline per se, of course, hardly originates with the industrial revolution. It is as old as humanity itself. How do you get others—or indeed, yourself—to carry out the work necessary to complete the task? This applies to parents, to farmers, to slave drivers, to shopkeepers—none of them parts of large bureaucratic organisations. In theory work discipline involves both the carrot and the stick—rewards and punishments. In practice it has often tilted radically toward one or the other. One difference which comes with the industrial age is the sheer number of workers involved. Another is the higher degree of synchronisation required, often imposed by the new machines themselves—the startup of the conveyor belt, the lowering of the car down the mine shaft by the winding engine, the departure of the train.

Hence the attention often given to changing concepts of time: time-discipline, time-sense, even time-thrift. One of the more influential articles of the past half-century is E.P. Thompson's 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', published in 1967. In it he contrasts the 'natural' and 'irregular' rhythms of pre-industrial, largely rural life with those of the industrial age. In the first there is task- as opposed to time-orientation. The pattern was 'one of alternate bouts of intense labour and idleness' especially to the degree that 'men were in control of their own working lives'³⁸ (independent peasants, for instance, or professors facing paper deadlines). This gives way to a clock-based regularity, in which closely calculated intervals of time determine the value of the labour: the hourly, weekly, or monthly wage. At first imposed, this time-sense, as well as concepts like 'devotion to duty' gradually can become internalised, abetted by the puritanical messages of church and school.³⁹

³⁷ C.W. de Kiewiet, *A history of South Africa: Social and economic* (Oxford, 1941), 90.

³⁸ E.P. Thompson, 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', *Past and Present*, 38 (1967), 73.

³⁹ A side plea: a history of clocks and watches in Africa would be most worthwhile.

Railways in fact were largely responsible for the standardisation of time and time zones in the modern world. Before, even towns short distances from each other were minutes apart in their 'official' times. The railways literally gave us Greenwich Mean Time.⁴⁰ The predecessor of the Association of American Railroads was called 'The American Time Convention.'⁴¹ Some have suggested that trains had quite a wide cultural impact concerning time. Consider Thoreau's musings, mid-nineteenth century:

They come and go with such regularity and precision, and their whistles can be heard so far, that the farmers set their clocks by them, and thus one well-regulated institution regulates a whole country. Have not men improved somewhat in punctuality since the railroad was invented? Do they not talk and think faster in the depot than they did in the stage-office?⁴²

(As an American who occasionally rides the trains, I can tell you that such precision is long gone). The railway timetable becomes the central directing text, the *raison d'être*, for the whole enterprise, and signifies the arrival of time-discipline.

To what extent do we find an industrial age work culture, including its disciplinary and time-based elements, on the Rhodesia Railways? Perhaps we could start with timetables themselves. Especially early on, partly—but only partly—due to shortages of needed material (including rolling stock) and skilled manpower, reality fell considerably short of the ideal. 'To run a time-table', recalled one railwayman, 'would have been an achievement analogous to breaking a Cape to Croydon air record.'⁴³ In fact, the white train crews were known to carry off 'extended train stops' in small towns to enjoy parties and dances. One driver regularly let his train simmer in the sun on the Shurugwi line while enjoying a game of billiards at the local hotel.⁴⁴ Such episodes echo Thompson's recounting of the persistence of older, leisurely habits—taking 'Saint Monday' off to carouse, for instance—which exasperated managers in industrialising England. In other ways too the system was more relaxed: according to

⁴⁰ Schivelbusch, *The railway journey*, 49–50.

⁴¹ Licht, *Working for the railroad*, 263.

⁴² Cited in Licht, *Working for the railroad*, 79. Originally cited in S. Holbrook, *The story of American railroads* (New York, 1947).

⁴³ J. Lunn, *Capital and labour on the Rhodesian railway system, 1888–1947* (London, 1997), 82.

⁴⁴ E.D. Hamer, *Sidelines: A collection of incidents, accidents and anecdotes relating to the railways of Zimbabwe in days gone by* (Bulawayo, 1985), 3.

the late H.L. Savory of Monze, white farmers were permitted to flag down and stop trains for 20 minutes in order to on-load the farmer's produce.⁴⁵

Thompson claims that as industrial culture matures, 'as the new time-discipline is imposed, so the workers begin to fight, not against time, but about it.'⁴⁶ This rings true on the Rhodesia Railways. The white railwaymen, many with experience from Britain, constantly wrangled with management over time issues, through their unions, the Rhodesia Railways Workers Union and the Amalgamated Engineering Union. 182 hours maximum per month; each-day-to-stand-by-itself-for-purposes-of-overtime—the issues took up days in contract negotiation and conciliation, and many painfully boring pages in the transcripts. The African railwaymen, many of whom came directly from rural backgrounds, fit even better Thompson's notion of a shift between generations. It is not accidental that the greatest African railway strike in the region's colonial history, that of 1945, began with a dispute over overtime in the goods sheds. The men involved would have been the second or third generation of Africans exposed to the rails. To borrow Thompson's phrasing, 'they had accepted the categories of their employers and learned to fight back within them. They had learned their lesson, that time is money, only too well.'⁴⁷ As the African workers organised their own unions, culminating in the Railway African Workers Union in the 1950s, they too consistently fought battles over time.

Was there a 'railway culture' among Rhodesian railwaymen which attracted them and offered incentives, the 'carrots' in establishing work discipline? There is abundant evidence that this was true for a great many white rail workers. As Licht found in the American case, 'discipline was self-engendered. Railroading offered a life of adventure, personal fulfillment, and camaraderie and the intrinsic rewards of such labor cannot be minimized.'⁴⁸

In his stimulating analysis of this Rhodesian white railwayman's culture, Lunn follows the pioneering study of Frank McKenna on Britain's rail labour, by starting with the organisation of work itself. What may appear to be a contradiction lay at its heart. The nature of the enterprise, and not least the enormous dangers involved, required absolute discipline, a chain of command, the following of orders. It is not a coincidence that so many railway managers—in Rhodesia and elsewhere—were former military

⁴⁵ Interview with H.L. Savory, 20 February 1974.

⁴⁶ Thompson, 'Time, work-discipline', 85.

⁴⁷ Thompson, 'Time, work-discipline', 86.

⁴⁸ Licht, *Working for the railroad*, 125.

commanders. Yet iron discipline is not necessarily the same as close supervision. Railwaymen—white ones, that is—were granted spaces, ‘bailiwicks’, McKenna calls them, where they largely worked on their own, or directing Africans while not being directed themselves. The extreme example, perhaps, was the isolated ganger, maintaining his ‘length’ of rail line from his simple cottage, invariably described as ‘lonely’. The key to resolving the contradiction was the internalisation of discipline. As Lunn puts it:

The railways recognised, often perforce, the desire of individuals and groups to establish a little elbow room at work. They also recognised that the concession of ‘space’ and a degree of autonomy could be harnessed so as to substitute up to a point for their lack of control over many spheres of work. In one sense, the railways could channel a white worker’s pride in his job into a feeling of obligation.⁴⁹

In McKenna’s view, a crucial source of the loyalty to railway work, and even (although strained) to railway companies, was ‘the unprecedented way in which the owners handed over the tools of production to the workers, thus establishing a proprietary interest in the care and maintenance of the equipment.’⁵⁰ In the Rhodesias this was seen in the shop artisan’s careful handling and storage of his implements. Perhaps no employees showed it more than the enginemen, that is, the drivers and firemen. For in the early days, in the Rhodesias as elsewhere, the locomotives were assigned to a single crew, which worked only that locomotive. Lunn notes the off-duty hours these men spent cleaning and polishing the engines; all in the effort, in the words of one driver, ‘to create a jeweler’s shop on wheels for natives and cattle to feast their vacant gaze on.’⁵¹ Hamer describes men affixing propellers and stars, painting and burnishing the locomotives, and giving them affectionate nicknames, ‘Popeye’, ‘Batman’, ‘Old Buck’, ‘Jumbo’. Some ‘were fanatical about the appearance of ‘their’ engines.’⁵²

The experience of the most famous Rhodesian railwayman of them all, Roy Welensky, reflected this ‘proprietary interest’, and he worked long enough to see it eroded by changing management practice. At the age of 80, he could remember the numbers (painted on the sides of the cabine)

⁴⁹ J. Lunn, ‘Capital and labour on the Rhodesian railway system, 1890–1939’, unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Oxford University, 1986), 203.

⁵⁰ F. McKenna, *The railway workers, 1840–1970* (London, 1980), 41.

⁵¹ Lunn, *Capital and Labour*, 83–4.

⁵² Hamer, *Sidelines*, 18.

of the engines he had fired over 60 years previous.⁵³ As soon as he became a mainline fireman, he was:

allocated to a driver and we had an engine. And there generally used to be a hell of a row if we didn't work her and her alone (...) What they call pooling today was unknown in those days. Every driver was allocated an engine. 'When he slept, the engine slept' kind of business (...) And it made a tremendous difference in the quality of the engines.

The 'pooling' he referred to, introduced late in his career, was a quite different arrangement, whereby locomotives were kept in nearly continuous operation, and crews would change constantly:

many men hated it. I disliked pooling intensely because you never knew what you were getting and taking out. And there were always people who would skimp the job and you had to be damned careful (...) In the handling of a pooled engine, you'd have to be very much more on the ball than you would an engine that you handled regularly.⁵⁴

Up to the time of his death, Welensky kept in his home the 'feeder' (oil can with a long, narrow spout) he began using on 'his' engines in 1928 or so. It was bronzed for him by his son.

In McKenna's scheme, railway work provided an arena for men to meet their 'need for acceptance and the desire to belong and to be seen to belong to a differential group.'⁵⁵ On the Rhodesia Railways, there developed a pride in being a community apart, of being inside the organisation and enterprise on which everything, it seemed, depended. As Lunn notes, 'both management and white labour referred to non-railway employment as 'outside' employment.'⁵⁶ Related to this, and allied with notions of empire and race, was a consciousness that railways and railwaymen were carrying on the 'pioneer' spirit, 'opening up' and 'developing' Africa. Those who let down the pioneer side, through want of strength, manliness, or character, were not worthy of it.

Welensky once articulated this ethos, later in his career, in a bitter letter to W.D. Dawson, Chief Superintendent of the Transportation Department at Broken Hill. The two had clashed over disciplinary action taken against another engineman, whom Welensky defended. 'You, of course', he wrote to Dawson, 'have resented the fact that I have considerable influence with

⁵³ Interview with Welensky, 26 February 1987.

⁵⁴ Interview with Welensky, 16 September 1988.

⁵⁵ McKenna, *The railway workers*, 41.

⁵⁶ Lunn, *Capital and Labour*, 84.

the men and that you never became a Rhodesia Railwayman.⁵⁷ When asked what he meant by the last phrase, Welensky replied: 'Well, he didn't. He never got the spirit of the Rhodesia Railways (...) He always remained a foreigner'⁵⁸—not because Dawson was a South African (many railwaymen were), but because he lacked the 'spirit' that should prevail 'inside'.

Did any of this *esprit de corps* carry over to Africans working on the Rhodesia Railways? There is little evidence that it did. The main reason, a good one, is obvious: the job colour bar. In the railways workshops, apprentices became artisans, fitters, turners, etc. Firemen became drivers. The reasonable expectation of promotion was one of the chief incentives in the internalisation of discipline. All of these jobs were closed to Africans. The railway job colour bar was not a legal one, in statute or contract, but the railway management never seriously considered breaching it until the late 1950s. (Welensky, in fact, as Federal Prime Minister, was critically involved in the negotiations.) Although they learned many skills on the job, the vast majority of black railwaymen were never paid above unskilled levels, which of course were a tiny fraction of what their white colleagues got. In this situation, with no prospect of taking on greater responsibility, it is hardly surprising that most black railwaymen felt less emotional commitment to their work, or that turnover levels were high: right into the early 1950s, over half the workforce turned over each year. It may be, as Grillo has argued based on his study of Uganda, that 'all railwaymen (...) share a common interest and experience derived from the industrial milieu in which they operate.' For instance, he notes, there emerged a common language utilising rail terminology—a drunk walks like he has 'an off-gauge load.'⁵⁹ It would be instructive to find parallel examples from the colonial Rhodesias. There are occasional hints of heroic devotion to duty, so common in the lore of other systems. Hamer ends his little collection of anecdotes with the story of an African railwayman, having been bitten by a snake, instructing his wife and child to 'man' the pumphouse works while he desperately bicycled for treatment; they did, and damaging flooding is prevented.⁶⁰ A bit of a roundabout example, for sure, but perhaps there is more out there.

⁵⁷ Rhodes House, Oxford, Welensky Papers: Old filing system – Coffin 23, file 1, Box 244. Emphasis added.

⁵⁸ Interview with Welensky, 22 August 1988.

⁵⁹ R.D. Grillo, *African railwaymen: Solidarity and opposition in an East African labour force* (Cambridge, 1973), ch. 2.

⁶⁰ Hamer, *Sidelines*.



Fig. 6.5 Beira Railway Falcon 4-4-0 no. 24 with six-wheel tender after repaint (many white enginemen on the railways took great care in looking after 'their' engines) (Source: A.H. Croxton, *Railways of Rhodesia*, David & Charles Publisher, 1973, p. 66)

We are inclined to think of large, bureaucratic organisations as impersonal, faceless, cold. And to some extent that is certainly true: most workers in such outfits will never meet the ultimate boss, unlike the way people knew the parent, the small business owner, the farmer, the slave-owner. And yet when it comes to the downside of discipline, punishment, we again face a contradiction. On the United States railways, the greatest single issue—even more than time and wages—spurring worker organisation was the perceived, and quite personal, arbitrariness and abuse at the hands of local supervisors and foremen. In 1895 a witness before the United States Strike Commission stated 'that they were almost in a helpless condition to stand against the oppression of the petty officials, and the petty officials took advantage of that feeling and deviled the men, just as their particular temperament at the moment led them to do.'⁶¹

⁶¹ Licht, *Working for the railroad*, 255.

To some extent this applies to white railwaymen in the Rhodesias. It is not an exaggeration to say that Welensky's first political base was centred on his skill in defending men charged with rules violations as their so-called 'prisoner's friend.' But imagine the situation for black rail workers. No 'bailiwick' for them. Almost all worked directly under a white foreman; indeed, virtually any white railwaymen could assume he had the right to give orders to an African; not infrequently such orders might include personal errands having little or no connection with the job or the railway enterprise at all. This 'right' should really be seen as part of the white worker's bailiwick. To be blunt: when a generous dose of colonial settler racism is injected into the scene, the result was doubly onerous for the African employees. As black rail workers and their unions began to flex muscle from the 1940s onwards, the record became rife with their complaints about arbitrary and abusive actions on the part of white workers, 'just as their particular temperament at the moment led them to do.' This partly accounted for the high rate of African turnover, through dismissals or resignations on the spur of the moment. And this included not only verbal abuse but, often and quite specifically, physical assault—what one African union official delicately called 'human touch incidents.'⁶²

Some examples. In 1945 'carriage cleaner boys' wrote to the Railways General Manager to complain of their supervisor: 'We want to know because you put the rules, why we are hits (sic) (...) [he] treat us very bad last week (...) came with his stick and hitting us.'⁶³ In 1952 300 African railwaymen gathered at a local railway African Affairs Department office to protest about a Mr. Harris in the works yard and a Mrs. Jones (one of the few females of any race employed on the lines) in the station. One after another spoke up, with some noting they were 'continually referred to as baboons' by Harris, while Jones made a point of walking past them holding her nose.⁶⁴ Later in the decade some 'bedding boys' wrote the General Manager that 'we are not treated by the right way or hand by our supervisor, monkeys, and dogs are more better to him than ourselves (...) His words are of scolding and swearing us as well as our wives, children and parents.'⁶⁵

⁶² National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) HM 56, A.H. Mwanza (General Secretary of Railways African Workers Union) to Chief Officer of African Affairs Department, 2 March 1960.

⁶³ NAZ HM 56, Carriage cleaner boys to GM, 20 June 1945.

⁶⁴ NAZ HM 56, Memorandum by R.C.N. Eiglaar, Area Controller, 28 February 1952.

⁶⁵ NAZ HM 56, Bedding boys to GM, n.d. but 1957 or 1958.

As early as 1949 the head of the system's African Affairs Department (AAD) had warned the General Manager about the number of assaults by Europeans 'who are too ready with their fists' and that such 'manhandling of an African by a European arouses a deep resentment, not only in the person so assaulted, but among all other Africans who get to hear of it.'⁶⁶ He urged the General Manager to issue a circular, stressing the railway administration's condemnation of these outbursts and its insistence that disciplinary procedures laid down in the African Staff Code be followed. The Code itself was seen by the African unions as a relic of earlier 'Masters and Servants' legislation, though certainly preferable to the spontaneous meting out of punishment by individual whites. And indeed the General Manager would issue several such circulars over the next decade or more.

But apparently with little effect. In 1958, the RAWU general secretary, Knight Maripe, sent a remarkable jeremiad to the AAD head. In it he conceded that the administration, as evidenced by its circulars, may not approve of the 'abusive language' or 'numerous incidents of assault which thrive so successfully in the Railway Industry: And the victim being the African.' However, official disapproval just amounted to words; given the structure of the situation, such behaviour could be expected:

How on earth can you give all powers that there are in the world and still expect him to keep his head! How on earth can you give protection to an individual against his potential competitor and still expect him to maintain harmonious relationship with his opponent!

The white railway worker, said Maripe, was in a sense both employee and employer, with powers over Africans like both policeman and magistrate—the bailiwick again: 'in practice the African employee is at the mercy of the lowest European employee in the Railway Industry who, by virtue of his colour, represents employing departments.' This was 'bound to breed illfeeling, and in this case, explosive racial tension. By this set-up the workers have been divided up into hostile and rigidly separate [sic] castes.' Unless things changed and soon, there was 'no hope of amity between the two. What is more the gulf widens every day that dawns.' Maripe included a not-so-veiled threat: all this for the African 'is burning into his soul the conviction that he has no future in the Railway industry

⁶⁶ NAZ HM 56, E.M.B. West (Chief Officer, African Affairs Department) to GM, 25 August 1949.

except what he can wrest from the unwilling white man by force, direct or indirect.⁶⁷

The general manager himself, W.S. Pegrum, replied. He was not amused. He took 'a very serious view' of these 'immoderate and irresponsible' statements, which he found 'gravely provocative.'⁶⁸ In a follow-up, Maripe refused to back down: 'What you have regarded as immoderate and irresponsible are the astringent truths about the actual position (...) truths which are hard for you to take because they ask to strip off illusions which are for the few privileged their comfort.'⁶⁹ The often caustic Pegrum scribbled in hand on Maripe's letter that further reply was a 'waste of time and paper. His mind is warped, that is if he has one at all.'⁷⁰

But despite his dismissive tone, Pegrum and the railways knew they had a problem. And like virtually everything else in the late 1950s and early 1960s, it was a problem intertwined with the larger political arena—specifically, with the crescendo of African nationalism (and resistance to it) in the region. Consider a 1960 report from very senior railway officials who held special meetings in Broken Hill after a series of incidents, including physical confrontations, in the locomotive shed—Welensky's old haunt. They were again trying to reign in white railwaymen, who invariably cited 'provocation' and 'insolence' from their ever-more-assertive African staff. The gravity of the situation was intensified, the officials repeatedly stated, by 'the prevailing political climate,' 'the political atmosphere,' 'political viewpoints.'⁷¹ In his response to the report the AAD chief noted that 'due to current political trends' race relations in the system had 'deteriorated to a serious degree.' The abuse must cease 'before it explodes into what could easily be very serious and large-scale disturbances.'⁷² In another memorandum he told the General Manager that it was 'quite apparent' that the General Manager's circulars 'are being ignored and European staff are taking matters in their own hands.'⁷³

Indeed, in the dying days of the Central African Federation the gloves were being taken off in many quarters, including the Rhodesia Railways, which as a pan-Rhodesian operation (and Welensky's former employer)

⁶⁷ NAZ HM 56, Maripe to Chief Officer of African Affairs Department, 14 August 1958.

⁶⁸ NAZ HM 56, Pegrum to Maripe, 6 September 1958.

⁶⁹ NAZ HM 56, Maripe to Pegrum, 15 October 1958.

⁷⁰ NAZ HM 56, Maripe to Pegrum, 15 October 1958.

⁷¹ NAZ HM 56, Joint Report on a Special Trip to Broken Hill to Deal with a Fracas in the Loco Sheds between European and African Employees, 29 February 1960.

⁷² NAZ HM 56, Chief Officer, AAD to GM, 5 March 1960.

⁷³ NAZ HM 56, Chief Officer, AAD to GM, 7 March 1960.

was in many ways a Federation symbol. In the wake of the Broken Hill disturbances the head of the African union reportedly counselled members 'to retaliate physically if struck or abused' and 'when necessary, to conduct a series of token strikes.'⁷⁴ As tensions everywhere peaked, incidents straining 'industrial discipline' hardly diminished on the railways. By 1964, with Federation dissolved, Zambian independence imminent, and the Rhodesia Railways about to be broken up, RAWU called a five day strike in Livingstone specifically to demand the removal of a white engine driver with a particularly nasty reputation.⁷⁵ High officials in the new African-led government promised that soon such folk would be replaced with trained Africans. Industrial discipline would, in theory at least, enter a new era.

The Rhodesia Railways represented a new kind of enterprise, employing many thousands of Africans in the twentieth century, a scale never seen before. Earlier, Africans had often faced harsh reprisals for any perceived error on smaller, more intimate operations like farms and small mines. But if I may end with one more popular song: for many African railwaymen, it was a case of 'meet the new boss, same as the old boss.'⁷⁶ Older, cruder patterns of enforcing work discipline persisted.

⁷⁴ NAZ HM 56, Joint Report on a Special Trip to Broken Hill to Deal with a Fracas in the Loco Sheds between European and African Employees, 29 February 1960.

⁷⁵ NAZ HM 56.

⁷⁶ The song is The Who's 'Won't Get Fooled Again' (1971).

PART III

ADVERTISING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

ADVERTISING, CONSUMING MANUFACTURED GOODS AND
CONTRACTING COLONIAL HEGEMONY ON THE ZAMBIAN
COPPERBELT, 1945–1964*

Walima T. Kalusa

INTRODUCTION

After the Second World War, European traders and foreign-based firms increasingly advertised manufactured goods in the print media controlled by the colonial state, European missionaries and mining companies in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Of singular importance among the media in which such advertisements appeared was *Nshila*, a radio magazine published fortnightly by the state for 'progressive' Africans on the Zambian Copperbelt and in other urban centres.¹ Most of the advertisements in the magazine not merely projected imported goods ranging from wrist-watches, European-style clothing and soap, to bicycles, cars, gramophones and several other symbols of modernity. They also depicted 'progressive' nuclear African families consuming these commodities in a Western fashion.

One of advertisements projecting such images that featured in *Nshila* with unrivalled regularity in the 1950s and early 1960s was a photograph of bottled Castle lager. The photograph portrays a smartly dressed, and most likely Western-educated, African husband together with his attractive wife and son on a picnic on the bank of an unnamed but picturesque river. Even though most black families could ill-afford to buy cars at that time, the family sits behind their brand new car. Its boot is open, revealing a wide assortment of bottled drinks and foodstuffs. Other drinks and food are on a camp-table, where the family is eating.² As the wife munches a banana and her son what looks like a piece of cake, the husband sips

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Conference CART IV: 'The history of consumption and social change in Central Africa, 1840–1960', Chisamba, Zambia, 27–29 August 2010. I am most grateful to the conference participants who made valuable comments on the paper.

¹ The forerunner of *Nshila* was a radio magazine called *African Listener*, whose publication seems to have commenced in the late 1940s. I have failed to trace copies of the latter magazine.

² *Nshila*, 117 (1962), 7; *Nshila*, 129 (1963), 7.

Castle beer. Prominently in front of the family in the picture is a bottle of the lager and the following caption: 'When you've found the perfect place for your picnic and the food is spread out- that's the time for Castle beer. It's the finest, most satisfying beer of all. (...) Cold Castle [is] the perfect beer for every time of the year.'³

Nshila carried several other reincarnations of this advertisement. In early 1958, it featured yet another 'progressive', urban-based African family out in the countryside. The family has just stopped their big car for refreshments. Sitting in front of the vehicle is a man appropriately dressed for the occasion in a checked shirt with his spouse in a blouse and jacket. Both are drinking Castle beer. Adoringly looking at the parents are their two beautiful daughters – one of whom holds a basket full of imported drinks and fruits.⁴ A similar depiction in *Nshila* is, lastly, a line drawing of another nuclear family in which the husband, sharply clad in a lounge suit, plays music on his Gallotone gramophone while sitting on a table with his son. Behind father and son are the man's wife and daughter similarly in immaculately adorning dresses and happily dancing to the gramophone's music. To the right of the drawing is a large photograph of a new gramophone, whose caption cajoles African consumers to purchase and use this 'wonderful' instrument at 'fashionable gatherings' with friends, thus publicly declaring their elite status.⁵

The constant portrayal of nuclear African families consuming Western manufactured goods on picnics, wearing modern-style clothing or owning cars, gramophones and other markers of modernity in these and other advertisements is emblematic of the fact that the adverts' architects aimed at more than securing a marketing space for Western commodities in imperial Africa. By routinely projecting these icons of modernity in the advertisements – and, by extension, excluding goods of local origin from them – advertisers hoped to convince Africans of the superiority of manufactured goods over local commodities. In the same vein, they demonstrated their ardent belief that in order to forge viable markets for Western commodities in extra-European settings, it was essential to inculcate in at least a few local people Euro-Christian bourgeois family values, tastes and leisure activities, such as picnicking and dancing to music played on gramophones. In this discourse of consumption, the colonised who acquired these Western lifestyles would obediently follow a linear progression

³ *Nshila*, 118 (1962), 7; *Nshila* 129 (1963), 7. Emphasis in the original.

⁴ *Nshila*, 118 (1962), 7.

⁵ *Nshila* 11 (1958), 34.

from jettisoning their 'inferior' material culture to embracing the allegedly 'superior' consumption culture of their colonial masters.⁶ Indeed, as Timothy Burke convincingly argues for colonial Zimbabwe and South Africa, the transfer of European values to the imperial periphery came to be regarded by the authors of colonial advertisements as no less indispensable to creating markets for manufactured commodities in Africa than to sustaining the profitability of Western entrepreneurship in the continent.⁷

Scholars of the consumption of manufactured products in imperialised communities, widely ranging in time and space, have aptly demonstrated that colonisers saw the transfer of metropolitan values and habits of consumption to imperialised societies as unproblematic.⁸ For, to these agents of empire, modern goods together with the values underlying material consumption in the metropole were inherently superior to those they encountered outside Europe. They, therefore, assumed that the consumption of Western objects in colonial settings would naturally be followed by the subordination of local values, tastes, and habits to those associated with the consumption of goods in metropolitan contexts.⁹

In this discourse, successful marketing of manufactured objects in extra-European societies was inextricable from the transfer of Western lifestyles, habits and values to those societies. Such values and habits could easily be exported to African colonies if the consumption of goods there was relocated from the communal space to the domain of the nuclear family, as was the case in the West since the nineteenth century. It is not surprising, then, that most advertisements in *Nshila* routinely cast the nuclear family as the most appropriate site of consumption. From this perspective, the magazine's advertisements were indisputably part and parcel of the wider Western 'civilising mission' that sought to refashion imperialised societies as well as their cultural practices in a European image. Through their advertisements, contemporary advertisers, entrepreneurs and authorities aimed as much at recreating the material culture of their colonial subjects as they sought to inscribe

⁶ My insight here derives from A. Mager, 'The first decade of 'European beer' in apartheid South Africa: The state, the brewers and the drinking public, 1962–72', *Journal of African history*, 40 (1999), 367–88.

⁷ T. Burke, *Lifebuoy men, Lux women: Commodification, consumption, and cleanliness in modern Zimbabwe* (London, 1996).

⁸ Burke, *Lifebuoy men*.

⁹ The view is informed by N. Thomas, *Entangled objects: Exchange, material culture, and colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge MA and London, 1991), Chapter 3. See also Burke, *Lifebuoy men*.

upon them Western values, without their subjects posing a threat to colonial power, as we shall see.

Historians today are certainly not oblivious to the imperialising agenda implicit in colonial advertisements. In this vein, they are aware of the efforts of European advertisers in Africa to undermine the indigenous material culture, so as to convert the local people to the gospel of Western consumption. But historians have generally been slow to explore how the subjects of empire responded to the hegemonic discourse associated with advertisements of manufactured goods in colonial settings. For their preoccupation has chiefly been to demonstrate how imperial rulers and entrepreneurs invented and mobilised marketing techniques to produce desire or need for imported commodities and to secure markets on the imperial frontier.¹⁰ Similarly, other scholars have concentrated on illuminating the deleterious impact which imports of Western origin have had on weak Third World economies in recent decades.¹¹ In either case, this academic scholarship throws insufficient light on the imaginative ways in which people on the periphery of the Western empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries appropriated advertised goods to come to terms with colonialism itself and, indeed, to subvert its power.¹²

There is little evidence that colonial subjects in Africa and beyond came to see European commodity culture with its values as superior to their own, even when they warmly embraced and avidly consumed modern

¹⁰ A good example here is Burke, *Lifebuoy men*.

¹¹ For a polished critique of this scholarship, see K.T. Hansen, *Salaula: The world of secondhand clothing in Zambia* (Chicago and London, 2000).

¹² For the ever burgeoning research industry on how Africans subverted hegemonic intentions, embedded in colonial institutions including Christianity, education and medicine etc, see D. Maxwell, *Christians and chiefs in Zimbabwe: A social history of the Hwesa people, c.1870s-1990s* (London, 1999); D. Peterson, *Creative writing: Translation, book-keeping, and the work of imagination in colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth NH, 2004); P.M. Larson, 'Capacities and modes of thinking: Intellectual engagement and subaltern hegemony in the early history of Malagasy Christianity', *American historical review*, 102:4 (1997), 969–1002; W.T. Kalusa, 'Language, medical auxiliaries, and the re-interpretation of missionary medicine in colonial Mwinilunga, Zambia, 1922–51', *Journal of Eastern African studies*, 1:1 (2007), 57–81; R.N. Hunt, *A colonial lexicon of birth ritual, medicalization and mobility in the Congo* (Durham and London, 1999); S.P. Landau, *The realm of the word: Language, gender and Christianity in a Southern African kingdom* (Portsmouth NH, 1995); A. Stoler and F. Cooper, 'Between metropole and colony: Rethinking a research agenda', F. Cooper and A.L. Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of empire: Colonial culture in a bourgeois world* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1997); J. Rich, 'Troubles at the office: Clerks, state authority and social conflict in Gabon, 1920–1945', *Canadian journal of African studies*, 1:1 (2004), 58–87; L. Schuler, 'Bridewealth, guns and other status symbols: Immigration and consumption in colonial Douala', *Journal of African cultural studies*, 16:2 (2003), 213–34; J. Gould, *Localizing modernity: Action, interests & association in rural Zambia* (Helsinki, 1997), 199.

goods. There is even less convincing evidence that their consumption of imported goods resonated with the expectations of colonial rulers, advertisers or missionaries. To the contrary, observations by scholars of the consumption culture which evolved in urban localities across Southern Africa after the Second World War indicate that the local consumption of imported goods often occurred in ways that Westerners neither fathomed nor controlled. For example, A.L. Epstein, a leading social anthropologist who frequented African beer-halls at Roan Antelope mine on the Zambian Copperbelt in the early 1950s to observe leisure activities and consumption habits among Africans, wrote that:

One's first impressions on a visit to the Beer-Hall are apt to be confused amid the constant clamour and jostling on all around. But, with repeated visits, a pattern begins to emerge. Young men dressed in gaily-coloured open-necked shirts and wearing cowboy hats, squat on the ground or move around strumming a guitar and singing the latest Copperbelt 'hit-numbers' (...) seek[ing] the attention of Bakapenta (...) the 'young ladies of the town'. Elsewhere a group of Tribal Elders are sitting together, and complain of a member of their tribe who has just bought a present of beer for an Urban Court Member of another tribe. In another group, some of the town's leading personalities, all smartly dressed in lounge suits, are in a quiet conversation in English with a well-known visitor from Kitwe or Lusaka. They gossip about personalities and discuss the political news, and they make arrangements for later meetings in their private homes.¹³

It is obvious from these observations that African consumption of manufactured goods on the Copperbelt scarcely conformed to the Western lifestyles or habits inscribed in colonial advertisements. To young men in the mining area, American cowboy hats, guitars and colourful shirts gave them a leverage to attract the attention of ladies, and, most likely, to proclaim their own virility and masculinity.¹⁴ To traditional elders, presents of industrially-brewed beer became a means to (re)construct cross-ethnic relationships, even if not all elders approved of this. And Western-educated African elites turned their proficiency in English and lounge suits into markers of urban sophistication and social distance from the urban rabble, and, as we shall see, into weapons with which to contest colonial oppression and power. Thus, even though most advertisements in *Nshila* routinely depicted 'progressive' Africans consuming manufactured

¹³ A.L. Epstein, *Politics in an urban African community* (Manchester, 1958), 9–10.

¹⁴ W.T. Kalusa, 'Elders, young men, and David Livingstone's 'civilizing mission': Revisiting the disintegration of the Kololo kingdom, 1853–1864', *International journal of African historical studies*, 42:1 (2009), 55–80.

products in conformity with modern values and habits, the advertisements failed to erode their consumers' capacity to read entirely new meanings into the foreign commodities, to put them to new uses or, indeed, to gain power from them.¹⁵

Moreover, although most advertisements in *Nshila*, as in other print media, routinely projected married African women imbibing manufactured alcoholic beverages with their spouses and wearing modern clothes, their presence in colonial drinking spaces and their sartorial habits often offended the sensibilities of their more socially-mobile African husbands. Worried that their wives' drinking habits and miniskirts, for example, might compromise the male elites' claim to social respectability and leadership, Western-educated men on the copper mines, like their counterparts across the sub-region, waged a furious campaign before and after the Second World War to banish married women from drinking in male-dominated spaces, to control their sexuality and their unsavoury sartorial preferences.¹⁶ In this manner, the Western-educated elite wittingly or unwittingly mocked their colonial masters' cultural agenda aimed at inculcating in Africans the Western family ideology and habits linked to metropolitan consumption of objects.

What all this amounts to, then, is that although the colonised quickly took to consuming advertised commodities, there was a glaring disjuncture between how they consumed those commodities and the values that their colonial masters and advertisers encoded in advertisements.¹⁷ This paper, through its analysis of advertisements in *Nshila*, seeks to explicate this disjuncture. Driven by the awareness that manufactured objects are

¹⁵ My insight here derives from Hunt, *Colonial lexicon of birth*, 189. See also her 'Letter-writing, nursing men and bicycles in the Belgian Congo: Notes towards the social identity of a colonial category', R.W. Harms etc. (eds.), *Paths toward the past: African historical essays in honor of Jan Vansina* (Atlanta GA, 1994), 187–210 and 'Domesticity and colonialism in Belgian Africa: Usumburu foyer social, 1946–1960', *Signs*, 15:3 (1990), 447–74; Kalusa, 'Elders, young men and David Livingstone's 'civilising mission''.

¹⁶ The literature on issues raised here is vast. See, for example, M.O. West, 'Liquor and libido: Joint drinking' and the politics of sexual control in colonial Zimbabwe, 1920s–1950s', *Journal of social history*, 30:3 (1997), 645–67; P.M. Martin, 'Contesting clothes in colonial Brazzaville', *Journal of African history*, 35 (1994), 401–26. For the post-colonial period, see A. Wipper, 'African women, fashion, and scapegoating', *Canadian journal of African history*, 6:2 (1972), 329–49 and T. Burgess, 'Cinema, bell bottoms and miniskirts: Struggles over youth and citizenship in revolutionary Zanzibar', *International journal of African historical studies*, 35:2/3 (2002), 287–313.

¹⁷ See also D. Kallmann, 'Projected moralities, engaged anxieties: Northern Rhodesia's reading publics, 1953–1964', *International journal of African historical studies*, 32:1 (1999), 71–117.

This is the life...and
THIS IS THE BEER!

**Friends, food
 and cold Castle**

When you've left the city far behind - when the sun is hot and you've pulled up for a snack - that's the time for Cold Castle. It's the finest, most satisfying beer of all. Cold Castle is so refreshing, so full of flavour - pure and sparkling clear! It's the *best* beer of all. Cold Castle - the perfect refreshment for every day of the year!

RHODESIA'S FAVOURITE BEER

© 1951 182/7008

Fig. 7.1 Advertisement for Castle lager in *Nshila* (Source: National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka)

'socially constructed' and possess their own biographies,¹⁸ and taking its clue from the recent academic discourse that places a high premium on the limits of imperial power,¹⁹ the paper attends to the imaginative ways in which Africans on the colonial Zambian Copperbelt reversed the unilateral cultural and political agenda that their white rulers and advertisers harnessed to the advertisements of manufactured commodities after the Second World War. Whereas European advertisers mobilised advertisements to control how and where Africans consumed imported products, the paper maintains that migrant workers on the Copperbelt creatively transformed those very commodities into a means to (re)configure pan-ethnic and gender relations, to forge urban identities, to mark social difference and, ultimately, to contest imperial power. Thus, far from being a sharp weapon of cultural or political subjugation, as advertisers intended, Western goods became an instrument through which imperial subjects negotiated history, often in ways that colonial authorities and advertisers neither expected nor controlled.

ADVERTISING AS A MARKETING STRATEGY

The preponderance of advertising as a strategy for marketing commodities in post-1945 Zambia can perhaps best be comprehended against a brief backdrop of the forces that thwarted the development of the manufacturing industry in the territory. First, from the early days of the colony to the 1920s, British authorities in the territory enacted such debilitating policies as taxation and labour migration, through which they sought to transform the territory into a reservoir of cheap African labour for white-owned capitalist ventures in more developed parts of Southern Africa, rather than as a self-sufficient economic entity.²⁰ Secondly, until well after the Second World War, the authorities discouraged white immigration into the colony. Thus, the white population in the colony remained meagre. Even as late as the 1950s when the colonial authorities started to actively encourage white settlement in the territory, there were only about

¹⁸ See Hansen, *Salaula*, 13; and her 'Transnational biographies and local meanings: Used clothing practices in Lusaka', *Journal of Southern African studies*, 21:1 (1995), 131–45; also 'Second-hand clothing encounters in Zambia: Global and local histories', *Africa*, 69:3 (1999), 343–65; Thomas, *Entangled objects*; Burke, *Lifebuoy men*.

¹⁹ See Footnote 12.

²⁰ See L. Gann, *A history of Northern Rhodesia: Early days to 1953* (New York, 1969).

65,000 whites in the whole country.²¹ By discouraging white settlement in the colony, the authorities denied the territory European expertise, capital and markets, which were indispensable to the development of manufacturing industries elsewhere on the continent after the Second World War.²² On the other hand, the African population was equally just too small. Standing at only two and a half million in the mid-1950s, it was also too impoverished to create an elastic market for manufactured commodities.²³ Compounding this situation were several other forces. These included the lack of a communication infrastructure, the weakness of local merchant/industrial capital in relation to that in neighbouring Zimbabwe and South Africa, and, finally, the eagerness with which authorities in colonial Zambia granted favourable trade/customs concessions to firms based in the latter two countries, often at the expense of local manufacturers.²⁴ Combined, these forces severely hampered the development of a thriving manufacturing sector in the colony.

The emergence of the mining industry on Northern Rhodesia's Copperbelt after the 1920s did little to stimulate the secondary industry, even though the mines created room for the marketing of some locally-produced capital goods.²⁵ The reliance on the mining industry by successive colonial regimes for revenue – a situation that persists to this day in Zambia, with dire economic implications- created little impetus for the expansion of other sectors of the economy. Thus, from as early as the 1920s onwards, the copper industry continued to be the most dominant element in the economy, as is indicated by the following figures. Between 1945 and 1953, copper exports alone accounted for an average of 86.5% of the colony's total exports, with other mineral exports adding another 8.8%. Moreover, in the decade between 1954 and 1964, the mining industry alone contributed an average of 46.5% to the gross domestic product.²⁶

The colony's dependence on copper exports for revenue, coupled with its debilitating policies, severely stifled the growth of the local manufacturing sector. As a sequel, the territory almost entirely depended on

²¹ Hansen, *Salaula*, 47.

²² See Burke, *Lifebuoy men*, Chapter 4.

²³ Hansen, *Salaula*, 46–7.

²⁴ Hansen, *Salaula*, 47.

²⁵ R.E. Baldwin, *Economic development and export: A study of Northern Rhodesia, 1920–1960* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966).

²⁶ These figures derive from Baldwin, *Economic development*, 35.

imported manufactured goods to meet most of its requirements throughout the colonial period.²⁷ This situation, scarcely reversed even after the colony witnessed a considerable expansion of its secondary industry after the Second World War, profoundly shaped the manner in which manufactured goods were locally marketed. Unlike in South Africa or colonial Zimbabwe where intense competition for the African market between manufacturers spurred far-reaching innovations in marketing research and techniques in the aftermath of the war, the weak secondary sector in colonial Zambia produced far fewer marketing innovations in the same period. Indeed, most of the European entrepreneurs and firms operating there restricted their marketing strategy to advertising commodities in African-oriented newspapers and magazines, private or public. These advertisements were mostly in the form of strip cartoons, line drawings and photographs.²⁸ Supplementing them were mail-order catalogues featuring goods ranging from wrist-watches, suits, shoes and shoe polish to bags and toys. Among the foreign-based firms that sent catalogues to their customers in the colony – sometimes offering them free post and packaging for purchases over £3 – were the United Watch Diamond Company in South Africa, the Lennards Stores, J. Pick and Sons Ltd., and Oxendale, all of which were based in the United Kingdom.²⁹ Audio advertisements of mostly toiletries and patent medicines, aired by the government-controlled Federal Broadcasting Services in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, completed the list of advertisements of manufactured products destined for the African market.³⁰

Karen Tranberg Hansen has observed that advertisements of manufactured products in Zambia before independence lacked an ‘imaginative appeal’.³¹ True as her observation may be, it, nonetheless, obfuscates the hegemonic discourse – couched in a modernising rhetoric – that informed the advertisements of goods in most parts of Southern Africa after the Second World War, a topic that Timothy Burke has so eloquently analysed. As Burke insists, the architects of this discourse portrayed the existing

²⁷ See Northern Rhodesia, *Report of the commission of inquiry into the cost of living* (Lusaka, 1950), 96.

²⁸ See also Hansen, *Salaula*, 47.

²⁹ *Nshila* 116 (1962), 17–8. Oxendale had been doing business with African customers on the Copperbelt from as early as the 1930s, if not earlier. See J.M. Davis, *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* (New York, 1933); Hansen, *Salaula*, 49.

³⁰ Interview with Andrew Ndlovu, former migrant worker, Ndola, 15 June 2010.

³¹ Hansen, *Salaula*, 47.

African culture of consumption, with its related lifestyles, as both mysterious and backward. The architects, Burke continues, thus saw the local culture of consumption as a major barrier which they had to overcome in order to secure markets for Western goods in Africa. Unsurprisingly, they incessantly called for the reconstruction, if not complete annihilation, of African material culture. To European advertisers in South Africa and Zimbabwe, whose discourse profoundly informed the marketing of goods in modern Zambia and Malawi after the war, advertising as a marketing technique was, therefore, a double-edge sword. Wielding it, they hoped to not just penetrate the African society, but also to transform its consumption culture. In deploying advertisements, their authors sought to inscribe Western needs, habits, values and material identity upon Africans, thus turning them into pliant *connoisseurs* of Western goods.³²

This hegemonic/modernist discourse inspired the advertisements that featured in *Nshila* and, of course, in other print media in Southern Africa as a whole in the aftermath of the Second World War.³³ The frequent appearance in the magazine of advertisements of nuclear African families consuming imported commodities suggests that the principal concern of the advertisements was, at the risk of repetition, to relocate local consumption of commodities from the communal domain, widespread in African societies, to the nuclear family. This view is not only supported by the advertisements of Castle lager with which this paper began. Many other advertisements in *Nshila* routinely portrayed immediate families consuming a wide range of manufactured commodities, not the least of which included sewing machines, skin-lightening creams, watches, bicycles and bottled beer. Without belabouring the point, these advertisements pointed to the nuclear family as the most ideal arena for commodity consumption.

Apart from deploying advertisements to redirect African consumption towards the confines of the immediate family, advertisers further used them to script on colonised societies Western ideologies, values and habits that seemingly underlined the consumption of commodities among Europeans, both in Africa and in the metropolitan world. It is to this end that most advertisements in *Nshila* made unmistakable connections between consuming manufactured goods and such bourgeois leisure

³² Burke, *Lifebuoy men*, Chapter 5.

³³ The majority of the European firms operating in Zambia and Malawi before and after 1945 were subsidiaries of either South African or Zimbabwean-owned companies and their chief executives were certainly influenced by the marketing rhetoric in those territories.

habits as picnicking or camping in the countryside. Indeed, many advertisements in the magazine and newspapers modelled 'progressive' Africans as people whose enjoyment of imported goods was inexorably linked to other Western leisure pursuits: fishing, riding bicycles, playing golf or attending 'fashionable gatherings'.³⁴ 'After a hot game of golf', pontificated an advertisement in *Nshila* in 1963, 'that's the time for Cold Castle.'³⁵ Another pictured a well-known South African football player, Stephen Kalamazoo Mokone, appropriately wearing his sports outfit and contentedly smoking a huge Life cigarette. 'This famous man', declared the advertisement's caption, 'goes for big things in life [:] Big king size satisfaction. Follow Kalamazoo's example. Enjoy Life.'³⁶ The ultimate goal of all these advertisements is obvious: Africans who attended the gatherings of the elite, played golf or emulated Mokone's sportsmanship and other bourgeois pastimes would turn into avid consumers of advertised commodities. In this way, they would signal their emulation of the colonial rulers' habits and tastes that underscored European social status, privilege and power.

The crusade to colonise the indigenous culture of consumption through advertisements meshed neatly with the developmentalist discourse of the colonial state and of the policy of labour stabilisation vigorously pursued by mining companies in the post-war period.³⁷ State officials came to see advertisements as indispensable to transforming at least a small fraction of the African workforce in the mining industry into industrial, semi-urbanised men. This transformation could be accelerated by promoting European material culture among black miners. This, in turn, would lead to the rise of a contented, pliant and productive African middle class more attuned to Western lifestyles and work habits than the previous generation of African labourers. More significantly, authorities envisaged that

³⁴ See *Nshila*, 116 (1962), 43; *Nshila*, 120 (1962), 7; *Nshila*, 132 (1963), 18.

³⁵ *Nshila*, 130 (1963), 18. On Mokone's prowess as a football player in South Africa, see P. Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, politics and society in South Africa* (Scottsville, 2004), 87–8.

³⁶ *Nshila*, 131 (1963), 34.

³⁷ Much ink has been spilled over this topic. See, for example, J. Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1999); F. Cooper, *Decolonisation and African society: The labour question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996); J.L. Parpart, "Where is your mother?": Gender, urban marriage, and colonial discourse on the Zambian Copperbelt', *International journal of African historical studies*, 27:2 (1994), 241–71. See also L.A. Lindsay, 'Domesticity and difference: Male breadwinners, working women and colonial citizenship in the 1945 Nigerian General Strike', *American historical review*, 104:3 (1999), 783–812.

such contented workers would pose no threat to colonial power.³⁸ On the other hand, mining companies' endorsement of the consumption of European goods among black workers was consistent with their policy of labour stabilisation after the war. As many labour historians have eloquently argued, this policy was prompted by the ever escalating demand for skilled African manpower in the rapidly expanding copper industry.³⁹ For these reasons, it is easy to grasp why both mine management and colonial administrators enthusiastically encouraged the publication of advertisements of manufactured commodities in African-oriented newspapers and magazines, including *Nshila*.⁴⁰

If European authorities regarded the consumption of goods as essential to securing colonial power and stabilising labour, missionaries, including R.J.B. Moore of the London Missionary Society, who evangelised on the Copperbelt in the 1930s and 1940s attempted to use advertisements to insulate and wean Africans away from the corrosive effects of their exposure to urbanisation, capitalist materialism and industrialism.⁴¹ To Moore and many other missionaries, unbridled consumption of Western commodities among Africans would only deepen their moral decadence, consequently leading them to worship at the altar of Western materialism, rather than that of the Christian God.⁴²

Missionaries, R.J.B. Moore included, hoped to forestall the rise of materialism among Africans not only through propagating the faith. Aware of the transformative power of advertisements, they also sought to sanitise the emerging African urban material culture through publishing advertisements in mission-owned journals, newspapers and books. Predictably, they routinely infused such advertisements with Christian imageries and meanings.⁴³ Moore, for one, saw the great demand for mission print media with their advertisements among Africans in mine compounds as a huge

³⁸ This point is eloquently discussed by Cooper, *Decolonisation*, 2.

³⁹ See for example, G. Chauncey, 'The locus of reproduction: Women's labour in the Zambian Copperbelt, 1927–1953', *Journal of Southern African studies*, 7:1 (1981), 135–64; Parpart, "Where is your mother?"

⁴⁰ For examples of magazines run by mining companies for African readers, see Footnote 56.

⁴¹ R.J.B. Moore, *These African copper miners*, revised with appendices by A. Sanderlands (London, 1948).

⁴² Moore, *These African copper miners*; Mine Industrial Archives (formerly Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Archives, Ndola, Zambia) (ZCCM), 10.7.10B, Cooperative work in the African Copper Belt by R.J.B. Moore of the London Missionary Society, 14 November 1937. See also E.W. Doell, *Hospital in the Bush* (London, 1957); E. Burr, *Kalene memories: Annals of the old hill* (London, 1956).

⁴³ For a more detailed discussion on this topic, see Hansen, *Salaula*.

opportunity to induct migrants into Christian modes of behaviour, to teach them how to consume modern goods in a Christian manner, and, most importantly, to reclaim their souls for Christ.⁴⁴ Dr. Dorothea Lehmann, another missionary on the Copperbelt in the 1950s, echoed similar views. She played an important role in opening libraries, in popularising reading and in running classes for African women in the mining area. Lehmann encouraged women attending her classes to learn how read and write, knit, sow and cook, all in keeping with the Christian crusade to domesticate African female labour. She also reportedly stimulated group discussions on the Christian messages and virtues embedded in mission publications, including advertisements.⁴⁵ To Lehmann, as to Moore, such advertisements were clearly an instrument through which evangelists hoped to reconstruct African domesticity and material consumption according to their own values and beliefs.

It is apparent from these observations that advertising modern products in the print media in late colonial Zambia came to be harnessed to the cart of varying colonial projects and visions. While European advertisers mobilised adverts to transform black societies into avid consumers of exotic commodities, mining companies, missionaries and administrative officials turned them into a means to stabilise labour, to Christianise local consumption of goods, and to entrench imperial power, respectively. These projects were all inexorably tied to the wider Western *mission civilisatrice* on the imperial periphery. This grand mission was designed to recreate colonised societies in the image of Western modernity, simultaneously turning them into a 'consumer frontier' for imported products, and into safe havens for the exercise of imperial power and authority.⁴⁶

CONSUMING COMMODITIES AND CONTRACTING COLONIAL HEGEMONY

European advertisers in the colony under probe left behind no studies on how effective advertising was as a marketing strategy. It is impossible,

⁴⁴ Hansen, *Salaula*.

⁴⁵ Interview with Mary Chomba, Kitwe, 22 August 2009; National Archives of Zambia (NAZ), W1/2/21, Dr [Dorothea] Lehmann, Report on Women's and Girls' Work at Mufulira, 1951. See also J.V. Taylor and D. Lehmann, *Christians of the Copperbelt: The growth of the church in Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1961). See also Parpart, "Where is your mother?"

⁴⁶ I borrow the term 'consumer frontier' from E.A. Perkins, 'The consumer frontier: Household consumption in early Kentucky,' *Journal of American history*, 78:2 (1991), 486–510.

therefore, to accurately assess the impact which their advertisements exerted upon the consumer culture that Africans forged on the Copperbelt after 1945. Yet even when they consumed modern clothes, watches, gramophones and cars in ways that seemed to parallel those of Europeans, as some contemporary observers were wont to imagine,⁴⁷ the meanings which Africans read into, and the uses to which they put Western goods, widely diverged from those inscribed in colonial advertisements. Even from as early as the nineteenth century onwards, successive European traders and visitors to the continent were often surprised that their local business interlocutors unfailingly distributed Western manufactures to their kinsfolk, often as quickly as they purchased them.⁴⁸ This practice continued well into and outlasted colonial rule. Between the 1930s and 1950s, European anthropologists studying the rising urban African consumer habits in wage employment centres in the colony routinely reported that migrant workers purchased and used manufactured goods to meet social and traditional obligations to their rurally-based kinsfolk. In 1951, a worker on the Copperbelt told anthropologist J. Clyde Mitchell that it was shameful to go back 'home' (village of origin) without goods to share with relatives, who expected him to return with wealth.⁴⁹ More recently, a former migrant miner to the Copperbelt in the 1940s and 1950s, reminisced that: 'It was unthinkable [for workers] to return home from the mines [*kumikoti*] without European cooking utensils, clothes, suits, sewing machines, hats, bicycles and money to give to their relatives and chiefs.'⁵⁰ Another added rhetorically: 'How could a worker go home without goods [earned on the mines] for his kinsmen? Only fools did that [and] all those who went back to their villages empty-handed lost their folks' respect', risking to become social misfits.⁵¹ Indeed, migrants reluctant to return

⁴⁷ See J. Clyde Mitchell and A.L. Epstein, 'Occupational prestige and social status among urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia', *Africa*, 14:1 (1959), 31; J. Clyde Mitchell, 'The Kalela Dance', *Rhodes-Livingstone papers*, 27 (1956). For a nuanced rejection of the view that Mitchell and Epstein regarded African consumption of modern clothing and other commodities as a mere imitation of European consumption, see Hansen, *Salaula*, 50–1.

⁴⁸ See Kalusa, 'Elders, young men and David Livingstone's 'civilizing mission'; McKittrick, *Generation*.

⁴⁹ See J. Clyde Mitchell, 'A note on the urbanisation of Africans on the Copperbelt,' *Rhodes-Livingstone journal*, 12 (1951), 24.

⁵⁰ Interview with Lazarous Manda, former migrant miner, Kitwe 22 June 2010.

⁵¹ Interview with Bornwell Chitulika, former migrant miner, Kitwe, 22 June 2010. Emphasis mine. According to the informant, a song sung in Zambia's Northern Province in the 1950s and 1960s roundly denounced labour migrants to the Copperbelt who refused to share their 'wealth' acquired on the mines with their rural relations, rhetorically asking them whether they would be buried by the 'white man's goods' or their kinsmen when they died.

'home' to share their wealth were roundly denounced in popular songs as 'restless wanderers', whose love for 'the sweets of Ndola-town' (urban life with its material things) had made them lose so much of their senses that they had turned their back on their own culture.⁵²

It is evident therefore that modern commodities on the Copperbelt increasingly shaped the rhythm of migrants' quotidian life and gave birth to new (contested) tastes and desires. But the consumption of Western goods occurred in peculiarly African ways, ways that European advertisers, manufacturers and colonial authorities seldom fully comprehended. Signalling their blatant refusal to restrict the consumption of goods to the nuclear family, migrant workers transformed them into a means to lubricate their social relationships with rurally-based kinsmen and women. If Western money shaped social ranking in colonial West Africa, as Jane Guyer has ably argued,⁵³ manufactured goods earned on the Copperbelt enabled their owners to fulfil socially and culturally-recognised obligations toward relations and traditional rulers alike.⁵⁴

Demonstrating their prodigious capacity to confer novel uses upon foreign goods, African elites and ordinary workers alike further deployed these items to proclaim social worthiness and to consolidate social prestige and reputations. Hortense Powdermaker, an American anthropologist who carried out research on the mines in the 1950s, observed that virtually all African miners eagerly purchased watches, clothes, radios and furniture as a means 'to show off'. Those reluctant to do so, the anthropologist added, were ridiculed as irresponsible fools, drunkards or witches by their neighbours.⁵⁵ In contrast, mineworkers with a penchant for elegant imported goods, especially clothes, easily attracted their neighbours' envy. They further commanded the respect of village folks upon their return

⁵² This is well illustrated in songs sung by Alick Nkhata in the 1950s. See P. Fraenkel, *Wayaleshi* (London, 1959), 71. Ndola was/is the provincial administrative centre of the Copperbelt.

⁵³ J. Guyer, *Marginal gains: Monetary transactions in Atlantic Africa* (Chicago, 2004). See also Schler, 'Bridewealth' and A.G. Adebayo, 'The currency devaluation and rank: The Yoruba and Akan experiences', *African studies review*, 50:2 (2007), 87–109.

⁵⁴ This is notwithstanding that endless conflicts sometimes erupted across colonial Africa between migrant workers, elders and other relatives over who should control the wealth acquired from wage employment. See S. Berry, *Fathers work for their sons: Accumulation, mobility, and class formation in a Yoruba extended community* (Los Angeles, 1985); E. Mandala, *Work and control in a peasant economy: A history of the lower Tchiri Valley in Malawi, 1859–1960* (Madison, 1990); P. Harries, *Work, culture and identity: Migrant labourers in Mozambique and South Africa* (Portsmouth NH, 1994); M. McKittrick, *To dwell secure: Generation, Christianity, and colonialism in Ovamboland* (Portsmouth NH, 2002).

⁵⁵ H. Powdermaker, *Copper town, changing Africa: The human situation on the Rhodesian Copperbelt* (New York and Evanston, 1962), 94–5.

'home', as the following exchange over an imported overcoat between two African miners recorded by Powdermaker attests:

First Miner: Mr Banda has ordered an overcoat from Oxindales (...) at seven pounds, fifteen shillings. It is very wonderful, indeed.

Second Miner: Ah!

First Miner: Yes, there are three kinds of overcoats in the Oxindales catalogue, but they are not good. The one this man ordered is wonderful. In June (...) he will be wearing it to the beer hall, since he is a strong drinker, and people will all be looking [admiring] him. The coat is brown in color and has very long hair. If he wears it in town, policemen can be asking him from where he got it. (...) The other day when he put it on, three Europeans asked him where he got it. Ah, it is wonderful.

Second Miner: You will order one, I guess.

First Miner: Yes, I must make sure that I get one. I shall order it before I go home next month. People at home [miner's village of origin] will just fall off the chair [with admiration and respect] when they see that coat.⁵⁶

It is evident, then, that African migrants transformed manufactured goods into a means to garner social respect. Equally, they appropriated them to craft entirely new relationships or, indeed, to discard unwanted ones.⁵⁷ In a move that lends veracity to the polemic that the consumption of goods brings together people from different socio-cultural spectrums into intimate networks of exchange and trust,⁵⁸ workers on the copper mines deployed imported products to forge relationships that transcended race and ethnicity and that, ultimately, came to define their urban social identity. By the 1950s and 1960s, some of them purchased goods on credit from both Indian and European-owned shops, in spite of rampant racism.⁵⁹ Others had by that time opened their own shops or engaged in other income-generating activities in which they employed people from different ethnicities. In the 1940s, Moore wrote of a Bemba-speaking tailor on the Copperbelt who employed a Luvale hawker to sell his clothes in the area's mining towns. When his employee became fatally sick, the tailor took care of him and met his funeral expenses.⁶⁰

The consumption of manufactured commodities occurred across racial and ethnic boundaries in countless other ways. Traditional elders in mine compounds, it will be recalled, shared manufactured beer with others from different ethnic groups, reinforcing the nascent multi-ethnic

⁵⁶ Powdermaker, *Copper Town*, 94–5.

⁵⁷ c.f. Kalusa, 'Elders, young men and David Livingstone's "civilising mission"'.
⁵⁸ See Perkins, 'Consumer frontier', 494.

⁵⁹ Interview with Laban Pelekamoyo, former migrant worker, Luanshya, 16 April 2010.

⁶⁰ Moore, *African copper miners*.

relationships. Migrants on the Copperbelt and beyond, moreover, increasingly used Western money in transactions essential to contracting and sealing cross-ethnic marriages, even though some of them opposed such marriages.⁶¹ Collectively, the practices that emerged around the acquisition and consumption of commodities inevitably brought people into relationships of trust. Like sharing the wealth procured on the copper mines with rural relatives, these practices further defied colonial projects intended to narrow the space within which the subjects of empire could consume Western objects.

Although African workers undoubtedly employed manufactures to create relationships of trust, it is noteworthy, too, that their consumption of these products did not always go uncontested. A.L. Epstein's fascinating ethnographic analyses of African court cases in the mining region between 1950 and 1956 indicate that endless marital and gender conflicts flared up around the consumption of commodities of European origin.⁶² According to the anthropologist, African men, especially the emerging elites, incessantly complained about their wives and girlfriends who bleached their skin with creams, painted their lips or smoked cigarettes. They equally inveigled against women who imbibed beer in male-dominated drinking domains, particularly in beer-halls infamous for their moral laxity. Between the 1950s and 1960s their complaints, reportedly sparked by women's incessant demand for money and for imports, found expression in a long stream of letters published in newspapers and magazines, including *Nshila* itself. Besides insisting that women's consumption of Western goods did not conform to the 'customs of home', they caricatured them as cultural misfits who had become 'entirely differently creatures'. They also denounced women's appetite for foreign goods as a grave danger, which, morally and culturally, was 'destroying the country'.⁶³ But literate wives were not slow to shoot back at these incriminating charges. By the 1950s they, too, were publishing letters in the press, castigating Western-educated men as hypocrites who enticed younger girls into illicit sexual liaisons with their money and lounge suits, while expecting 'their wives to stay at home to look after children.'⁶⁴

⁶¹ For details on this topic, see G. Geisler, 'Moving with tradition: The politics of marriage amongst the Toka of Zambia', *Canadian journal of African studies*, 26:3 (1992), 437–561; Schler, 'Bridewealth'.

⁶² A.L. Epstein, *Urbanisation and kinship: The domestic domain on the Copperbelt of Zambia, 1950–1956* (London etc., 1981).

⁶³ Epstein, *Urbanisation and kinship*, 351.

⁶⁴ See *African miner*, 1953–4; *Nchanga miner*, 1951–62; *Nchanga weekly*, 1961–6. Interview with Mildred Mwale, wife of a former migrant, Ndola 15 June 2010; Interview with Mauren

Confirming Nicolas Thomas's perceptive remark that the consumption of imports is largely conditioned by prevailing socio-economic and political circumstances and not by the goods' inherent characteristics,⁶⁵ or by extension, how they are marketed, migrant men and women's accusations and counter-accusations over manufactured commodities were fuelled by anxieties engendered by existing social conditions on the mines. 'Single' men, allegedly renowned for their moral lapses, lived in proximity to women in overcrowded compounds. This generated a climate of suspicion and anxiety especially among the African elites, the majority of whom were married. Such suspicions and anxieties were all the more real, for the 'single' workers on the mines far outnumbered women and patronised the same drinking spaces as the wives of the elite.⁶⁶

Worried that their spouses' fidelity was at stake in the Copperbelt's overcrowded beer-halls, educated men, like their counterparts in colonial Zimbabwe, campaigned relentlessly to prevent married women from drinking beer in beerhalls, from wearing miniskirts and from using skin-lightening toiletries.⁶⁷ In this manner, they hoped to hold their wives morally accountable, shield them from 'single' workers' temptations and thus discipline their wives' sexuality. In return, the elites could safeguard their own social respectability, secure their reputations and lay claim to urban leadership.⁶⁸

But by questioning how their spouses consumed their earnings and suits and by consuming beer in beerhalls, wives hoped to rein in their unfaithful husbands and assert their own social freedom. Both sexes on the Copperbelt, therefore, transformed the consumption of manufactured goods into a discursive terrain of cultural creation, negotiation and contestation. On that terrain, they acrimoniously renegotiated gender and marital relations, urban identity, as well as the position of women in a rapidly changing society.⁶⁹ And they did so in ways that rarely resonated

Phiri, retired typist, 15 April 2010; Interview with Margret Mulenga, wife of former migrant, Ndola, 16 April 2010; see also Parpart, "Where is your Mother?"

⁶⁵ Thomas, *Entangled objects*.

⁶⁶ Parpart, "Where is your mother?"; See also M.O. West, *The rise of an African middle class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898–1965* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2002); and his 'Liquor and libido'. In reality, most of the 'single' men were married but had left their spouses in their villages of origin.

⁶⁷ Parpart, "Where is your mother?"; West, *The rise of an African middle class*.

⁶⁸ Parpart, "Where is your mother?"; West, *The rise of an African middle class*.

⁶⁹ This analysis is informed by Martin, 'Contesting clothes'; Parpart, "Where is Your Mother?"; West, *African middle class*.

with colonial or metropolitan lifestyles. In this manner, they unwittingly confounded the colonial rulers' unilateral and undemocratic ambition to influence how black urban dwellers ordered their material and social life.

Apart from consuming European goods in ways that defied the hegemonic project and vision implicit in advertisements, Africans in the colony more pointedly harnessed some Western commodities to contest colonial political power and racism. In the 1950s, Kenneth Kaunda, who played a pivotal role in the nationalist struggle leading to the country's independence in 1964, used his imported guitar to popularise the nationalist cause in Zambia's Northern Province in the late 1940s. As a composer, he, in his role as the Organising Secretary of the African National Congress (ANC), travelled the length and breadth of the province strumming his guitar to the accompaniment of his politically-charged songs composed to stir anti-colonial consciousness in villages. As Kaunda's autobiography shows, his music and guitar attracted numerous attendees at the political meetings which the future president of Zambia addressed. In his own words, he effectively exploited this situation to discredit colonial rule as well as to win mass following for the nationalist crusade.⁷⁰ Later, in the late 1950s, when Kaunda and other more radical elements broke away from the moderate ANC to form the United National Independence Party (UNIP), he would again turn his Western guitar and music against rivals in the ANC, with telling consequences for their political careers.⁷¹

Kenneth Kaunda did not stop short of playing the guitar to fight foreign rule and fellow political competitors. He, like other nationalists, further transformed the consumption of manufactured commodities itself into a hot arena of anti-colonial agitation. In the 1950s and 1960s, aware that Europeans would never treat them as equals, even if the elite was encouraged to consume modern goods, the nationalists orchestrated back-breaking strikes, go-slows and boycotts against European shops, bakeries, butcheries and post offices, which forced Africans to buy commodities through small holes at the back of the buildings. Arguing that black consumers gave white entrepreneurs 'a major proportion of their

⁷⁰ K. Kaunda, *Zambia shall be free: An autobiography* (New York, 1963).

⁷¹ For the most recent and nuanced analysis of the ANC/UNIP split in 1958, see G. Macola, *Liberalism in Central Africa: A biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (New York, NY, 2010).

businesses', the nationalists persistently demanded to be treated with courtesy, just like white customers.⁷²

There were other but less obvious ways in which leading African freedom fighters used imported goods to undercut imperial hegemony. At the height of the struggle for political freedom in the 1950s and 1960s, they attended constitutional talks with British officials unfailingly clad in immaculate business suits complete with neckties and well-polished shoes.⁷³ With such attire, the nationalists made themselves sartorially indistinguishable from sceptical British conferees, hopeful to convince them that Africans were now more than ready to take over the political reins of their country. They hence demanded respect and recognition from British rulers, engaged them on equal terms and, in 1964, wrested power from their indifferent oppressors. Suits and other material goods, which European authorities had earlier brandished before admiring colonial subjects to create a politically malleable black middle class, came to haunt them.

It is clear, then, that although 'progressive' Africans may have envied European material culture with its underlying social status, privileges and power, their consumption of modern goods on the Copperbelt scarcely replicated the Western tastes and habits reflected in *Nshila's* advertisements. The migrants' new culture of consumption stemmed from their own intensive and daily interactions with each other in the mining towns and was in no small measure influenced by prevailing socio-political conditions in the territory.⁷⁴ To forge this material culture, Africans drew raw materials from their own pre-existing material culture and practice, read new meanings into and put the symbols of modernity advertised in colonial newspapers and magazines to novel uses. Their culture of consumption can, therefore, be said to have been constructed according to their own cultural agenda, rather than that dictated by colonial masters.

⁷² See NAZ WP 1/1/ 30, Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Luanshya African urban advisory council held in the office of the District Commissioner at 5:30 pm on 3 February 1954. In the same file, see Minutes of the Luanshya Urban advisory council held in the office of District Commissioner on 26 January 1954 at 5:30 pm; Kaunda, *Zambia shall be free*.

⁷³ Interview with Reuben Mulenga, former freedom fighter, Lusaka, 18 June 2010; Interview with Daniel Banda, former freedom fighter, Lusaka, 19 June 2010.

⁷⁴ This point is inspired by Gould, *Localizing modernity*; J. Alexander and J. McGregor, 'Modernity and ethnicity in a frontier society: Understanding difference in Northwestern Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African studies*, 23:2 (1997), 187–201. See also Harries, *Work, culture, and identity*; B. Bravman, *Making ethnic ways: Communities and their transformations in Taita, Kenya, 1800–1950* (Portsmouth NH and Oxford, 1998).

Indisputably tempered by its 'ambivalent engagement' with imperial power, this agenda was central to familiarising, localising and domesticating modernity itself.⁷⁵ And, in Zambia, it was no less indispensable to the lowering of the Union Jack in 1964.

CONCLUSION

Many scholars have rightly argued that white authorities across imperial Africa sought to make colonial spaces into impressions of their own modernity, culture, authority and power.⁷⁶ To this end, colonial rulers mobilised a wide range of institutions and programmes to secure their power and to regulate African life in urban localities. On the colonial Zambian Copperbelt, one such hegemonic programme after the Second World War was advertising Western manufactured commodities for the small, but increasingly significant black middle class. In their eagerness to secure markets for manufactured goods, European advertisers turned to advertisements as a strategy to create bourgeois tastes and habits among African 'progressives'. These advertisers enjoyed the active support of colonial authorities, mining companies and missionaries who, respectively, saw African consumption of Western products as a key to maintaining colonial political control, fostering labour stabilisation and converting black workers to Christianity.

But the urban African society that emerged in the Copperbelt's mining towns was not an empty slate onto which Europeans could write their cultural and political scripts unchallenged. This paper has tried to show that the material culture which Africans constructed around the consumption of manufactured goods issued from their own daily interactions, drew its raw materials from local traditions and was tempered by the worker's engagement with colonial power and modernity. While Africans undoubtedly embraced imported goods, they, nonetheless, rarely used them in

⁷⁵ See Gould, *Localizing modernity*; see also A.D. Kemp and R.T. Vinson, 'Poking holes in the sky': Professor James Thaele, American Negroes, and modernity in 1920s segregationist South Africa', *African studies review*, 43:1 (2000), 141–60.

⁷⁶ See G.A. Myers, 'Colonial and post-colonial modernities in two African cities', *Canadian journal of African studies*, 37:2/3 (2003), 328–9; S. Marks, 'The microphysics of power: Mental nursing in South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century', S. Mahone and M. Vaughan (eds.), *Psychiatry and empire* (New York, 2007), 67–98; M. Vaughan, *Curing their ills: Colonial power and African illness* (Stanford, 1991); L. Schler, 'Looking through the Glass of beer: Alcohol in the cultural spaces of colonial Douala, 1910–1945', *International journal of African historical studies*, 35:2/3 (2002), 315–34.

ways enshrined in colonial advertisements. To the contrary, they read their own meanings into Western goods, deploying them to reinforce kinship ties and chiefly power, to create novel relationships that transcended ethnicity, to forge urban identity, and, in the final analysis, to undermine colonial power. In local hands, therefore, imported goods became a means by which Africans (re)negotiated their history in ways which European rulers, mining companies, advertisers and missionaries neither fully understood, nor effectively controlled.

FABRICATING DREAMS: SEWING MACHINES, TAILORS, AND
URBAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ZAMBIA*

Karen Tranberg Hansen

INTRODUCTION

During the first half of the twentieth century guns, bicycles, and sewing machines were the imported industrial products that African men had to have if they were to achieve economic success in the changing context of everyday life in colonial Northern Rhodesia. This observation was made in Luapula Province in 1995 by the grandfather of my research assistant, Damiano Chonganya. Damiano's grandfather had served in the Congolese army on the Belgian side during the First World War, and had married a woman who was also from Luapula. On their return to Mansa, he established himself as a building contractor. The extensive labour migration across the Central African region in the early decades of the twentieth century is well documented,¹ but the technology and ideas that were carried along and spread in the process have received far less attention. I suggest that the sewing machine is one example of a technology that has not received its due.

The purpose of this paper is to take the technology provided by sewing machines seriously and to acknowledge tailors as important actors, not only in early urban development but also in the contemporary period. The focus is on imported sewing machines and the tailors who used them, for

* My research on the clothing economy has been supported by the Social Science Research Council, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and faculty grants from Northwestern University. In addition to interviewing tailors in many different locations, I have also used their services for my own wardrobe, using the skills and services of many tailors, women and men, in township markets, city markets, downtown corridors, and private homes. In 2002, I briefly observed a training course in tailoring, organised by the Kanyama Youth Training Program, a NGO offering vocational services for young people with limited economic means. Recently, I began research on tailors' involvement in the development of up-scale and designer fashion, first in 2007, and again in 2009.

¹ Among them, J. Fabian, *History from below: The "Vocabulary of Elisabethville"* by Andre Yav. Text, translations, and interpretive essays (Philadelphia, 1990); B. Fetter, *The creation of Elisabethville, 1910–1940* (Stanford, 1976); and J. Higginson, *A working class in the making: Belgian colonial labor policy and the African mineworker, 1907–1951* (Madison, 1989).

a long time mostly men but today also increasingly women. Because sewing machines translate needs and wants into desirable garments, they go to the heart of widespread dreams of leading new and better lives in urban Zambia, and therefore they play a part in shaping social change agendas. Drawing on observations from field research which I conducted in Luapula Province in 1995, and archival work pertaining to the region,² I also include research which I carried out on the clothing sector in Lusaka in the 1990s, when I examined the persistence of the tailor's craft in the face of competition from imported secondhand clothing from the West and, increasingly, cheap apparel imports from China. The paper ends with brief observations from recent research into the emerging design and fashion scene.

Across Zambia in village settings, towns, and cities, past and present, sewing machines, rented or owned, have been a key technology in a vibrant and constantly changing consumer market that produces garments for everyday use as well as for special occasions. In effect, the sewing machine is central to a cultural economy of consumption that works because of the enormous social value that local consumers attach to the dressed body and to dressing well. That is, dress is both a means and an end. This paper highlights three processes, firstly, the importance of imported sewing machines as a technological means; secondly, the role of tailors as entrepreneurs in urban development; and thirdly, the salience of consumer needs and desires in shaping these processes. Showcasing tailors whose production I monitored during the 1990s, the paper examines the resources that are part of the success and survival of tailors in a highly competitive clothing and apparel market: technology; skills, including competence in producing 'the latest'; location; and niche markets. I also discuss the demand side, for without fabricating dreams, the sewing machine would not be successful at all.

IMPORTED SEWING MACHINES

A variety of sewing machines were patented in the United States and Europe in the last half of the nineteenth century, with Isaac Singer producing the first commercial machine in the 1850s.³ The machines quickly

² M.C. Musambachime (ed.), *The oral history of Mansa, Zambia* (Lusaka, 1996).

³ Efforts to design sewing machines took place both in Europe and the United States. There were earlier patents, yet the most significant ones were registered during the period

became popular, resulting in far-reaching changes both in industrial mass production and home sewing in North America and Western Europe. Sales increased rapidly. Although the sewing machine industry was rooted in the United States, it quickly became international.⁴ I.M. Singer & Co., according to Ruth Brandon, 'was possibly the first of what has since become one of the most familiar phenomena in Western economies: the American-based multinational corporation'. She notes that Singer's sewing machine sales in Europe were greater than those in the United States already in 1861. In 1867 the company established its own factory in Glasgow, and another in 1882 in Clydebank.⁵ In the late 1800s, Singer dominated the British sewing machine market.⁶ The history of sewing machine imports into different parts of Africa has yet to be written and Singer was by no means the only company involved.⁷ Briefly, Singer sewing machine exports, shipped from Scotland, were handled by general agents. The primary importers were trade consortiums.⁸ For instance, in the late nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth century, Bourne and Co. Ltd. served as Singer's South African subsidiary.⁹

To be sure, some sewing machines made the long overland journey from South African ports to destinations in Northern Rhodesia. But

referred to here. R. Brandon, *A capitalist romance: Singer and the sewing machine* (New York, 1977), 52–66.

⁴ N. Oddy, 'A beautiful ornament in the parlor or boudoir: The domestication of the sewing machine', in: B. Burman (ed.), *The culture of sewing: Gender, consumption and home dressmaking* (Oxford, 1999), 285.

⁵ Brandon, *Capitalist romance*, 135.

⁶ A. Godley, 'Singer in Britain: The diffusion of sewing machine technology and its impact on the clothing history in the United Kingdom, 1860–1905', *Textile history*, 27 (1996), 62.

⁷ Among the exporting companies based in Europe were Pfaff (Germany), Bernina (Switzerland), and Husqvarna (Sweden). In a study by a sewing machine technician, somewhat presumptuously entitled, *An international history of the sewing machine*, there is not a single reference to exports to Africa, or Asia, for that matter. In the section about Singer, the author notes that the company organised and opened factories all over the world, for example, in Russia in 1902, Quebec in 1904, Monza in Italy in 1934, Bournieres in France in 1934, and in Brazil the 1960s. F.P. Godfrey, *An international history of the sewing machine* (London 1982), 263. The Japanese sewing machine industry got under way after the end of the Second World War. Godfrey, *An international history*, 280–1.

⁸ S. Maiwada and E. Renne, 'New technologies of embroidered robe production and changing gender roles in Zaria, Nigeria, 1950–2005', *Textile history*, 38 (2007), 31.

⁹ According to the Singer Manufacturing Company records, State historical society of Wisconsin, Archives division. <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi/f/findaid/findaid-idx?c=wiarchives;cc=wiarchives;view=text;rgn=main;didno=uw-whs-us0000ai>. In 1997, I briefly explored Singer exports to Africa in the Business Archives Center (BAC) at the University of Glasgow. The BAC holds very limited records on Singer, merely an unpublished history and some business records.

imports were affected by customs rulings that made Katanga a strategic entry point for sewing machines to Northern Rhodesia. For customs purposes Northern Rhodesia was divided into two zones: the Congo Basin and the Zambezi Basin.¹⁰ The north-eastern part of the territory fell under the Congo Basin treaties, which maintained low tariffs and did not discriminate against any country's imports. This is in contrast to the Zambezi Basin, which was subject to reciprocal customs agreements with Southern Rhodesia, the Union of South Africa, and the protectorates, which gave 'empire preference' to several classes of goods. A duty was paid on goods passing from the Zambezi Basin into the Congo Basin, where there was no duty on imports.¹¹ Some early sewing machines imported into Northern Rhodesia might have arrived overland from Elisabethville in Katanga, the cultural and economic hub of the region, until well after the opening of the Copperbelt mines in the late 1920s.¹²

Scholarship on sewing machines in the industrialising West tends to focus on one of two topics. One topic is the role of industrial sewing machine technology in the growth of mass-produced garments and the development of factory production often organised as sweat shops. The second topic is the role of the sewing machine in home sewing, with focus on women's control of the new technology and the domestic use of its products.¹³ But these topics are not particularly helpful to scholarly inquiry in colonial settings, such as early twentieth century Northern Rhodesia. There, industrial development was incipient at best. What is more, most wage labour was performed by men. During most of the colonial period, the tailor's work was construed as a man's job in cultural terms that reflected the gender division in the migrant labour system of the wider region.¹⁴ Although today many women work as tailors, widespread gender norms and assumptions in Zambian society at large continue to privilege

¹⁰ These customs arrangements, established under the terms of the Berlin Treaty of 1885 and the Convention of St. Germain-en-Laye of 1919, stipulated complete freedom to 'the trade of all nations'. The Congo Basin embraced the entire Belgian Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Nyasaland. The southern line cut through Angola, Northern Rhodesia, and Portuguese East Africa; the northern line cut through the French Congo and French Equatorial Africa, a small part of Sudan and Abyssinia, and Italian Somaliland. The Congo Basin Treaty was abrogated in 1956 or 1957. K.T. Hansen, *Salaula: The world of second-hand clothing and Zambia* (Chicago, 2000), 262, notes 5 and 6.

¹¹ A.M. Kanduza, *The political economy of underdevelopment in Northern Rhodesia, 1918–1960. A case study of customs tariffs and railway freight policies* (Lanham MD), 60.

¹² Fetter, *Creation*.

¹³ Burman, *Culture*; Godley, *Singer*.

¹⁴ K.T. Hansen, *Distant companions: Servants and employers in Zambia, 1900–1985* (Ithaca NY, 1989).

men over women. As a result, specific types of tailoring continue to be associated with men.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT: TAILORS AS ENTREPRENEURS

Damiano's father, born around the time of the First World War, learned to tailor from an older 'brother' in the Congo. He returned to Luapula, went to mission school, and later found work at the Mandala Stores in Mansa,¹⁵ advancing from tailor to office orderly. In his 80s when I met him in 1995, he clarified what kinds of fabrics were popular in the stores in the 1940s and 1950s, with lively insight and input from his wife. As the *Boma*, the administrative headquarters of the province, Mansa also served as a staging point for labour recruitment to the Katanga mines, Tanzanian gold fields, and sisal plantations. Stores and tailors found eager customers in the returned migrant workers for whom clothing was a high priority consumer item, both for their own use and as a desirable commodity to be taken to the rural areas. As a commercial hub with a unique location near Katanga and the lakes, Mansa's growth also helped influence the development of early African entrepreneurship in the trade of fish, secondhand clothing imported from Congo, transport, and store keeping. In growing towns like Mansa, African urban residents spent a good proportion of their cash earnings on clothing, as Godfrey Wilson reported from Broken Hill (Kabwe) in the late 1930s, when mine workers used more than half of their cash wages on clothes.¹⁶ Although the sources of clothing are not specified, their purchases are likely to have included secondhand clothes as well as tailored garments.

Mansa and tailors converge in a most striking way in the accounts by several elderly residents of the province who were interviewed in an oral history project in 1974 by students from the University of Zambia.¹⁷ The people interviewed, mostly men, recalled the African employment scene

¹⁵ Mandala Stores were established by the African Lakes Corporation, a trading company based in Malawi that also had stores in Northern and Luapula Provinces in Northern Rhodesia. The Mandala Store in Mansa was established in 1909. Musambachime, *Oral History*, 26.

¹⁶ G. Wilson, 'An essay on the economics of detribalization', Vol. 2, *Rhodes-Livingstone papers*, 6 (1942), 80.

¹⁷ This oral history project was conducted by the Department of History at the University of Zambia (UNZA) by the second-year students Raban Chanda and Daniel Yambayamba in Mansa District in Luapula Province in 1994. I am grateful to Mwelwa Musambachime for enabling me to read his edited and annotated manuscript version of the taped interviews, deposited in the UNZA library special collection. Hansen, *Salaula*,

during the first quarter of the twentieth century as Mansa slowly grew; in building construction and lowly jobs related to the administration such as messengers and office orderlies. In addition, according to R. Chungu Kanswe, 'In Mansa a common job was that of house-boy (...) [and] some people were employed as tailors in the stores'.¹⁸

As a young man, Sebio Mulenga came to Mansa from Mporokoso to join a 'brother'. 'We hoped to get some employment at the *boma* and learn various trades or skills (...) It was common for young men to go on long journeys in search of jobs and wealth'.¹⁹ Working initially as a kitchen-boy, he learned tailoring from a well-known tailor from Nyasaland who took him on as an apprentice. Between 1918 and the early 1920s, young Mulenga travelled widely in search of jobs, working brief stints in Ndola, Kabwe, and finally returning to Mansa. But tailoring jobs did not last long, because he did not own a machine: 'I worked as a tailor in Ndola but did not stay long on the first job because my white employer did not provide me with a sewing machine (...) There was nobody I knew who could lend me a sewing machine'.²⁰ Then he heard that Mandala Stores in Kabwe were looking for a tailor. He was interviewed, but did not get the job because he did not own a sewing machine.²¹ When a white man lent him a machine, he got the job in Kabwe, only to leave it almost immediately to take up employment with Thom's Stores in Ndola, who required a qualified tailor. Thom's Stores soon sent him to Mansa, along with two men to carry the sewing machine and his personal belongings. They walked. In 1923, when he was 23 years old, he was employed at Boot's Store in Mansa: 'There were few tailors then', Sebio Mulenga recalled. He was paid by the number of shorts he sewed on a daily or on a monthly basis. When working fast, he recalled, he earned 'too much for a black man during the colonial days'.²²

J.B. Mwansabombwe also worked 'for Mandala,' beginning in 1934: 'Because I was too young, I was assigned the duty of fixing buttons on garments. When I became a little older, I became a tailor. From tailoring, I was placed behind the counter to help sell items in the store. Later I was promoted (...) I supervised the twenty-two tailors that Mandala employed in the store. I was given yards of cloth, which I cut into pieces and distributed

cites the unpublished version of the manuscript whereas this paper references the published version, Musambachime, *Oral History*.

¹⁸ Musambachime, *Oral history*, 52.

¹⁹ Musambachime, *Oral history*, 23.

²⁰ Musambachime, *Oral history*, 21.

²¹ Musambachime, *Oral history*, 22.

²² Musambachime, *Oral history*, 23.

among the tailors'.²³ The fabrics for sale in Mandala Stores included 'a certain kind of black cloth called *nkabula*. There was a type of khaki material (...) known locally as *kasapato* and a white cloth called *toyo*. There was also another white cloth named *tumimbi*, which was sewn into bedspreads'.²⁴

As these recollections demonstrate, growing towns like Mansa were critical settings for jobs, trades, skills acquisition, and consumption. Aside from construction, office orderly jobs, and domestic service, which employed a great number of migrants in towns away from the mines,²⁵ the tailor's craft was an important activity that enabled men to find urban employment almost anywhere. To be sure, the tailor played an important, and underappreciated, role in such settings by responding to clothing demands and desires. Tailors made a wide range of western-styled garments. In the early years, as Sebiso Mulenga recalled, tailors made men's everyday standard wear such as khaki shorts, shirts, and uniforms, and women's plain dresses. But for strolling around the town, men did not want to wear shorts, but 'a new pair of trousers of distinguished appearance'.²⁶ And women wanted stylish dresses in fashion rather than plain frocks with yokes and puffed sleeves. As a result of new dress sensibilities, the tailors' repertoire expanded to include garments that required more skills and individuation in the design of suits and more elaborately styled dresses. Translating clothing needs and desires into desirable garments, tailors contributed importantly to the process of making Africans knowledgeable and discriminating consumers of clothes.

Labour migration and urban living turned Africans in Northern Rhodesia into active consumers. In the growing cities and towns, they acquired not only knowledge about consumption practices but also insights into how and where to pursue them. Racially segregated consumption spaces and shopping venues in the second class trading areas had markets and stores where African urban residents could purchase clothing and apparel. Because of the limited scale of the colony's domestic garment manufacture, African consumers turned to other sources to obtain clothing. Mail-order firms in the United Kingdom and South Africa were a popular source for new and stylish clothing.²⁷ By the mid-twentieth

²³ Musambachime, *Oral history*, 27.

²⁴ Musambachime, *Oral history*, 28.

²⁵ Hansen, *Distant companions*.

²⁶ Wilson, 'Essay', 18.

²⁷ Hansen, *Salaula*, 49.

century, African urban residents were able to purchase clothing from several sources: imported factory-made, imported secondhand from Congo, locally produced by small-scale tailors, and to a very limited extent, manufactured in local factories. Indeed tailors experienced brisk business, judging from the steep rise in the imports of sewing machines.²⁸

These developments took place against the backdrop of a rapidly changing scene in the post-Second World War years. The economy expanded. More family housing was built in towns, and women who migrated to towns alone were no longer sent back to the villages. When women came to towns in larger numbers during and after the Second World War, they went for the new fashions with abandon.²⁹ A report on the commercial prospects of the colony in the early 1950s, when African purchasing power had improved somewhat, noted that a man's 'first expenditure is on clothing for himself and his womenfolk and the latter usually see to it that they are not overlooked (...) [The African] woman (...) attaches considerable importance to matters of design, style and fashion in her dress goods and she generally knows just what she wants in the way of cloth[ing] when she goes shopping'.³⁰

Recognising that African women were in towns to stay, the colonial government began to work harder on two fronts: establishing basic and secondary schooling for girls, whose education lagged far behind that of boys; and organising domestic science training programmes, especially in towns, for adult women, in order to make them into better wives and mothers.³¹ The sewing machine enters here, as a technology to enable women's home sewing. The colonial welfare department, which was established in the 1950s, introduced domestic science classes in urban townships, as the mining companies had already done on the Copperbelt. With the 'winds of change' now blowing across this part of Africa, a variety of training centres were established to hone the domestic skills of women

²⁸ Sewing machine imports rose from 935 in 1940, declined to only 217 in 1943, and increased to 3,458 in 1952, when it was estimated that at least 80 percent of the machines were sold to Africans. Customs Department, *Annual report 1949* (Lusaka, 1950), 90; Board of trade, *The African native market in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland* (London, 1954), 14 and 34.

²⁹ J.L. Parpart, "Where is your mother?" Gender, urban marriage, and colonial discourse on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1924–1945', *International journal of African historical studies*, 27 (1994), 250–4.

³⁰ Overseas economic surveys, *Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1950* (London, 1950), 28.

³¹ K.T. Hansen (ed.), *African encounters with domesticity* (New Brunswick, 1992).



Fig. 8.1 Modern African life, Lozi, 1959 (Source: Livingstone Museum, 289 Photograph by M. Yeta)

who were, or might become, wives of ‘advanced’ Africans and the new men in power.

A result of these new developments is captured beautifully in a framed photograph I saw in 1995 on the wall of a small restaurant in Kashikishi, the lakeside town in Luapula Province that served as an entrepot for various sorts of trade between Zambia and Congo.³² In a striking composition the studio photograph, probably taken in the late 1960s or early 1970s, depicts the owner of the restaurant. Wearing a tailored *chitenge* (colourful printed fabric) dress, she is seated in an upholstered chair adorned with antimacassars. And there on a table in front of her stands a portable hand-operated sewing machine, a conspicuous visual presence, ready to take pride of place as a domestic appliance, contributing to a new living room aesthetics. I do not recall the brand name of the machine. With this photographic image, we have come full circle, bringing the sewing machine

³² K.T. Hansen, Luapula field notes, 28 May 1995.

home, domesticating it.³³ In effect, the sewing machine was no longer an important means only for men to establish themselves in society, but it had also become a technology that women used to move on in society.

TAILORS AND SALAULA

When Zambia became independent in 1964, questions about clothing were important economically and culturally, since independence meant, among many other things, producing what had previously been imported. The mining industry was nationalised in the late 1960s. In 1972, the first multi-party elected government gave way to a one-party state that centralised the economy and restricted imports of all kinds of commodities from food to clothing and fabrics. Along with this, there was first a rise, and then a decline of production in the newly established textile and garment manufacturing industry. Over the course of those years new dress styles emerged, inspired by concerns about what to consider as national dress. The safari suit became *de rigueur* for men in public. And the development of the *chitenge* suit for women took off: a skirt or wrapper and a top of colourfully printed fabric which Zambia's two new textile mills initially delivered. Printed textiles were popular but in short supply. The limited availability of ready-made garments and good quality fabrics challenged the creative skills of tailors during the economy's downward slide from the early 1970s and onwards, when smuggled fabrics and garments became coveted commodities.

The country's outlook changed once again in 1991, when a multi-party elected government took the reins of the economy. The opening up of the economy that had begun in the late 1980s and early 1990s made clothing and apparel from many sources, as well as a wide range of fabrics, available to local consumers. When import restrictions were relaxed, second-hand clothing from the United States and Europe became a popular trade and consumption item, locally referred to with the Bemba term *salaula*, meaning to select from a pile. After a period of rapid growth during the first half of the 1990s, the import and local trade in *salaula* appears to have become an established part of the clothing economy, rarely causing any public debate in the 2000s. In fact, with the growth of imported new

³³ Even though it focuses on industrially developed countries, I was inspired by the title of Oddy's chapter, 'Beautiful ornament'.



Fig. 8.2 Tailors and *salaula* vendor in Mansa, 1995 (Photograph by Karen Tranberg Hansen)

garments and apparel from China in recent years, secondhand clothing's share of total clothing imports has declined.

What is the place of small-scale tailors in all of this? While I have continued to monitor the location and contribution of tailors in the urban dress scene, I explored this question specifically in the 1990s as a part of my study of the secondhand clothing trade. In 1995 I interviewed tailors in Mtendere township, a low income residential area in Lusaka that I know well because of my previous research there,³⁴ in Soweto and Kamwala markets also in Lusaka as well as in Mansa and Kawambwa in Luapula Province.³⁵ I wanted to learn about the gender division of labour in tailoring, the training background of tailors, the scale/scope of their work, their resources, and their market approach. All these tailors were located in the

³⁴ K.T. Hansen, *Keeping house in Lusaka* (New York, 1997).

³⁵ In 1995, in connection with my research on secondhand clothing, I interviewed a total of 76 tailors: 11 in Mtendere, 18 in Kamwala, 20 in Soweto, 20 in Mansa, and 7 in Kawambwa. This is far from my only interaction with tailors among whom very many have serviced my Zambian wardrobe over the years. More recently, I began research on the development of up-scale and designer fashion in Lusaka.

public space in or near markets and in front of stores in Lusaka's former second-class trading area. They were not employed by the stores but worked on an individual basis, paying a fee to the storeowner for overnight storage of sewing machines and supplies. Many of these 'corridor' tailors, as people operating sewing machines in front of shops and in arcades are called in Zambia, have since been relocated because of a combination of shifts in urban policy on street vending, the demolition of open air markets, and the upgrading of market space. Although my observations are not representative in any statistical sense, they capture the spatial dynamics and the gender division of labour in small-scale tailoring.

Today in Zambia, tailoring is taught in many courses, both in government technical and vocational schools and in a multitude of NGO supported vocational training programmes in a manner that has not changed much since the late colonial period. But in spite of the wide availability of training venues, the majority of the tailors I interviewed had learned the craft informally from a friend or relative rather than in a formal course or apprenticeship. Start-up capital was often a problem, and it usually took a while for an aspiring tailor to acquire a sewing machine. Tailors who had been to school had varied work backgrounds with some stints of factory employment in between jobs. Much like Sebio Mulenga, the skilled tailors'



Fig. 8.3 Male and female tailoring students at vocational training centre, Lusaka, 2001 (Photograph by Karen Tranberg Hansen)

craft enabled them to move around. This was also evident in their personal backgrounds with several tailors coming from Malawi, and a few from Congo, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

Generalising, there were two types of tailor operations: single person shops, and workshops shared by several tailors. Tailors who work alone take orders from personal clients who bring along the fabric. They are the all-purpose tailors in townships and urban markets who make a variety of garments and also do some mending and alteration of *salaula*. Some tailors share premises, working on an individual basis whereas others work in 'companies', meaning informal arrangements between several tailors, who hire workers for piece-work and rent additional machines for larger jobs, involving specific orders placed by middlemen. Such tailors do not consider mending and alterations to be worth their while. All these tailors owned sewing machines and rented additional machines for larger jobs. Most of the machines were electric foot powered Singers and Chinese-imports, like the Butterfly brand. Still, hand-powered and treadle machines find widespread use in areas with no, or irregular, supply of electricity.

LOCATION AND NICHE PRODUCTION

When I began exploring Zambia's clothing scene in the early 1990s, some observers feared that imported secondhand clothing might adversely affect the domestic textile and garment industry and even 'kill' the small-scale tailoring craft. In fact, this has not happened.³⁶ Rather, many tailors changed their physical location, for example moving from townships to city markets, and they reoriented their production. One tailor I knew from Mtendere Township had set himself up at Kamwala market after closing shop in the township market. When I spoke to him in 1995, he told me: 'I sat down for two hours to think of how to beat *salaula*.' His solution, like that of many other tailors who kept on working, was specialty production, in his case church uniforms, a regular part of many women's wardrobes in Zambia.

Many of the corridor tailors whom I revisited in 1995 had followed a similar strategy, targeting niche production of garments and sizes rarely available in *salaula*. Such garments included women's slippers, girls' frilly dresses, and an ever-changing range of 'office wear', meaning two-piece

³⁶ K.T. Hansen, 'Helping or hindering: Controversies around the international secondhand clothing trade', *Anthropology today*, 20 (2004), 3–9.

suits with varying details and trim. But perhaps above all, as one tailor in Mansa noted: 'there is no *chitenge* in *salaula*.' Indeed, the production of *chitenge* wear has grown in recent years. *Chitenge* outfits have moved from serving largely as attire for special occasions to work dress for teachers and as free/casual wear on Fridays for office workers and bank clerks. Some of these tailors produced job lots, for example, of men's trousers for established boutiques as well as for upcountry clients for resale in the villages, while others made *chitenge* dresses to order for suitcase traders who sold them in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Consumers there referred to such outfits as 'Zambia'.

If the small-scale tailoring sector in corridors and markets is dominated by men, there is another setting in which many women are involved with the tailor's craft. This is home-based production, often by hired tailors, both women and men, organised as a sideline activity by women who work away from home but also by some who pursue it full time. In Zambia, such women call themselves tailors, not dressmakers or seamstresses. Some of them do not sew at all but supervise and contract orders. Their operations may take place within the home, in extensions built onto homes or in servants' quarters in homes in the medium- to high-income residential areas. I have seen such operations in the middle of the living room of two-bedroom flats of bank employees, for example, as well as in the flats of university lecturers whose wives did not hold wage jobs. Some of these women entrepreneurs go to office buildings soliciting orders, some produce school uniforms, while still others supply regular clients with garments for everyday wear and specifically *chitenge* styled outfits for special occasions.

DESIGN AND FASHION

When women of means in Zambia today say, 'I have a tailor', this may mean several things. One, they may be clients of a particular male tailor, perhaps from the Democratic Republic of Congo, who supervises a workshop of male and female workers. Two, they may be clients of a particular female tailor, perhaps from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria or Ghana, who runs a workshop with several workers of both sexes. Three, they may be clients of a woman entrepreneur who calls herself a designer, has her own clothing label, and either supervises a workshop of male and female tailors or subcontracts her designs to tailors whom she knows well. And four, in fact the woman who says that she has a tailor is likely to draw on some of all of these sources at different times, depending on her needs.

Take Sylvia Masebo, Member of Parliament and former minister, who is in her 40s. A flamboyant dresser, depending on the occasion, she wears a mix of western-styled and *chitenge* wear, often with hats or elaborately folded head-ties. In a 2005 interview, Ms. Masebo indicated that she used two local designers and a Nigerian tailor.³⁷

The design scene is the most recent twist in the ever-changing development of the organisation of the tailor's craft in Zambia. In the mid-1990s, downtown Lusaka had several successful production units with boutique-style outlets, operated by well-educated women, often married to wealthy men. Such women were able to travel abroad, where some had taken design and fashion courses. They concentrated on producing 'high quality fashion garments for high-income clients who prefer imported clothing from London, Paris, and New York' to what they perceived as 'cheap' local wear.³⁸ When I began to study the emerging fashion and design scene in 2007, these preferences were clearly changing, as the Sylvia Masebo account illustrates. Seasonally changing and creatively styled *chitenge* wear now takes centre stage alongside other dress inspirations in fashionable women's wardrobes. *Chitenge* styles are displayed proudly by women who have the body to wear them. And young women who used to argue that *chitenge* outfits made them look 'old'³⁹ are beginning to be attracted to the creatively styled *chitenge* fashions, made by a cohort of new designers who are deliberately modernising the *chitenge* for young people to wear. *Chitenge*, said Angela Mulenga in 2009 when I interviewed this twenty-one year old designer with a study background in business administration, 'will stand the test of time'. Angela's production of the Queen's Wear design takes place in a tiny workshop in one of downtown Lusaka's old shopping venues, the Central Arcade, with four industrial machines and one embroidery machine. Queen's Wear was started by her mother for whom the oldest of the four male tailors began working several years ago.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FORMAL FASHION SCENE

Between 1997 and 2009, more than five up-scale shopping malls opened in Lusaka and still more are under construction. New consumption spaces,

³⁷ 'Trendsetters', *The Post*, 2 December 2005.

³⁸ M. Kasengele, 'Differentiation among small-scale enterprises: the Zambian clothing industry in Lusaka', A. Spring and B.E. McDade (eds.), *African entrepreneurship: Theory and reality* (Gainesville, 1998), 96–7.

³⁹ Hansen, *Salaula*, 204.

clothing stores, and boutiques appeal to urban residents with money to spend. Against this backdrop, two processes have helped fuel the growth of a more formal fashion design scene. For one, the production potential of these new designers has been greatly facilitated by the improved availability in recent years of imported sewing machines, dress fabric, and sewing notions.⁴⁰ Secondly and above all, their exposure to a global world of fashion and styles has expanded, and along with it has the scope for local dress entrepreneurship. There is now a formal fashion circuit, complete with organisers, promoters, models, photographers, and a fashion magazine that was published from 2004 to 2010, *Beauty Zambia*. There are dress entrepreneurs who view themselves as designers and label their clothing lines, among them, *Ubuntu Designs*, *Seyeni*, *Aglam Couture*, *Fay Design*, and *Dodo Wear Designs*. The first organised *Zambia Fashion Week* unfolded in Lusaka in October 2005, and has taken place subsequently every year. Over these same years, other fashion shows and competitions have appeared. And some of the designers have joined in a group they call *Ministry of Fashion* to promote their lines.

Most of the recent self-proclaimed designers are women, although they include a few men. Among them are people of diverse national and cultural backgrounds, that is, not all of them are black Zambians. What they all share is a keen sense of style acquired from diverse experiences and exposures that do not always include much formal training. Most of these designers do not sew themselves but hire tailors, mostly men, to carry out the basic tasks. A few put out their work for completion by tailors. Many operate from their own or their parents' homes or rented premises. They use several sewing machines, mostly their own but at times also rented, including in addition to chain-stitch sewing machines, lock-stitch

⁴⁰ As an illustration, statistics from the Department of Customs and Excise show imports of household sewing machines of 2600 in 1999 and 2674 in 2000. Imports of industrial sewing machines declined from 2171 in 1999 to 1311 in 2000. The machines for household use were imported by schools, churches, NGOs, embassies as well as by stores for resale, for example, *Radian Stores*, *Game*, and *Zambia Sewing Company*. The industrial sewing machines were imported by government agencies, for example, the Department of Education, and industrial manufacturers like *Zambia Bata Shoes* and *Polythene Products*. Customs duties were paid on most of the household machines whereas the industrial machines appear to have been imported without duty. VAT was paid on all machines. The machines were imported from many different places, including Denmark and Canada, but most of them show South Africa (ZA) as the place of origin. Origin does not mean place of manufacture; Chinese machines, of which there were very few on this list, are likely to have entered Zambia via South Africa. The document does not provide brand names. Department of Customs and Excise, 'Statistics on the importation of sewing machines for household and industrial use', Unpublished list (Lusaka, 2001).



Fig. 8.4 A designer and her male tailors in her workshop, Lusaka, 2008 (Photograph by Karen Tranberg Hansen)

machines, and machines for embroidery and knitting. Some had several industrial sewing machines as well as old-fashioned treadle and hand-operated machines.

Who are the chief clients? My Choice, an upscale boutique in Lusaka's Manda Hill shopping centre, sells some garments produced by the new designers. This new crop of style entrepreneurs design clothes, for example, for beauty pageant and Face of Africa contestants. In 2009, a group of them designed part of the wardrobe for the Zambian participant in the Miss Universe contest in Brazil. Designs produced for such events have ripple effects in the form of referrals. Women of means call on these designers to get special dresses made particularly for kitchen parties (bridal showers) and weddings. Many designers have a special *clientèle* that includes women in high-level jobs and public positions who are well known throughout Zambian society and some of whom, like Ms. Masebo, are regarded as trendsetters when it comes to fashion. But more than anything else, it is the production of bridal wear and dresses for bridesmaids that ensures a flow of income for many of the new designers. And some would not be able to keep operating if they did not have

husbands in well-paid positions that supported them. To keep their creative design going, some of them pursue additional income generating avenues, for example producing uniforms for restaurants and sports teams, and designing graphics for special occasion stationary and invitation cards.

CONCLUSION: FABRICATING DREAMS

Going to the tailor to place an order for a garment has been a long-standing dress option in Zambia, especially during the colonial period due to import restrictions, and in the not-so-distant past due to the limited dress choice in the government-owned department stores during the era of the one-party state. Most tailors in the past were men, as many still are today, yet more women have joined their ranks in recent years, and some of them are contributing to the development of a flourishing entrepreneurial design scene. The basic underpinnings supporting the persistence and diversification of the tailor's craft and the emergence of a fashion design scene is a consuming public that since early colonial days has been intent on cutting a nice figure in dress. The great value placed on clothing that is evident in the Luapula interviews with which I began this paper persists powerfully today, the chief difference between then and now being the abundance of dress options and style influences from across the world that are available to local consumers.

The single most important vehicle in all of this was, and is, the sewing machine. Because of the value people in Zambia place on clothing, sewing machines create a livelihood for a highly differentiated category of tailors whose production serves diverse markets. Yet much like R.J. Pokrant observed in his study of the organisation of tailors in the old city of Kano back in the mid-1970s, there seems to be a ceiling on the size of tailors' workshops: 'A successful workshop owner', Pokrant noted then, 'tends to move out of production into dealing in cloth, or into an entirely different occupation, rather than further expanding and rationalizing his tailoring business'.⁴¹ I have observed a very similar process in Zambia. In a more general sense and drawing on the experience of the industrialising West, some observers have viewed the textile and garment sector of the economy

⁴¹ R.J. Pokrant, 'The tailors of Kano City', E.N. Goody (ed.), *From craft to industry: The ethnography of proto-industrial cloth production* (Cambridge, 1982), 132.

in developing countries as a potential engine of economic growth.⁴² This growth scenario may have held true in some countries in the past but it does not play well in today's global manufacturing system where countries like Zambia have to 'run faster to stay in place'.⁴³ But while resource access, including training and technology, workshop organisation, and the structure of markets may keep tailoring at a small-scale level of entrepreneurship, the vibrant cultural economy of clothing consumption leaves no doubt that tailors and their sewing machines will continue to fabricate dreams across all levels of society in Zambia.

⁴² Y-I. Park and K. Anderson, 'The rise and demise of textiles and clothing in economic development: the case of Japan', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 39 (1991), 53–548.

⁴³ G. Gereffi, 'Capitalism, development, and global commodity chains', in L. Sklair (ed.), *Capitalism and Development* (London, 1994), 226.

PART IV
TRADERS

INDIAN TRADERS AS AGENTS OF WESTERN TECHNOLOGICAL
CONSUMPTION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN MUKUNI: MEMORIES OF
THE SHARMA BROTHERS' TRADING STORE, 1950S TO 1964

Friday Mufuzi

INTRODUCTION

Studies of the activities of Indian traders in colonial Zambia have focused on their changing economic pattern and how they went from being simple merchants to the owners of large-scale businesses such as stores, supermarkets and textile-manufacturing factories.¹ In Eastern Zambia, Indians did not always settle along the main transport routes but also in the hinterland in areas such as Merwe, Petauke, Kazimule, Chadiza, Sinde, Misale Kalicherero and Jumbe.² Unlike those in Chipata, the Livingstone Indian settlement was more successful in the urban centres along the communication network.³ In my earlier work on the Indian trading community in Livingstone, I demonstrated that, although Indians were less successful in settling in rural areas around Livingstone, they were involved in substantial trading activities in those areas mainly through itinerant trading practices and the use of proxies, such as trusted Africans who worked for them. Through such practices, Indians supplied the local people in the rural areas around Livingstone, such as Katombora and Makunka, with western consumer goods like soap, calico (cloth), blankets, paraffin, candles, matches, cups, plates, basins and three-legged pots.⁴

Although the Indian traders' involvement in the distribution of foreign consumer goods among Zambians dates back to the classical period,⁵ and became more pronounced in the colonial era, no studies have yet been

¹ F. Dotson and L. Dotson, *The Indian minority of Zambia, Rhodesia and Malawi* (New Haven/London, 1968); B.J. Phiri, *A history of Indians in Eastern Province of Zambia* (Lusaka, 2000); C. Mukunga, 'The development of the Asian trading class in Chipata, Zambia, 1900–1964', unpublished MA Dissertation (University of Zambia, 1992).

² P. Nag, 'Asian settlement in Zambia', *African Quarterly*, 8:4 (1979), 65.

³ Nag, 'Asian settlement', 67.

⁴ See F. Mufuzi, 'A history of the Asian trading community in Livingstone, 1905–1964', unpublished MA Dissertation (University of Zambia, 2002), in particular Ch. 2.

⁵ This has been shown by the discovery of glass beads and fine cloth from India and other items such as copper, iron, gold and ivory at Ingombe Ilede, an Iron Age site near

done to establish their impact on the local people in the context of technological consumption and social change. This paper attempts to address this by examining the impact the Indian traders had on the rural populations of Zambia by distributing western consumer goods. It focuses on the Sharma Trading Store that was established in the 1950s by two Indian brothers, Vithaldas Motiram Sharma and Sharnkerlal Motiram Sharma, in Mukuni village in the Mukuni chieftaincy on the outskirts of Livingstone Town, Kazungula District (then under Kalomo District). It argues that Indian traders were a major agent of social and cultural change in Mukuni. The western consumer goods they brought to this area changed people's tastes, which resulted in the dying out of traditional handicrafts and native utensils in favour of mass-produced western goods. Although European traders, such as the Susman Brothers,⁶ played a role in introducing western consumer goods to rural areas, this was mainly in the early period of settlement when they were involved in African trade.

This paper also argues that, by changing the consumption tastes of the local people who began to prefer western goods to indigenous products, Indians were a 'push factor' in the migration process as people moved from Mukuni to Livingstone and even to Zimbabwe and the South African mines in search of employment to finance their new taste for western goods. While it is true, as postulated by traditional historiography on labour migration, that Africans were forced to migrate to earn money to meet the tax demands of the colonial authorities,⁷ Indian traders contributed to this movement after the 1940s by selling western goods to Africans and significantly changing their consumption patterns, which were financed by wage labour elsewhere.

It is also argued here that the consumption and ownership of western consumer goods became a status symbol among Africans and that those who accumulated and consumed such goods were held in high esteem by the local community. This resulted in a social and economic differentiation among the local people and weakened political traditional leadership as the 'rich' or 'new and travelled elites' felt that it would lower their status if they prostrated themselves before their traditional leadership.

Lake Kariba and south of the confluence of the Kafue and Zambezi rivers in the 1950s. See A. Roberts, 'Pre-colonial trade in Zambia', *Journal of African social research*, Institute for Social Research, University of Zambia, 10 (1970), 722.

⁶ H. Macmillan and F. Shapiro, *Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia* (London/New York, 1999).

⁷ M. Yudelman, *Africans on the land* (London/Massachusetts, 1964), Ch. 6; C. van Onselen, *Chibaro: African mine labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900–1933* (London, 1976).

Using archival and oral sources and both published and unpublished materials, the paper begins by considering the development of European trade in Livingstone because the Indian trading businesses there and in the surrounding rural areas were a corollary of European traders and the Indian traders obtained their merchandise from established European wholesale traders. It then briefly discusses the development, nature, activities and impact of the Indian merchants in Livingstone, where traders such as the Sharma brothers set up stores on the outskirts of the town as offshoots of others in Livingstone itself.

DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN TRADE IN LIVINGSTONE

Following the establishment of effective British colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), a considerable white settler presence developed. Livingstone, which had grown up into a town at the Old Drift⁸ around 1898, had a population of white settlers of different nationalities and more Europeans arrived when the town moved to its current site in 1905. Most of the pioneer settlers were itinerant traders who had started businesses ranging from general dealers in native or African trade,⁹ to bakeries, butcheries, hotels, chemists, building contractors and other more sophisticated businesses.

Although trade in Livingstone was carried out by whites of different nationalities, Jews from Russia – particularly Lithuania – were the main traders in African goods. At least two-thirds of the general dealers' licences issued in the town were held by members of the Jewish community, which totalled 28 in 1909.¹⁰ More European businesses opened in Livingstone when it became the capital of Northern Rhodesia following the amalgamation of North Eastern and North Western Rhodesia in 1911 to form a

⁸ The Old Drift was also known as Sekuti Drift, Mopane Drift or Old Livingstone. See D. Watt, 'A thesis of Livingstone Town', n.c., n.d. (MS in the Livingstone Museum).

⁹ In this study, native or African trade refers to retail and wholesale business catering specifically to Africans. European trade refers to retail and wholesale businesses catering to Europeans.

¹⁰ Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, 42. The predominance of Jews in trading activities in the pioneering days of settlement in Livingstone is confirmed by Charlotte Mansfield in her travel book, *Via Rhodesia* (London, n.d. but it is believed to have been written in 1910), 146. She described the situation as it was in about 1908 following her visit to Livingstone: 'I have no grudge against the Jew (...) but I should like to see a few Englishmen make money. At present, the Jew (...) seem[s] to be collecting all the plums.'

unified country, namely Northern Rhodesia. By 1927, a glut in African trade had developed that prompted stiff competition for customers.¹¹

BACKGROUND TO INDIAN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Pioneer Indian settlers came in the wake of British colonisation of the area during the early twentieth century. Like their European counterparts, these Indian settlers were predominantly traders and had entered the country at two main points: Fort Jameson, now called Chipata¹² in eastern Zambia, and Livingstone¹³ in southern Zambia.

In 1911, the population of Indians in Livingstone numbered six in total and remained the same in 1921, rising to 20 in 1931 and 186 in 1946.¹⁴ Although the Indian population was small¹⁵ in Livingstone, it was active in terms of trade, particularly African trade. Consequently, while there were only a few Indian hawkers in town in 1913, nearly all trade in African goods was being done by Indian traders on Queens Way (now Kuta Way) by 1937.

Many European trading companies collapsed between 1928 and 1933 as a result of the Great Depression. By 1932 the situation had become so severe in Livingstone that nearly all the Africans there were unemployed¹⁶

¹¹ National Archives of Zambia (NAZ), RC/299, Issue of Recruiting Licences to Livingstone Storekeepers: 1926–1927, Petition of Livingstone Holders of General Dealer's Licence to the Chief Secretary, 29 September 1927.

¹² Pioneer Asian settlers went to Chipata, North Eastern Rhodesia in 1905 at the behest of Codrington, the Administrator of North Eastern Rhodesia. Codrington adopted Johnson's Nyasaland policy of using Asian traders as intermediaries between the European trading firm, the African Lakes Corporation (Mandala) and the African consumers. Johnson held that white settlers should concentrate on farming rather than trading which ought to be the domain of Asian traders. See H.H. Johnson, *British Central Africa* (London, 1897), 152, 178; A.J. Hanna, *The beginning of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, 1889–1895* (Oxford, 1969), 226–7; L.H. Gann, *A history of Northern Rhodesia: Early days to 1953* (London, 1964), 146.

¹³ Mufuzi, 'History of the Asian trading community', 24.

¹⁴ NAZ, A3/1/1-2, Northern Rhodesia Census, 1911, 2; Northern Rhodesia Reports of the Director of Census, 1931, University of Zambia (UNZA) Library Special Collections, Gov. ZAM/02/1931/2, 1931 Census Report, 28; and Gov.ZAM/02/1949/17, 1946 Census Report, 64–5.

¹⁵ The population of Indians remained small because of the 1915 Northern Rhodesia Proclamation 15 of 1915 that required would-be immigrants to be able to read and write a European language to the satisfaction of an immigration officer. See NAZ, SEC 3/51, Asiatic immigration: 1931–48, Indians into Northern Rhodesia, Correspondence, Chief Immigration Officer, Livingstone to the Chief Secretary, Lusaka, 15 April 1945. Since most Indians in the early decades of the twentieth century were illiterate because of poor education facilities in India, and due to the First World War, no Indians migrated until after 1921, as can be seen from the censuses of 1911, 1921 and 1931.

¹⁶ NAZ, KDB 6/4/3/2, Livingstone Tours: 1930–1934, Tour Report Number 3 of 1932, 1.

and the *Livingstone Mail* reported great distress amongst the unemployed in Maramba, the town's African location.¹⁷ The reduced economic activities following the Depression resulted in most European traders going bankrupt.

Livingstone suffered two additional blows during the 1930s. The first was the transfer of the headquarters of Rhodesia Railways from Livingstone to Broken Hill (now Kabwe) in 1932. And then the capital of Northern Rhodesia was moved from Livingstone to Lusaka in 1935. As a result, the area's white population, on which European traders depended and which had reached 1,600 in 1931, dropped to 1,300 in 1946. The African population, which stood at about 10,000 in 1931, increased to 13,000 by 1946¹⁸ and they were the Indian traders' main customers. Indian trade thus thrived and by the mid-1930s, all the second-class (African) trading business was in the hands of Indians. The only prosperous European-owned store had a labour-recruitment business and¹⁹ this did well because most would-be labourers bought items here in anticipation of preferential treatment regarding recruitment.

Between 1935 and 1964, Indian businesses grew tremendously. By the 1930s, pioneer Indian traders, who had predominantly started out as fruit and vegetable hawkers, hairdressers and cobblers, had become store owners by forming partnerships. Although most of these traders had made a substantial amount of money, operating individually was not easy so they pooled their financial resources. Members of each partnership contributed an agreed amount of money which was used to procure merchandise and rent or buy shops from failing European traders.²⁰ By 1938, there were 15 licensed Indian traders operating in Livingstone.²¹

Partnerships often came to an end after each partner had accumulated enough money to operate individually. This resulted in a proliferation of Indian businesses as all the partners would then set up their own new business. The Indian trading community in Livingstone grew as established traders ventured into branches in the main trading areas along the

¹⁷ *Livingstone Mail*, 6 December 1933.

¹⁸ Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, 50.

¹⁹ NAZ, SEC 3/51, Asiatic Immigration: Summary of Livingstone District Commissioner's Report attached to Confidential Minute from Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 12 June 1937.

²⁰ Interview with Oza, Lusaka, 22 January 2000. Different advertisements for trading licences placed in the *Livingstone Mail* by Asian traders in this period confirm Oza's testimony.

²¹ K. Ese, *A historical guide to Livingstone Town* (Harare, 1996), 23.

railway line and the Great North Road in Zimba, Kalomo, Choma and Mazabuka. In the late 1940s, R.V. Nayee opened a general shop in Kalomo called 'Elvina' and later branched out into the rural areas of Kalomo such as Luyala, Mukwela, Chilumbwe, Chilesha, Mapatizya and Kabanga where he opened various other shops. Kalomo became the trading domain of R.V. Nayee and by the late 1950s, he had about 21 shops in the area.²² Harischandra Oza opened a shop in the 1950s at Kasilya in Namwala²³ while C.R. Trading, owned by C.M. Patel and R.K. Patel, opened a subsidiary of their Livingstone branch at Senkobo in the late 1950s.²⁴

The general sequence was that after an established trader in Livingstone had set up a chain of stores in the main trading area, he would begin 'importing' relatives and friends to serve as assistants in the newly opened branches. The established traders had external business contacts and sufficient capital so it was easy for them to access goods for their shops. The new immigrants came through the permit system, with the established trader obtaining a permit from the government which he sent to either a friend or relative he wanted to invite to work for him. The permit was used by the migrant to prove to the authorities that he had secured employment and would not be an economic burden on the government.²⁵

The need for Indian shop assistants, coupled with the end of the Second World War in 1945, led to Indian immigration to Northern Rhodesia in general, and Livingstone in particular, increasing tremendously (See Table 9.1).

In the period between 1940 and 1964, Indian trading activities diversified and businesses became more sophisticated. Like the white traders before them, most successful Asian traders moved into large-scale farming and wholesale and manufacturing ranging from tailoring, biscuit and candle factories, hardware to construction work. The Europeans of mainly Jewish origin had been replaced by Asians in the African retail trade by the 1930s and in the more dynamic sectors of the economy, such as wholesale trading and specialised businesses, by the late 1950s.²⁶ The takeover of European-oriented department stores, hardware businesses and companies selling office equipment in Livingstone by the late 1950s is an example of what the Dotsons called 'ethnic succession', namely the

²² Interview with J.R. Nayee, Livingstone, 7 July 1999.

²³ Interview with Oza.

²⁴ Interview with R.K. Patel, Trader, Livingstone, 13 July 1999.

²⁵ Interview with Oza.

²⁶ For details, see Mufuzi, 'History of the Asian trading community', 53–62.

Table 9.1. Comparative growth of the Asian population in Northern Rhodesia and Livingstone between 1911 and 1961

Year	Asians in Northern Rhodesia	Asians in Livingstone
1911	39	6
1921	56	6
1931	176	20
1946	1,117	186
1951	2,524	364
1956	2,450	548
1961	7,790	644

(Source: Northern Rhodesia Reports of the Director of Census; 1911, 1931, 1946, 1951 and 1961. For 1911, see NAZ Ad/1/1-2, Information Regarding British Indians desired by the Census Commission for India, 2. For 1921 and 1931, see Census Report 1931, 28; for 1946, see Census Report 1946, 64-5; for 1951, see Census Report 1951, 42; and for 1956 and 1961, see Census Report 1961, 42-3)

tendency for ethnic groups to replace each other in specialised commercial activities.²⁷

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SHARMA BROTHERS' STORE

The Sharma brothers,²⁸ Vithaldas Motiram Sharma (the older brother) and Shankerlal Motiram Sharma came from Gujarat State in India to

²⁷ F. Dotson and L. Dotson, 'The economic role of non-indigenous ethnic minorities in colonial Africa', P. Duignan and L.H. Gann, *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1969, Volume IV, The economics of colonialism*, (Cambridge, 1975), 592.

²⁸ In addition to the Sharma brothers mentioned here, there was another set of Sharma brothers – Keshavlal Joitram Sharma, Babulal Joitram Sharma and Sombhai Joitram Sharma – who operated a business of the same name in Livingstone (Sharma Brothers). Both sets of brothers came to the country from Gujarat State via R.V. Nayee in the late 1940s but were not related to each other. The latter set was more successful in terms of business. Following the dissolution of their partnership, each partner expanded and diversified his business operations. For instance, K.J. Sharma, who later moved to Lusaka, had a variety of businesses ranging from a bedding and furniture factory to jewellery. Interviews with J.R. Nayee, retired businessman and oldest child of R.V. Nayee, Livingstone, 11 June 2010; N.M. Nayee, retired businessman, Livingstone, 7 February 2011; Vijay B. Sharma, businessman, Kershalal J. Sharma's son, Livingstone, 9 February 2011.

Livingstone in Northern Rhodesia under the auspices of Riverbhai V. Nayee in the late 1940s.²⁹ The two brothers stayed with Nayee who they worked for as shopkeepers for about seven years and in the late 1950s they opened their own shop in Mukuni called the Sharma Brothers' Store.³⁰ After a few years, the partnership between the two was dissolved and the younger brother, Shankerlal, moved to Livingstone and later back to India. The older brother, Vithaldas, remained in Mukuni where he continued running the shop until the 1980s.³¹

H.V. Merani and H.L. van der Laan in their study of Indian traders in Sierra Leone observed that most shopkeepers were devoted to their employees. This was ascribed to the way they were hired, which was done on the basis of kinship, and resulted in the moral obligation of protecting the interests of their employees. There was, however, a legal contract between the employer and the employee, even if they were close relatives, which covered the salary, the period of service and the obligations of the employer regarding the provision of accommodation, medical attention and a passage home at the end of the contract. Each employee expected a *longhi pothi* or bonus at the end of his period of service. This acted as an incentive because employees often planned to open their own businesses using the money they received.³² This also applied to the Livingstone situation where Chhotobhai Mahthurbhai Patel, for example, received a *longhi pothi* amounting to £4000 in 1950 after working for his sponsor/ employer for three years. He then established his own business.³³ It was

²⁹ Riverbhai V. Nayee came to Livingstone in 1926 and became the town's first non-white mayor when the country gained independence in 1964. Interview with Joytindra R. Nayee, Livingstone, 11 June 2010. For details on how Nayee became mayor, see N.T. Robbins, 'A study of African participation in urban politics in Livingstone, Zambia, 1905–1966', unpublished PhD thesis, (Howard University, 1977), 335–44.

³⁰ I could not establish the exact date when the Sharma Brothers opened their shop in Mukuni. None of the people interviewed (Indian or African) knew precisely when the shop started. This was probably due to telescopic problems, as most of those who had any contact with the shop during the period under study are now over 70. A good number of those interviewed had memory problems.

³¹ Interview with J.R. Nayee.

³² H.V. Merani and H.L. van der Laan, 'The Indian traders in Sierra Leone', *African Affairs*, 78:311 (1979), 247.

³³ However some Indian sponsors were cruel to their employees. C.M. Patel noted in an interview that when he came to Livingstone in 1947 some of the sponsors were taking advantage of the desperate situation of the people they had hired as they could not go home due to the expense. Some sponsors did not give their employees proper food and they were made to work like slaves and received only a meagre *longhi pothi* at the end of their contact. With no means of recourse, they had no alternative regarding employment as civil-service jobs were closed to them. Interview with Chhotobhai Mahthurbhai Patel, Livingstone, 8 June 2010.



Fig. 9.1 The old Sharma Brothers' Store in Mukuni. When this photograph was taken, it was being renovated by a NGO into a computer centre for the Mukuni community (Source: The Livingstone Museum Archives, Photograph by Fidelity Phiri, June 2010)

this kind of bonus that the Sharma brothers received at the end of their contract with Nayee and that enabled them set up a trading store (see Fig. 9.2) in Mukuni village³⁴ about 20 kilometres east of Livingstone in the seat of governance of Chief Mukuni of the Leya³⁵ people.³⁶ This shop played an important role in bringing western-produced goods to the people of Mukuni and the surrounding villages and memories of it still linger, particularly among those who knew it in its heyday.

NATURE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE STORE

The Sharma Brothers' Store was a general shop and sold a variety of merchandise including sewing needles and cotton thread, men's, women's

³⁴ Interview with Nayee, 11 June 2010.

³⁵ The Leya are a small section of the Tonga group of tribes in Zambia. In pre-colonial times, they occupied the area where the town of Livingstone now stands, numbering 4000 in 1946. There are still a number of Leya villages on the eastern side of Livingstone Town, the biggest being Mukuni. See M. McCullogh, *A social survey of the African population of Livingstone* (Manchester, 1956), 1.

³⁶ NAZ, KDB6/4/3/4, Livingstone Tours, 1937–1940: The District Officer's Tour Report No. 4 of 1940 of Livingstone District dated 29 November 1940, 1.

and children's clothes, footwear, cheap cotton blankets, calico cloth, bowls, cups, plates, three-legged pots, buns, scones, bread, sugar, salt, yeast, mealie meal, soft drinks (Fanta and Coca Cola), lagers (Castle and Lion) as well as whisky, candles, hurricane lamps, paraffin, matches, cooking oil and spices (*piripiri*, the hot Indian chilli pepper). Others were radios, record players, gramophone records, musical instruments (accordions, whistles), (vegetable) seeds, watering cans, basal and top dressing fertilisers, bicycles, ploughs (see Fig. 9.3) and chains and spare parts for ploughs.³⁷

The store was quite popular among the Mukuni village community and the surrounding areas. People from villages situated far away such as Dindi, Kafekwa and Kambizi travelled long distances to purchase their requirements there. Generally, people could get goods on credit, particularly essential ones such as salt, paraffin and candles. However, owing to the fact that such goods did not cost much, they had to be paid for within a short period of time. In case of items that were costly such as bicycles, ploughs and radios, and therefore beyond the reach of most villagers, hire purchase arrangements were available.³⁸ In this way, many people in Mukuni accessed or became consumers of western goods, brought to their door step by the Sharma Brothers' Store. Some even accumulated goods of high value such as ploughs and bicycles. Although I could not determine the profitability of the store due to my inability to access its financial records, it is reasonable to speculate that the store ran profitably because the proprietors opened another one in Kaanda village, now called Mubila within the Mukuni Chiefdom.³⁹

The store was popular among the local population because of the Sharma brothers' practice of giving a small gift or token of appreciation (*mbasela*) to customers who bought from them regularly or who bought either an expensive item or a lot of small items at one time. The *mbasela* was an item of small value, such as a headdress, handkerchief, a small packet of salt, a sewing needle, cotton thread, sweets or goods that were rarely purchased by customers. Although the *mbasela* was of insignificant value, the practice promoted good relations between the store's owners and the villagers and encouraged villagers to buy from the store in the

³⁷ Interviews with Nayee; Nelson Keelo (male, 87 years old), Mukuni Village, 20 June 2010; Stanley Siamapa Siachilubwi (male, 71 years old). He is currently a judge at Mukuni Local Court, Mukuni Village, 20 June 2010; Bornface Simasiku (male, 60 years old), Mukuni Village, 30 June 2010; Mbaita Siamwiza (female, 82 years old), Livingstone, 1 July 2010.

³⁸ Interview with Siachilubwi.

³⁹ Interview with Siachilubwi.



Fig. 9.2 Nayee Brothers outside their shop on the outskirts of Livingstone town in the 1950s. Note the plough they are sitting on which was typical of the type the Sharma Brothers' Store sold in Mukuni and surrounding villages (Source: The Shambhoo Nayee family photo album)

hope of getting a *mbasela*.⁴⁰ This practice was also common among Indians who traded in the second-class trading area on Queens Way in Livingstone following the proliferation of Indian enterprises there in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The practice resulted in stiff competition for customers amongst Indian traders⁴¹ and was also observed by Chiwomba Mkunga in his study of Asian traders in Chipata.⁴²

The Sharma Brothers' practice of offering a *mbasela* and of selling goods on credit or hire purchase undercut emerging African entrepreneurs' shops in Mukuni. There were only two African-owned shops in the area: the Katapazi and the Sithole shops. The older was Katapazi and its original owners were Susman and Wolfsohn who sold it to Katapazi in the 1950s. The other shop was built and owned by Sithole, who came from Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and he continued trading in the area until the late 1960s when he left Mukuni for Kalomo where he had another shop.⁴³

The two African entrepreneurs resented the Sharma brothers for taking so much of their potential business. These feelings were compounded by the fact that the Sharma brothers sourced their merchandise from well-established Indian wholesalers in Livingstone who sometimes sold it to them on credit. The two African traders also depended on Indian wholesalers (who by the 1950s had replaced the Europeans in Livingstone) for their supplies but did not enjoy such privileges.⁴⁴

The people of Mukuni were involved in economic activities such as market gardening (spinach, cabbage, lettuce, cauliflower, beetroot, carrots). They peddled their produce in the white residential areas in Livingstone and sometimes even supplied greengrocers frequented by white people in Livingstone and Victoria Falls Town in Zimbabwe. They also cultivated maize, sorghum, *nyauti*, millet, groundnuts, pumpkins and beans on a small scale, raised cattle, goats and chickens, and made curios, baskets and mats. Despite the items of economic value that the locals produced, the Sharma Brothers' Store rarely purchased supplies from them.⁴⁵ The two African traders' dislike of the Sharma brothers was also shared by some Mukuni residents who were engaged in local economic activities.

⁴⁰ Interview with Nelson Keelo.

⁴¹ Mufuzi, 'A history of the Asian trading community', 50.

⁴² Mkunga, 'The Asian trading class in Chipata', 96.

⁴³ Interview with Siachilubwi.

⁴⁴ Interview with Siachilubwi.

⁴⁵ Interview with Siamwiza. Also see NAZ, KDB 6/4/3/4, Livingstone Tours: 1937–1940 – The District Officer (DO) Tour Report No. 1, 1940 dated 4 March 1940 regarding Chief Mukuni's area, Annex II.

They accused the brothers of stifling entrepreneurship through their indifference to purchasing local produce such as cereal crops (sorghum, millet, maize), vegetables, fruit, fowl, goats and other produce that was in abundance.⁴⁶

It is not therefore surprising that as far back as the 1940s, Indian traders in East Africa⁴⁷ were resented by Africans who saw them as an obstacle to their emerging enterprises. Numerous accusations championed by the leaders of the Livingstone African Welfare Association, founded in 1930, such as Nelson Nalumango, Chief Musokotwane and Headman Makumba, were made against them. The Indian traders were accused of not helping the country as they allegedly did not provide employment for the local people and never bought native products like cattle, chickens, baskets, curios and mats. They were also accused of not using scales when selling items whose price went by weight, thereby giving imprecise quantities of whatever they were selling. Additionally, they were accused of not reinvesting the money they made in the local community but instead sending it to India. Furthermore, they were thought to overcharge their customers and change their prices continually, and often at short notice. Africans therefore called for a ban on Indians trading in the Native Reserves and restricted entry into Zambia for Indians, arguing that if allowed to do so, they would take all the land and leave nothing for native Africans.⁴⁸

However, this was also seen by some as unfair criticism. Zambian scholars, such as Ngalaba Y. Seleti, Chiwomba Mkunga and Bizeck J. Phiri, have noted that the failure of African business in the colonial period was due to their lack of a wide social network, which is vital in the business world,⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Interview with Siachilubwi. In fact a Native Commissioners' Report suggests that by 1930, Mukuni was economically strong. Reporting on the chiefdom as a whole, the report noted that most villages owned one or more ploughs, two villages had wagons, two had harrows and one had a colonial mill. Those who could not afford wagons made sledges from forked trees; and one man had a rough cart that ran on large wooden rings. It also reported on livestock figures. These were: bulls (77), cows (1804), oxen (1191), goats (1249), pigs (12), donkeys (22), dogs (284), wagons (2), ploughs (123), harrows (2) and mills (1). See NAZ, KDB6/4/3/2, Native Commissioner's Tour Report No. 3 of 1932.

⁴⁷ Y. Ghai, 'Prospects for Asians in East Africa', *Contemporary African monographs: Racial and communal tensions in East Africa*, 3 (1966), 13.

⁴⁸ NAZ, SEC 3/328, 1930–48, Stores in Native Reserves, Volume One, Southern Province Annual Provincial Council Meeting Namwala, 14 and 15 June, 1945. See also NAZ, SEC 2/228, Southern Province Regional Council Minutes of Meetings, 1944–48, Volume One, Southern Province Annual Council Meeting, Livingstone, 11 and 12 January, 1946.

⁴⁹ Y.N. Seleti, 'Entrepreneurship in colonial Zambia', C.N. Samuel (ed.), *Guardians in their time: Experiences of Zambia under colonial rule, 1890–1964* (London, 1992), 173–4; Mkunga, 'The Asian trading class in Chipata', 117; Phiri, *A history of Indians*, 67–8.

and that Jewish and Indian traders flourished thanks to such networks. Phiri observed that unlike Jewish and Indian traders:

Africans were too individualistic to pool resources together to effectively compete with Indians. Africans lacked the ability to employ persons who understood business but preferred to employ relatives who often knew little about trading [and] most traders could not break away from traditional family ties and obligations that tended to exert pressure on traders' resources.⁵⁰

The above observation was particularly true for the two African traders in Mukuni. In addition to individualism, a lack of business acumen and the burden of family obligations, they did not, unlike the Sharma brothers, have a wide social network and could not compete favourably with them. They were unable to offer incentives or credit facilities to their customers as the Sharma brothers did or sell on hire purchase without putting their businesses in jeopardy.

THE IMPACT OF THE SHARMA BROTHERS' STORE

The opening of the Sharma Brothers' Store in Mukuni contributed to changes in social patterns among the people of the area as they began to assume western lifestyles and consumption patterns. The store was an agent of social change in that it made western factory-produced goods like clothes, blankets, plates and pots, and foodstuffs such as sugar, salt, mealie meal, cooking oil and many other items available to the indigenous people. Wives put pressure on men to engage in wage labour in urban centres such as Livingstone, Victoria Falls Town, Wankie (Hwange), Bulawayo and the mining towns of South Africa like Johannesburg and Kimberly, to earn money so that they could purchase the goods on sale in the Indian-owned shops.⁵¹

One change the local people experienced was in their style of dressing. In the 1930s and 1940s, it was not uncommon to find men and women dressed in clothes made of tree bark or animal skins that generally only covered their loins (see Fig. 9.4). This was to change with the arrival of the Sharma Brothers' Store as the shop stocked the colourful cloth called *malesu* (in the Leya language, a dialect of Tonga with influence from Lozi, the main language in western Zambia).⁵² However, it should be stressed

⁵⁰ Phiri, *A history of Indians*, 67–8.

⁵¹ Interview with Siamwiza.

⁵² W.V. Brelsford, *The tribes of Northern Rhodesia* (Lusaka, 1956), 61.

that *malesu* did not originally come into the area with the Indian brothers but was sold in Mukuni before the brothers arrived in the region.⁵³ By 1936, a European trader, J. Jacobs, was already operating a well-equipped store in the area⁵⁴ and people could get the material from European traders and later on from Indian traders in Livingstone. Nonetheless, the Sharma Brothers' Store contributed to popularising *malesu* and other western-produced consumer goods.⁵⁵

Women used lengths of the cloth wrapped around their bodies from the waist downwards. *Malesu* was akin to today's *chitenge* which could be said to be the national dress of Zambian women. They used the same material for making *munsinsi*, a gathered skirt similar to the Lozi *musisi* and *chibaanda* or *chibaki*, a kind of a blouse that matched the *munsinsi*. According to Siamwiza, it was fashionable from the late 1940s to the 1960s for a Leya woman to wear a *chibaanda* and *munsinsi* (see Fig. 9.5). This put pressure on married men to earn enough money to buy such a garment for their wives as women who did not have such clothes were teased and local musicians would even compose songs ridiculing them.⁵⁶

The consumption of western goods was seen as a status symbol. Thus, as providers of such goods, the Sharma Brothers' Store contributed to social differentiation within Mukuni society in the sense that people who accumulated and consumed these goods enjoyed a higher status than those who did not. Siamwiza noted that this caused problems for the traditional leadership, such as headmen and the chief, as ordinary subjects whose status had improved on the basis of accumulation and the consumption of western products were often insolent to them and it was not unknown for people to refuse to participate in communal work projects such as constructing shelters for traditional ceremonies like the annual *Lwiindi*.⁵⁷

⁵³ Interview with Siamwiza.

⁵⁴ NAZ, KDB6/4/3/3, Livingstone District Tour Report, 1936.

⁵⁵ Interview with Siamwiza.

⁵⁶ Interview with Siamwiza.

⁵⁷ The *Lwiindi* ceremony was an event when people gathered to ensure adequate rainfall from their ancestral spirits and a successful harvest and good health. In pre-colonial times, the ceremony played an important role in the lives of the Leya people because, whilst hunter gathering was also an important part of their lives, they depended more on agriculture in an area where rainfall was inadequate and cattle rearing was difficult due to tsetse fly infestation and poor pastures. However, with the arrival of colonialism, the ceremony became less important due to the adoption of more western lifestyles and social formations and people could afford not to participate in activities they no longer depended on. The ceremony has now been reduced to a form of entertainment for tourists and other spectators. See F.M. Mizinga, 'Activities characterising the Lwiindi ceremony of the Leya of Mukuni chieftaincy of Kalomo District', *The Livingstone museum newsletter*, 3:1 (1995), 24–8.



Fig. 9.3 Woman wearing old Leya dress. Note the animal skin fastened around the waist (Source: Kafungulwa Mubitana, 'The Traditional History and Ethnography', D.W. Philipson (ed.), *Mosi-oo-Tunya: A handbook to the Victoria Falls region*, London, 1975, p.70)



Fig. 9.4 Woman wearing *munsinsi* and *chibaanda*, a Lozi form of dress modelled on the style introduced by the Paris Missionary Society missionaries who operated in Sefula in western Zambia. The new style dress was a remarkable change from the previous one shown in 9.4 (Source: Kafungulwa Mubitana, 'The Traditional History and Ethnography', D.W. Philipson (ed.), *Mosi-oa-Tunya: A handbook to the Victoria Falls region*, London, 1975, p.70)

ceremony. Such people began to consider themselves too important to perform such manual tasks.⁵⁸

Zambian historians, such as Maud Muntemba, George Mwalukanga and Axon Kanduza,⁵⁹ used the underdevelopment theory, as propounded by Africanist scholars such as Walter Rodney,⁶⁰ to explain the lack of development in Africa and rejected the tendency to recognise peasants as beneficiaries under colonial conditions. In contrast, Chipungu's study followed liberal scholarship that considered peasants as people who were 'progressive' in the colonial period and saw the state as not a villain of the peasant but rather as a modernising institution.⁶¹ Thus, in his study on the impact of technology and the role of the state on the process of peasant differentiation in the Southern Province, he concluded that 'the economic and political interests of the state vis-à-vis the peasantry and the ability of the peasants to adopt new productive technology during specific historical periods' led to 'the rise of peasant differentiation' or the formation of different strata of peasants, i.e. the rich, middle-income and poor peasants in Mazabuka.⁶²

Chipungu's observation about the creation of social differentiation was also evident in Mukuni. However, while the goods sold by the Sharma Brothers' Store to people in Mukuni Village and the surrounding areas undoubtedly contributed to social differentiation, the phenomenon was not as pronounced as in the case of the peasantry in Mazabuka where maize production and post-colonial programmes such as resettlement schemes and credit facilities enriched some peasants but were beyond the reach of others.⁶³ This was because the trading activities of the Sharma brothers were not as intense as the peasant maize-growing activities in Southern Province, and Mazabuka in particular, which were massively

⁵⁸ Interview with Siamwiza.

⁵⁹ See M.S. Muntemba, 'Rural underdevelopment in Zambia: Kabwe Rural District, 1850–1970', unpublished PhD thesis (University of California, 1977) and 'Thwarted development: A case study of economic change in the Kabwe rural district of Zambia, 1902–1970', R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds.), *The roots of rural poverty in Central Africa* (London, 1977); G. Mwalukanga, 'Dispossession of peasant resources: The case of Lusaka District of Zambia, 1905–1953', *Zambian land and labour studies*, 4 (1981), 1 and 'Constraints on development of cotton production in Northern Rhodesia, 1900–1945: The case of the Luangwa', unpublished MA Thesis, (University of Zambia, 1984) and A. Kanduza, 'The tobacco industry in Northern Rhodesia, 1912–1938', *International journal of African history*, 16:2 (1983) 201–29.

⁶⁰ W. Rodney, *How Europe underdeveloped Africa* (London, 1988).

⁶¹ S.N. Chipungu, *The state, technology and peasant differentiation in Zambia: A case of the Southern Province, 1930–1986*, (Lusaka: Historical Association of Zambia), 5.

⁶² Chipungu, *The state, technology and peasant differentiation*, 34–55.

⁶³ Chipungu, *The state, technology and peasant differentiation*, 34–55.

supported by government policy and the maize could also be sold as a cash crop.⁶⁴ In Mukuni, the money realised from economic activities that were a response to trading activities of the Sharma Brothers' Store could not be reinvested in the intensive growing of maize or rearing of cattle because the area was rocky and hilly and rainfall was inadequate. For this reason, the local people resorted to market gardening and curio making for tourists. These activities were not as heavily supported as maize production was, nor were they lucrative enough to support a rich peasantry as the maize growing in Mazabuka did.

The Sharma Brothers' Store contributed to easing the hardships that people encountered in their everyday lives, particularly the women on whom the burden of making mealie meal flour for their staple food of *nshima* fell. In the past, women in Mukuni and the surrounding villages used either stones to grind their cereals or they pounded them using a pestle and mortar to produce mealie meal. An informant, Siamwiza, noted that, as a girl and later a woman, she had experienced the lifestyle of that period and the gruelling and time-consuming chore of making mealie meal. Her description of the process is similar to that given by Elias C. Mandala among the African people in Malawi's Lower Tchiri Valley before colonial rule and in the following decades.⁶⁵

The process had two stages: first the grain (maize, sorghum or *nyaute*) was put in a mortar, a log of wood about 80–100 centimetres long and 30 centimetres in diameter that had been hollowed out at one end. One or several women, each with a heavy wooden pestle, then crushed (*kutwa* or *kochokola*) the grain simultaneously⁶⁶ (see Fig. 9.6). This was then shaken over a bamboo tray (*luceelo*) and, with a skilful movement, the bran was separated and the crushed grain remained behind. In the second stage, the crushed grain was made into flour either by pounding the soaked grain in a mortar or grinding it on a grinding mill made of hard rock about 130–136 centimetres² and 50 centimetres thick with another piece of hard rock about the size of half a brick, one side of which had a convex surface that fitted into a concave hollow in the larger rock. The woman made the flour by moving the small stone backwards and forwards in the hollow part of the larger stone placed on a slope to allow the ground

⁶⁴ Chipungu, *The state, technology and peasant differentiation*, 3.

⁶⁵ E.C. Mandala, *Work and control in a peasant economy: A history of the Lower Tchiri Valley in Malawi, 1855–1960* (Wisconsin, 1990), 62–3.

⁶⁶ Interview with Siamwiza. A similar observation was made by Elias C. Mandala on the indigenous people of Lower Tchiri Valley in Malawi. See Mandala, *Work and Control*, 62.



Fig. 9.5 Women pounding grain in Malawi, 1914. This was the main way of making mealie meal in Mukuni before the advent of factory-produced meal flour (Source: E.C. Mandala, *Work and control in a peasant economy: A history of the Lower Tshiri Valley in Malawi, 1859–1960*, p.62)

meal to fall onto a skin or mat⁶⁷ (See illustration 9.7) With the Sharma Brothers' Store in their area and provided they had money, people could now simply buy factory-produced mealie meal, which the Leya called *mugaiwa*.⁶⁸

People in Mukuni and the surrounding villages used cooking oil from the nuts of *Mooma* (*Adansonia digitata*) or *Mungongo* trees (*Schinophyton rautanenii*). The process for producing oil was energy-intensive. First, the nuts had to be shelled and crushed into a paste using a mortar and pestle.

⁶⁷ Interview with Siamwiza. Mandala noted the same among the Tshiri Valley people in *Work and Control*, 63.

⁶⁸ *Mugaiwa* was a western technologically-ground mealie meal. It was roughly ground and relatively cheap but not as fine as today's roller meal or the finely ground breakfast mealie meal. Interview with Siamwiza.



Fig. 9.6 Woman at work on a stone grinding mill, early 1860s. Mealie meal was also made in a similar way in Mukuni before the advent of colonial rule (Source: E.C. Mandala, *Work and control in a peasant economy: A history of the Lower Tchiri Valley in Malawi, 1859–1960*, p.63)

Then, the paste had to be boiled and simmered for a long time before the oil could be used, a process that required a lot of firewood and thus contributed to the problem of deforestation. Although the *mooma* oil had a good taste and was quite nutritious, regular consumption left people with an unpleasant smell and they would often be ridiculed in their communities. With the western factory-produced oil that was brought to the Mukuni community by the Sharma Store, such problems were alleviated.⁶⁹

Many respondents confirmed that the Sharma Brothers' Store contributed to increased beer brewing and drinking but stressed that beer brewing was popular in Mukuni even before the store opened. The sugar and

⁶⁹ Interview with Siamwiza.

yeast it sold became essential ingredients in brewing as they hastened the fermentation process. The result was a reduction in the number of days it took to make beer from the normal seven days to two or three. Flour made from sorghum, millet or *nyaute* grains that had germinated and been dried had previously been the main ingredient used in the slow fermentation process. The arrival of yeast and sugar thus revolutionised the beer-brewing process and, in addition to a reduced production time, beer became more easily available to consumers.

Beer brewing was mainly done by women. According to Siamwiza, a lot of women resorted to it to raise the money they needed to purchase the western consumer goods available in the store. Some, particularly those considered experts in producing good beer, were able to generate a lot of money and began to feel superior to their husbands, thereby threatening the men's position as head of the household or family. In some cases, married women abandoned their husbands as they felt that they did not need a man to provide for them, but most women continued to live with their husbands and used the money they earned from beer sales to augment their husbands' incomes and cover additional family expenses, particularly school fees and school uniforms for their children. Siamwiza noted that most of the people in Mukuni who received a western education between the late 1950s and the 1970s were able to do so as a result of the money their mothers earned from their brewing activities.⁷⁰ One consequence of the Sharma Brothers' Store was, therefore, that it contributed to reduced female dependency on men and to more children being educated in the area, although this cannot be substantiated statistically.

Another major effect of the Sharma Brothers' Store was its contribution to a weakening of the area's inheritance system. In the traditional Leya inheritance system, the pattern of distribution of family chattels following a couple's separation due to divorce or death was known long in advance. Most items were communally owned by household members but some, particularly high-value items such as cattle, guns, sledges, drums, axes and hoes, were owned by the husband. Other items were owned by the wife, generally those that were acquired through her own efforts or as gifts from her husband or relatives. These included clothes and blankets made of animal skins or tree bark, winnowing and carrier baskets, sleeping and sitting mats, pestles and mortars, wooden pots, plates, cooking sticks, wooden cutlery and fowls. Gifts might include items of high value such as

⁷⁰ Interview with Siamwiza.

goats or cattle, but communal possessions could not be disposed of arbitrarily or indiscriminately. A husband could give away his personal possessions to anyone or to a member of his extended family and a wife was at liberty to do the same.⁷¹

Following the death of a husband, communal family items went to his wife and children while his personal chattels went to his children and a few to his relatives. The items given to relatives were meant to cement their relationship. If any of the children of the deceased encountered a problem, s/he could lean on them, particularly on the shoulders of a person who had inherited the family name (*swaana* or *sikulyazina*), normally the deceased's brother or nephew. In some cases, the *sikulyazina* also inherited the deceased person's wife and took care of her and her children. The system thus ensured the widow and her children some element of social security and the property owned by the deceased's wife never changed hands, even if she decided to go to the village she hailed from. Similarly when a wife died, the family chattels remained in the family while her personal possessions were shared among her children and a few went to her relatives.⁷²

Before the arrival of western-produced consumer goods, the people in Mukuni only owned a few goods, mostly items made of animal skin or bark. Valuable possessions tended to be cattle and goats. The arrival of the Sharma Brothers' Store therefore led to an increase in the number of (valuable) possessions the local people had, including ploughs, radios, metal beds, bicycles, carts, jerry lamps and cotton and woollen blankets. According to Siachilubwi, these possessions weakened the Leya inheritance system because some relatives, such as brothers and uncles of a deceased husband claimed items they coveted, thus dispossessing the widow and her children. Sometimes they even grabbed personal items belonging to the widow and although it is difficult to substantiate these claims, Siachilubwi felt that from the time when western consumer goods became common in Mukuni, in part as a consequence of the actions of Sharma Brothers' Stores, a number of cases related to property grabbing were heard at Mukuni's traditional court.⁷³

The goods people in Mukuni and the nearby villages owned as a result of the arrival of the Sharma Brothers' Store contributed to a weakening of the inheritance system. In the past, the heirs to the property of deceased

⁷¹ Interview with Siachilubwi.

⁷² Interview with Siachilubwi.

⁷³ Interview with Siachilubwi.

husbands were known, and the needs of the widow and any children were taken care of by the deceased's relatives. With more people accumulating possessions from the Sharma Brothers' Store, interest lay more in inheriting the deceased people's property than in taking care of their widows and children. This even led to reports of property grabbing, a practice that was hardly known before. It would be interesting to research whether or not the scourge of property grabbing, which is endemic in contemporary Zambian society, has its origins in the arrival of western-produced consumer goods in the country.

In addition to being a place to procure consumer goods, the Sharma Brothers' Store was also a place to congregate, particularly in the evenings when adults and children would come to the store to meet their friends. Generally, discussions centred on meeting the opposite sex and on love affairs, while children used the place as a play area. People also met, however, to settle pending disputes and sometimes fights erupted because of the failure of belligerent individuals to settle their disagreements amicably. These sometimes even went to litigation, particularly when neighbours were involved.⁷⁴

The goods the Sharma brothers sold prompted an unprecedented craving for western consumer goods. Men who failed to meet family obligations as demanded by their wives met serious challenges and women who were married to men who were unable to provide western consumer foodstuffs, clothes and utensils as a result of a lack of financial resources often left their husbands for men with the means to do so. In Leya tradition, no woman was allowed to drink beer publicly, except for elderly women. Women who disregarded this norm were often ostracised because a woman was considered to be the bedrock of the moral fibre of the family and what she did carried more weight than what a man did. Infidelity and prostitution among women were therefore not common. However, the desire to own the western goods on sale in the Sharma Brothers' Store did result in increased social problems and drunkenness, and infidelity and prostitution among women became more common. Women became attracted to men who had accumulated wealth in the form of western technology and consumer items and some even migrated to Livingstone Town, where they could drink beer without anyone questioning them and enjoy a more western lifestyle.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Interview with Siachilubwi.

⁷⁵ Interview with Siamwiza.

Fearing being abandoned or divorced by their wives because of their inability to provide them with western consumer goods, some of the men in the Mukuni area left for urban areas such as Livingstone Town, Victoria Falls Town, the Hwange coal mines or Bulawayo in Zimbabwe, or even for South Africa where they worked as migrant labourers in the diamond and gold mines in Kimberly and Johannesburg respectively.⁷⁶ By encouraging an appetite for western goods and with the failure of some husbands to meet their wives' newly acquired desire for these goods, the Sharma Brothers' Store contributed to social ills such as drunkenness and prostitution among women in Mukuni, which was later 'exported' to areas of high-population density such as Livingstone.

Changes in taste and consumption patterns, whereby western goods were preferred to traditional goods, resulted in the dying out of traditional handicrafts and native utensils. This was highlighted by Siamwiza, who in an interview stressed the negative aspects of the Sharma Brothers' Store's contribution to life in Mukuni. It had led to the local people abandoning traditional handicrafts. Traditional manufacturing methods were considered too time-consuming and laborious and the resulting products were deemed inferior to western ones. Traditional Leya-produced goods such as wooden plates, cups and stools or chairs with a wooden frame and animal hide base and back were abandoned for metal and enamel plates and cups and modern chairs. Traditional clothes made of bark and animal skins were also replaced by western clothes that were now easily available.⁷⁷

Other items that became less popular included traditional mats, baskets, winnowing and storage dishes and musical instruments, such as *kantiimbwa*, *kankokela* and *mpeta*. Over time, the skills required to make these were lost and the curios and other wood and animal-horn carvings in Mukuni, which in the past were finely made, lost their traditional touch as the carvers became influenced by the demands of tourists visiting Victoria Falls. Unlike in the past, curios were made in large numbers to meet the demands of the tourists from whom the local people got the money they needed to buy western consumer goods in the Sharma Brothers' Store and other similar stores in Livingstone. This state of affairs compromised the standards of traditional workmanship and resulted in products that did not portray the culture of people in the area.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Interview with Siamwiza.

⁷⁷ Interview with Siamwiza.

⁷⁸ Interview with Siamwiza.

CONCLUSION

The Sharma Brother's Store in Mukuni introduced the products of industrial technology to Mukuni village and the surrounding areas, and thus contributed to the transformation of consumption patterns and the area's social structures and associated concepts of wealth. The store eased the lives of people with its trading activities and put essential consumer goods within the easy reach of many who previously had had to walk long distances to Livingstone for supplies. Over time, the store contributed to a change in consumption tastes and in the way of life of the people in these areas: they moved from having traditional to western or modern lifestyles. More importantly, the Sharma Brothers' Store helped establish capitalism in Mukuni and the surrounding areas as the trade in western-produced consumer goods developed and encouraged cash-earning economic activities among the local people who wanted to access the cash they needed to purchase goods such as soap, salt, paraffin and clothes. In some cases, men were forced to engage in migrant labour to generate enough income to facilitate the purchase of such necessities.

The Sharma Brothers' Store, just like Indian traders in the rest of rural Zambia, was therefore an agent of social change because the factory-produced items it sold brought about change in the culture of the local African people as they came to depend on them. The store also transformed the social structures of the community it serviced as its goods ultimately assumed a status symbol and those who accumulated and consumed them enjoyed a higher status in the community than those who did not. The store thus contributed to a degree of social stratification in the community that, at times, threatened the authority of the local political leadership of the village headmen and the chiefs. It also led to a gradual but definitive disappearance of traditional handicrafts and native objects in preference for mass-produced western goods as well as the proliferation of social ills such as drunkenness, prostitution and marital problems. The Sharma Brothers' Store therefore underpins the role played in rural Zambia by Indian traders in establishing capitalism and in introducing material consumption patterns, the end of locally manufactured goods and associated technologies, and social differentiation and ills anchored in economic power.

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE FORT
JAMESON (CHIPATA) INDIANS ON THE DEVELOPMENT
OF CHIPATA DISTRICT, 1899–1973

Bizeck J. Phiri

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1891 the British South Africa Company's (BSAC) Charter was extended to the territories north of the Zambezi. Friday Mufuzi has suggested that the expedition included an Indian.¹ Furthermore, according to Mike Hagemann, 'in the same year, an Indian police force was raised from Sepoys Sikhs and Mohammedan cavalrymen.'² Later, in 1893, this force was replaced by new drafts of Sikhs, Zanzibaris, Mozambique and Nyasaland Africans. When Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia were separated, the mixed forces were withdrawn. Clearly, therefore, Indians were introduced in Zambia at the dawn of colonisation.

Between 1890 and 1911 Northern Rhodesia was administered by the BSAC as two separate entities, North-Western and North-Eastern Rhodesia. North-Western Rhodesia was administered from Livingstone, while North-Eastern Rhodesia was administered from Fort Jameson (present day Chipata). Although both administrations were financed by the BSAC, they developed separate immigration policies, which later affected the nature and character of Indian immigration to Northern Rhodesia. North-Eastern Rhodesia's immigration policy was to resemble that of Nyasaland (Malawi), because in the 1890s Cecil Rhodes had signed an agreement with Harry Johnston to oversee both Nyasaland and North-Eastern Rhodesia on behalf of the BSAC.³ The Indian immigration policy in North-Eastern Rhodesia reflected Johnston's colonial ideal in which he placed a high premium on the role of Indians. For Johnston, the territory was to be 'ruled

¹ F. Mufuzi, 'A history of Indians in Livingstone, 1890–1964', unpublished MA thesis, (University of Zambia, 2001).

² Mike Hagemann, 'Northern Rhodesia Police', <http://www.mazoe.com/nrp.html>

³ J. Haig, 'Crossing colonial boundaries: The "Indian question" and early Indian immigration to Northern Rhodesia', C. Baker and Z. Norridge (eds.), *Crossing places: New research in African studies* (Newcastle, 2007), 5.

by Whites, developed by the Indians, and worked by the Blacks.⁴ The two men worked closely in trying to create a role for Indians as middlemen in the fledgling economy of North-Eastern Rhodesia.⁵

The region, which is today called the Eastern Province of Zambia, was initially part of what was known as North-Eastern Rhodesia. Prior to that, the area was called East Luangwa District and included parts of what is currently the Northern Province of Zambia. The region as a colonial administrative and economic enterprise traces its origins to the visit by a German trader named Carl Wiese to Paramount Chief Mpezeni of the Ngoni people between 1889 and 1891. The Company was already present in North-Western Rhodesia. The NCEC was formed in England with a nominal capital of £1,000,000 and Wiese became an employee of the NCEC in the late 1890s.⁶ Although Colonel Warton was sent out as a Company representative, the NCEC did not have formal control of the territory, and was not in a position to administer the territory, nor conduct any business without Mpezeni's consent. Nonetheless, the NCEC established an administrative station at Chinunda (Old Fort Jameson) and Mr. Moringham was appointed by the Company to be in charge of the post. Because the administrative post was outside Ngoni territory, his administration was ineffective. Later, with the permission of Mpezeni, the administrative post was moved to Fort Young. This development notwithstanding, the NCEC still felt insecure. Believing that the Ngoni would attack the station, residents of Fort Young applied for an armed force from the Nyasaland Protectorate.⁷ The Protectorate administration at Zomba dispatched troops to Fort Young. Macmillan and Shapiro suggest that Wiese in fact precipitated the attack by the British troops from Nyasaland on Mpezeni's Ngoni in 1898.

Worse still, the arrival of troops at Fort Young created further tension between the two communities, especially because the troops were considered a threat to peace and security of the African people. The war effectively suppressed the Ngoni and paved the way for the actual occupation of the territory by the NCEC administration. The new station was placed under a Collector of Taxes. He was charged with the responsibility of enforcing NCEC control of the region. In August 1898 Robert Codrington

⁴ Cited in R. Rotberg, *The rise of nationalism in Central Africa: The making of Malawi and Zambia 1873–1964*, (Harvard MA, 1965), 13.

⁵ Haig, 'Crossing colonial boundaries', 5.

⁶ H. Macmillan and F. Shapiro, *Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia* (London and New York, 1999), 5.

⁷ Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, 5.

visited the territory and chose a new site for Fort Jameson, which became the headquarters of the district. In September of the same year, Fort Jameson became the new chief station of the East Luangwa District. However, it was not until December 1899 that the Administrator took up residence at Fort Jameson, which was established in 1899 as an important administrative town for the British South Africa Company. In that year Robert Codrington, who was then the Deputy Administrator of North-Eastern Rhodesia, transferred his headquarters from Blantyre in Nyasaland. The town was founded near Mpezeni's palace following the latter's defeat the previous year by BSAC forces. Almost immediately Fort Jameson became a small but successful centre for trade and other socio-economic services concomitant with an emerging town.

Within ten years of its establishment, Fort Jameson had attracted a considerable number of Asian traders (mostly from India). This study examines the introduction of Asian/Indian merchant capital in Eastern Province and the impact it had on the economies and consumption patterns of the local peoples.

The study also examines, among other things, the political establishment of Fort Jameson (Chipata) and the impact which the colonial town had on the economic development of the town itself and the surrounding areas. The study further examines the response of the local African population to the establishment of a settlement that was very different from the village type of settlement that Africans were used to in the pre-colonial times or on the eve of colonisation.

The establishment of the North-Eastern Rhodesia administration in 1898 led to a transformation of both the political and economic development of the region. The NCEC was not only engaged in exploratory work, but was also engaged in trading, facilitating European trade activities in the area. Meanwhile, the African Lakes Company (ALC) had an administrative station and had established several stores in the region. Undoubtedly, these commercial ventures by European traders, and later by Indian traders in Fort Jameson, had a considerable impact on the social and economic development of the surrounding areas of the Fort Jameson District, which at independence became known as Chipata.

While the country was colonised by the British and much has been written about the colonial administration and how it changed the life of the indigenous people, the Indian community once introduced in Eastern Province complemented the changes that were already taking place. In fact, it was the Indians who were to venture deep into the remote parts of the region to conduct trade which introduced European commodities

to Africans. In colonial Zambia, the presence of the Indian population was attributed to the migration movement of the Indians. Consequently, the history of Indians in Zambia is essentially the history of Indian⁸ merchant capital. Because Indians in Zambia are predominantly engaged in commerce, this study is largely an examination of Indian merchant capital in both colonial and post-colonial Zambia and the extent to which they influenced consumption patterns of Africans.

In her study of Indians in Tanzania, Martha Spencer Honey identified two eras of Indian merchant capital: before colonisation when pre-capitalist (communal, feudal and slave) modes of production were dominant; and after the advent of imperialism when capitalism penetrated and dominated the exchange-oriented economies.⁹ In the case of Zambia, Indian merchant capital belongs to the second era and not the first. There were no Indians in Zambia before the introduction of colonial rule. Indian merchants in colonial Zambia made huge profits in their dealings with African producers. Indians came to colonial Zambia well acquainted with the basic principle of commodity exchange, that is 'you buy cheap and sell dear'. More important is that in the colonial set up merchant capital became an agent of capital in industrialised Europe, America, Japan and even India. Merchant capital was therefore used to distribute European manufactured commodities and also to extract the colony's agricultural products for the benefit of the colonial power. It is in this later process that Indians had the largest impact in shaping African responses to the colonialist mode of production for the market.

This process of subordinating African producers to Indian merchant capital to meet the needs of the colonial state generated both economic and political conflict. In colonial Zambia the state successfully dictated the process of economic transformation, unlike in East Africa where Indians were already present and firmly in place when Europeans arrived. In colonial Zambia Indian merchant capital depended on the state for survival. In turn the colonial state was able to manipulate the playing field to its advantage by changing rules regarding where merchant capital would be invested.

⁸ The terms 'Asians' and 'Indians' are used interchangeably in Zambian discourse and refer to people originally from the Indian subcontinent. The term Asian became popular after the independence of India in 1947 in order to include people from what is today Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as India itself. However, in this study I have generally used the term Indian as the study is essentially a study of Indians in Zambia.

⁹ M.S. Honey, 'An economic history of Indians in Tanzania and Zanzibar 1840–1940', unpublished PhD thesis, (University of Dar es Salaam, 1982), 1.

Throughout the colonial period, merchant capital did not significantly transform itself into productive capital. While generally merchants do not invest their capital in production, colonialism itself impeded industrial development. This was because the colonial state ensured that metropolitan capital was central and prevented Indian capital from venturing into the industries. This position changed very little after independence. Indian merchant capital was therefore restricted to commodity distribution and to this effect contributed extensively to transforming African rural life.

Indian merchant capital could not be transformed into productive capital because four years after independence President Kenneth Kaunda announced the Mulungushi economic reforms, which had serious implications for Indian merchant capital. The nationalisation programme that followed was not conducive to Indian merchant capital. A period of stress and low economic activity by Indian merchant capital followed the Mulungushi declaration. It was only after 1991 that one could see a renewed interest and vigour by Indian merchants in economic activities. Nonetheless, most are still safe light business interests of Indian based firms. As such, they are essentially still engaged in the distribution category of the business.

INTRODUCTION OF INDIAN MERCHANT CAPITAL

In both cases, the 'excess baggage' were the Indian merchant capitalists. Indians had been in South Africa since the early nineteenth century as indentured labourers and traders. They were also present in Nyasaland (Malawi). Thus in 1904 Indian merchant capital attempted to start business in the Fort Jameson (Chipata) region, but was heavily resisted by Europeans in the area. Europeans in Northern Rhodesia greeted the introduction of Indian merchants with mixed reactions. The Company Administration wished to introduce Indian traders for a variety of reasons. Indian merchants were seen as a good way of introducing the money economy in the African society. The Administration needed revenue to conduct its administrative responsibility. Taxes from Indian business and licence fees seemed a good opportunity for the administration. The Company therefore ignored the protest from Europeans over Indian immigration into the territory. It decided to sanction the introduction of a limited number of Indian merchants into the country.

Although Indian traders were already actively involved in merchant business in neighbouring Malawi, and were conducting their business

alongside European traders, European traders in colonial Zambia were threatened by the introduction of Indian merchants. They argued that the introduction of Indian traders would drive European traders out of business, which would generally be harmful to Africans as well. The Company administration was not convinced that Indian merchants would drive Europeans out of business. Harry Johnston had already decided to use Indian merchants as intermediaries between European trading firms and African consumers.¹⁰ Codrington, therefore, replicated the Nyasaland Indian immigration policy where Europeans were encouraged to go into farming, and leave the trading to Indians. He pointed out that trading should be left to the European trading firm and Indian traders. This policy evoked a sharp reaction from both European traders and European farmers.

The Glasgow based African Lakes Company, one of the leading European trading firms in Nyasaland and colonial Zambia, on 3 June 1905 threatened to petition the BSAC Board of Directors in London if the protest against Indian immigration to the Acting Administrator at Fort Jameson did not yield positive results.¹¹ African Lakes Company believes that the introduction of Indian Traders would drive many Europeans out of the country, and that it will negatively affect the welfare of the natives.¹²

They further pointed out that the Farmers Association at Fort Jameson met and passed a resolution deploring the action of the Administration to invite Indian traders into the territory. Europeans argued that the Charter held by the NCEC gave them the sole trading rights in the territory. The introduction of Indian merchants was viewed as a violation of that right. They wondered why Indians traders were not simply prohibited from entering the territory.

As a result, European traders tended to discourage, instead of encourage Africans to take up trading. European traders were also said to have been reluctant to engage in trade of merchandise that was specifically for the African consumers. The Acting Administrator at Fort Jameson wrote to the Honorary Secretary of the Farmers Association on 6 June 1905 to the effect that if European traders collapsed it was because of their failure to cultivate African trade, and not because of the introduction of Indian

¹⁰ C.M.T. M'kunga, 'The development of the Indian trading class in Chipata, Zambia 1900–1988', unpublished MA dissertation, (University of Zambia, 1992), 20–1.

¹¹ NAZ A/1/4/4/7, Issuing, Introducing and Granting Trading Rights to Indian Traders, 31 July – 2 December 1905.

¹² NAZ A/1/4/4/7, African Lakes Company to BSAC, 7 June 1905.

traders.¹³ Therefore, as far as the Company Administration was concerned, Europeans had to adjust to the changes. At this stage it looked as though the Company Administration was going to sacrifice European traders.

The Farmers Association at Fort Jameson did not give up the fight. They continued to question the wisdom of the Administration to invite Indian traders into the territory without first establishing the position of trading in the country. The fears expressed by European farmers and traders reflected the reality of the potential competition posed by Indian traders once introduced in the territory. Although European traders had for a while concentrated on meeting the needs of European consumers, they now realised that Indians would not only target African consumers but the European consumer as well. The prospect of losing business to Indian traders was real and not welcome at all.

However, after the exchange of memoranda and discussions, the BSAC Board informed the ALC on 31 July 1905 that it did not feel that the introduction of Indian traders would cripple or drive away European traders from the country.¹⁴ The BSAC Board further noted that in Nyasaland, contrary to European fears in Northern Rhodesia, European and Indian traders were doing wholesale business together. The two communities were working side by side. Indian traders were said to cater almost exclusively to the African consumer while the European traders were catering to the European consumer. Indeed it was encouraged and for a while it seemed that European traders would survive the introduction of Indian traders.

The Board was keen to introduce Indian traders because since the colonisation of the territory European traders had not showed much interest in the natural products of the country. Indian traders, on the other hand, had shown a keen interest to venture into this area of trade. In Nyasaland Indian traders had already demonstrated a willingness to exchange European manufactured goods for African products like hides, beeswax, grain, oilseeds and other agricultural products. European traders found this type of business troublesome and therefore avoided it altogether. It was on account of this that the BSAC Board of Directors felt encouraged that the introduction of a limited number of Indian traders in the territory would be to the advantage of the African producers and the country as a whole. The BSAC Administration wished to raise the

¹³ NAZ A1/4/4/7, L.P. Beaufort, Acting Administrator to J.A. Ford, Honorary Secretary Fort Jameson Farmers Association, 6 June 1905.

¹⁴ NAZ A1/4/4/7, Assistant Secretary to Robert Codrington, 31 July 1905.

appetites of Africans for European manufactured goods so that they could be awakened to the demand for money. This would eventually make Africans want to look for wage employment to earn cash with which to buy European manufactured goods. Indian merchants were considered perfect partners in the proletarianisation of the African people as well as introducing Africans to new consumption patterns.

Therefore, by the end of 1905 Indian traders had been formally introduced in colonial Zambia despite European objection. The BSAC Board of Directors in London hoped that the ALC, which had put up the hardest struggle against the introduction of Indian merchants would adapt to the presence of Indian merchants. Clearly, therefore, European traders and the European firm had lost the battle against the introduction of Indian merchants. European traders and the European firm resorted to other methods of dealing with Indian competition. These methods in the long run reflected the colonial social and racial differentiation of the social formation. By January 1906 Indian traders had begun to arrive in the country.

INDIAN SETTLEMENT IN (FORT JAMESON) CHIPATA

Soon after the BSAC Board made the decision to allow a limited number of Indian traders to come to Chipata, a few moved from Blantyre and Zomba in Malawi. They established trading shops in the town and the surrounding areas. Both Europeans and Africans felt the impact of the newly arrived seasoned merchants, whose base was in many respects still in Malawi. The first shops were off-shoots of their Nyasaland businesses. Arguably, therefore, the pioneer Indian merchants in the Eastern Province were not the poor type. They were already established merchants in Nyasaland seeking to expand their business. By 1912 several Indian traders had established themselves in the Chipata area and were operating a number of stores. In that year the ALC was running eleven shops throughout the province. Meanwhile, an Indian trader named Oman Adam was operating five stores. Another Indian trader, Mohamed Osman was running three stores. There was no doubt that the Indian traders were favourably competing with the European traders. At the same time the Indian traders remained patriotic to the Company administration.

Meanwhile, the number of Indian traders was steadily growing. In 1916 another Indian trader named Assan Khamisa opened three stores and was involved in trading African goods. Because of the war, there were no other

Indian traders who set up shops in Eastern Province during the period. Thus, up to 1919, when the war ended, Oman Adam, Mohamed Osman and Assan Khamisa were the only big names in the Indian community in Chipata in African trade. When the war ended there was an increase in the number of Indian traders who came to the Eastern Province. They were encouraged by the post-war boom in spite of the measures which the Company was putting in place to restrict Indian immigration.

Meanwhile in 1915 the Company Administration had begun to restrict Indian immigration because the few who had established businesses were beginning to invite their relatives and friends over as shop assistants. The Northern Rhodesia Proclamation 15 of 1915 Section 7 (4 and 5) was used to check the rising numbers of Indian immigrants.¹⁵ This legislation was passed following extensive lobbying by European traders who consistently argued that Indian immigration, if allowed to rise, would be detrimental to both Africans and Europeans in the territory. It can be said that the 1915 Proclamation was in a way a victory for European traders, who in 1905 had failed to block the immigration of Indian traders.

A substantial number of Indian merchants first came to colonial Zambia as shop assistants. When the business expanded the owner would apply to the Colonial Administration to import a shop assistant from India. Africans would never be taken on as shop assistants. This practice made Africans uncomfortable because it contributed to the growth of the Indian population in the country. Furthermore, since Indian merchants controlled the wholesale trade, Africans could not easily compete with the newly opened Indian shops, which received all the support from the established Indian wholesalers.¹⁶

This view was in apparent reference to the reduced licence fees for African traders in the Native Reserves whose objective was to encourage Africans to take up trading at the village level. From the above observation by the Assistant Secretary for Native Affairs, emergent African traders were seriously threatened by both European and Indian traders. However, it was the number of Indian merchants and their Indian employees which was of major concern to the Africans.

From the table below it is clear that African concerns were justified, particularly in those areas where the number of Indian merchants and shop assistants was considerably high. Even colonial officials conceded

¹⁵ NAZ RC 21 Asiatic Admission into Northern Rhodesia and Immigration Regulations, 1924–1927.

¹⁶ NAZ SEC 3/5 Asiatic Immigration: Indians, Pop/A/20/1.

Table 10.1. Distribution of male Asiatic population as at December 1938

District	Store Owners	Store Assistants	Farmers	Other Trades
Livingstone	15	41	-	9
Kalomo	1	1	-	-
Choma	4	8	-	-
Mazabuka	5	27	-	-
Lusaka	26	34	2	6
Broken Hill	10	31	-	9
Ndola	19	26	-	7
Luanshya	9	25	-	4
Fort Jameson	17	53	-	3
Mpika	1	-	-	-
Mumbwa	3	2	-	-
Namwala	-	1	-	-
Serenje	-	1	-	-
Abercorn	2	1	1	-
TOTAL	112	251	3	38

(Source: NAZ SEC 3/53 New Immigration Ordinance Volume I, 1939–1946)

that with the advent of Indian merchant capital in the rural areas the prospect of Africans engaging in trade on their own was remote. This was certainly the case in Fort Jameson. Yet, it were the economic activities of the Indian community that contributed to the socio-economic transformation of the district.

INDO-AFRICAN RELATIONS

The problem of Indian immigration into colonial Zambia was not confined to Europeans alone. Africans as the indigenous people were equally affected and were concerned about the introduction of the Indian merchant capitalists to the country. From the above discussion it is evident that the official view was generally positive towards Indian immigration, and was generally sensitive to views of the Colonial Office and the Government of India. To what extent did this affect African opinion on Indian immigration? Did African opinion count in the decisions made regarding the immigration of Indians into colonial Zambia? The position of the colonial state on these issues was guided by its belief that Indian merchant capital was a necessary catalyst for stimulating African appetite

for European manufactured goods. The colonial state was further convinced that this development would simultaneously bring the African community into the money economy. Indian merchant capital was also considered a catalyst for African peasant production for the market, and it was believed that it would assist in re-orienting African peasant production towards a money-driven economy. This was the basis on which the colonial state continued to support a limited number of Indian immigrants into the country. Thus, based on these assumptions, African protests against Indian immigration into the territory were ignored.

The colonial government's position was strengthened by the fact that a considerable number of Africans also began to participate in trading activities at the village level. Since they were only starting they needed government protection against the more experienced Indian merchants. The colonial state was well aware of the position and the vulnerability of the emerging African traders in the face of Indian competition. Consequently, the colonial state put measures in place that restricted Indian merchants to areas outside the Native Reserves. Only Africans were licensed to trade in the reserves. Indian and European traders were not permitted to trade in the reserves unless under special permission from the Traditional Authorities. The colonial state used this argument to permit Indian or European merchants to trade in Native Reserves.

As early as 1929 the Provincial Commissioners' conference had agreed that Indian merchants should be allowed to trade in Native Reserves as long as the Native Authorities permitted them in their areas.¹⁷ The colonial state decided that certain areas, which were in Native Reserves but were traversed by main roads, should be zoned for Indian traders. Thus in the Eastern Province these trading areas were founded at Jumbe, Kalichelo, Msoro, Mgubudu, Katete, Petauke and Sinda. It is not clear how much protection this gave to African traders. Evidence seems to suggest that a considerable number of African traders in the villages were actually employed by Indian merchants in the designated trading zones. They extended their areas of operation by merely sub-contracting their business to an appointed African who obtained goods on credit and sold them on behalf of the Indian merchant for a salary. The Indian merchant appropriated the surplus value and the African remained at the same level and never developed to own the business.

¹⁷ NAZ SEC 1/1576, General Dealers, Indians in Barotseland, 1937–39: Minutes of 22 October 1937.

This was in sharp contrast to the way in which Indian merchants treated fellow Indians whom they brought as shop assistants and assisted to emerge as owners of their own businesses through a well worked out credit system. Several Indians testified that they came in as shop assistants, but after several years of working they were able to save enough capital to start their own trading business. The argument seems plausible considering the large number of failed African business enterprises during both the colonial and post-colonial periods.

However, it should be pointed out that African traders were equally disadvantaged when compared to European traders. For example, in 1934 the Assistant Secretary for Native Affairs pointed out that: 'A very large number of the stores which will be opened under the new reduced charge will be covertly nothing else but sub-stores of European traders.' This view was in apparent reference to the reduced licence fees for African traders in the Native Reserves whose objective was to encourage Africans to take up trading at the village level. From the above observation by the Assistant Secretary for Native Affairs, emergent African traders were seriously threatened by both European and Indian traders. However, it was the number of Indian merchants and their Indian employees, which were of major concern to the Africans.

INDIAN MERCHANTS AND LAND ACQUISITION, 1924 TO 1953

Although Indians were predominantly merchants, a few acquired land quite early. It was common practice among the Indian merchants to cultivate vegetables and fruits for their own consumption and sale to Europeans. In fact, several pioneer merchants used part of their land allocated for a shop to cultivate vegetables for sale to the surrounding white community. A number made their initial capital for the shops and trading business from the small profits realised from the sale of vegetables. There is therefore evidence that some Indian merchant capital formation was initially tied to land.

Almost all Indians arrived as store assistants. Soon some emerged as successful shop owners and landowners. The Indian merchant was known to oblige the European and cheat the African and to make a lot of money in the process. The case of Ibrahim S. Jasat was really exceptional and clearly demonstrated how Indians transformed themselves from mere shop assistants to prosperous shop owners in a big way. In 1938 Jasat was a store assistant. This profile made Jasat an important merchant leader

among Indians in the Fort Jameson area.¹⁸ Colonial officials noted that by the late 1940s Indian merchants had become the biggest potential land buyers in Eastern Province. More land was moving into Indian than European hands.

Jasat was not the only Indian merchant who took up land and diversified into agriculture in the Eastern Province. The acting Provincial Commissioner informed the Chief Secretary at the end of 1946 that four Indian traders had taken up land for the first time totalling 10,000 acres. Most of the land was being bought from the North Charterland Exploration Company.¹⁹ It was observed that there was a big demand for land by wealthy Indian traders. The Indian traders made very generous offers to European landowners and there were signs that some land owned by coloureds changed hands. One Indian bought a 1770-acre farm from a coloured.

The following year (1947) the NCEC sold four more farms of 5075 acres to Indian buyers. However, despite these purchases there is little evidence that the Indian buyers put this land to full commercial agricultural use during the 1940s. Only one Indian was registered as a tobacco grower in the Eastern Province during the period.

In Chipata the Town Management Board dealt with a number of land disputes involving Indian merchants. In 1948 the board heard a case between Mohamed Hamir and Almed Osman. The case concerned who should use the piece of land that was opposite Osman's Store. The Indian merchants decided to take the matter before the board for arbitration. The board decided that the piece of land should be sub-divided between the two merchants.²⁰ This indicates the significance of land among Indian merchants and also underscores the role of vegetable farming in the process of capital formation among the Indian merchants in colonial Zambia.

An Indian named Mohammed Ismail owned a 200 acre farm near Kasowi's village since 1911. It was in this area that Indian merchants clashed with African interests. Indian merchants bought maize and other agricultural produce at cheaper prices and sold at higher prices. This made Indian merchants realise handsome profits, which contributed to the process of Indian merchant capital accumulation and growth. Africans resented the

¹⁸ NAZ SEC 2/191, Provincial Newsletter, Eastern Province 1938–1948, 31 December 1947.

¹⁹ NAZ SEC 2/191, Provincial Newsletter, Eastern Province 1938–1948, Acting Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, Lusaka, 20 January 1947.

²⁰ NAZ EP 4/1/4, Minutes of the Town Management Board, Fort Jameson, 1940–1959, 13 January 1948.

practice because they did not benefit from it. For example, Indian merchants purchased maize in the Lundazi District and exported about 2,000 kilogramme bags to the line of rail where the maize was sold at a profit.

This business was very attractive to Indian merchants because transportation costs were relatively cheap. Indian merchants took advantage of Thatcher and Hobson lorries that were returning empty from the Eastern Province to Lusaka after transporting soldiers to Eastern Province and Nyasaland.²¹ Yet, while the Indian merchants were cashing in on the maize produced by African peasants, Africans were experiencing food shortages and hunger. Once again Indian merchants demonstrated their skill of appropriating surplus value as distributors of commodities at the expense of the producers. Africans developed a deep resentment against Indian merchants who bought agricultural produce at low prices and made huge profits by selling at higher prices.²²

Evidently, Africans as producers of primary commodities did not have a strong bargaining voice in their dealings with the more experienced Indian merchants, who were already accustomed to the principle of 'buy cheap, and sell dear'. It should be pointed out, however, that Indian merchants were issued with grain trading permits by the colonial government. More important perhaps, it should be noted that in several instances African peasants took grain to Indian merchants 'in such odd quantities that it [was] not always possible to pay cash for it.'²³ Colonial officials observed that African women and children often took small quantities of grain to Indian merchants in exchange for salt, matches, candles and other odd wants. Furthermore, in remote villages far from Indian shops African women often preferred to barter their agricultural produce with cloth to save themselves the trouble of walking long distances to the nearest Indian shop.

That the Indian merchants exploited African peasants merely demonstrated the Marxist view of the capitalist mode of production, whereby the distributors who appropriate surplus value exploit the producers. Indian merchants did not add any value to the agricultural produce. They merely increased the selling price to realise a profit. African peasants rarely transformed themselves into distributors and continued to depend on Indian merchants for the distribution of their agricultural produce. This process

²¹ NAZ SEC 2/191, Acting Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 18 October 1946.

²² NAZ SEC 2/225, Eastern Province African Provincial Council Minutes of the Meeting of 27–28 April 1948.

²³ NAZ ZA 1/9/87/2, Secretary of Native Affairs to Chief Secretary, 21 June 1933.

enhanced the growth of Indian merchant capital. The profits realised were ploughed back into the trading business.

Indian merchants did not have problems with buying grain from African peasants because they usually found a cash buyer for the grain later in the year. In fact, some Indian merchants paid cash for the grain in the hope of selling it at a profit later. Because of the shortage of cash in the villages in the 1930s and 1940s, Indian merchants easily and willingly bartered their European manufactured goods for African agricultural produce. Thus, when Traditional Authorities complained that Indian merchants were exploiting the people, they did not take into account the circumstances which gave rise to the practice. The problem was that the practice contributed to the marginalisation of African peasants while it enhanced Indian merchant capital formation and growth.

The practice was illegal. In 1939 the colonial state put the Credit Sales to Native Ordinance Cap 54 in place. It prohibited the advance of goods or cash by merchants to Africans against future deliveries of grain crops, live-stock or other produce.²⁴ Under the same ordinance it was illegal for Indian merchants, or indeed any merchant, to engage in barter trade. However, in practice the ordinance did not stop Indian or European merchants from engaging in barter trade. The practice continued because both sides got some, though unequal, benefits from the practice.

Under the circumstances, all the Traditional Authorities could do was complain to the colonial authorities about the negative effect of the practice on the economy of their societies. Chief Ledi Mkanda of the Chewa people complained in 1948 that during the months of January–March his people experienced much hunger because of the indiscriminate buying of food by European and Indian merchants. A related problem raised by Chief Ledi Mkanda was about price control, which the government put in place. He argued that by controlling the price of maize, the government was facilitating the exploitation of African growers by Indian merchants.

The government on its part was not concerned with the returns of African peasants. The colonial state did not wish to create conditions which would lead to social unrest in the urban areas. Keeping the prices of the main foodstuffs as low as possible was one of the main objectives for instituting price control on maize. Thus Indian merchants and other suppliers of food were expected to supply maize to urban areas at prices

²⁴ NAZ SEC 2/293, Credit Sales to Native Ordinance, 1939–1949.

which were as low as possible. This is why in 1946 the colonial government openly admitted that the price of maize had to be controlled 'because many people have no maize.'²⁵

The Colonial Administration also pointed out that prices were fixed in such a way that the interests of both producers and distributors were protected. This was achieved by ensuring that the Price Controller fined those who sold goods far in excess of the fixed prices. The government even brought out recent figures of Indian merchants who had been fined for offences relating to price control regulations at Fort Jameson in March 1946. To prove its case the government told members of the African Provincial Council (APC) that fifteen Indian merchants had been fined in March alone for offences connected to violating price control regulations. Furthermore, the government argued that price controls were not just imposed on African grown agricultural produce, but on all other commodities sold by Indian merchants.

The colonial administration was set to convince members of the APC that Indian merchants were not making profits above what was expected of them. However, the fact that several Indian merchants were convicted in the courts for cases related to price control violations suggests that African complaints were justified. This does not mean that the colonial state was protecting African interests. Traditional authorities complained to the colonial government that Indian merchants, who did not seem to stick to price labels, were exploiting their people. They also complained because Indian merchants demanded that when an African bought a clothing material, this material had to be tailored in the same shop. This resulted in the African paying more.²⁶ The Provincial Commissioner, R. Bush, informed the APC that in 1947 an Indian merchant was fined £30 for refusing to sell cloth to an African unless the cloth was tailored at his shop. Otherwise, it would be the word of the African against that of the Indian merchant. A common practice, which contributed to Indian merchant growth, was the payment of African labour in kind. It was found that African workers never formally complained about the practice, apart from just talking about the poor conditions in general.

²⁵ NAZ SEC 2/225, Minutes of the African Provincial Council, 27–28 April 1946.

²⁶ NAZ SEC 2/225, Eastern Province, APC Minutes of the Meetings, 1943–48: Price Control, 27–28 April 1948.

THE POST-COLONIAL PERIOD

Zambia attained political independence on 24 October 1964, and like most former colonies, Zambia took over the reins of government while the economic sector was still entirely in the hands of non-citizens, especially Europeans and Indian merchants. This situation was a direct result of the colonial policy, which denied economic opportunities to Africans. The nationalist leaders were expected to change this situation and give indigenous people a greater role in the economic development of the country. There was not even a resident expatriate business or a foreign controlled business or business for that matter with a Zambian manager in Cairo Road.²⁷

Undoubtedly, therefore, the Zambian resentment of foreign and alien minority interests in the economy found expression in the president's quest to re-align the economic environment in favour of Zambian citizens. During the first four years of independence, the Zambian government called upon the Indian community to take up Zambian citizenship and identify themselves with the nation. While the speech expressed the concern of the nationalist government over the continued dominance of aliens, both Indians and Europeans, in the economy, it also served to highlight that the continued dominance of these aliens was a constant reminder of colonial domination. The economic reforms that followed were therefore an attempt to empower indigenous people economically, in order to complete the process of independence. Thus, the economic reforms had a political agenda as well.

Surprisingly, President Kaunda chose to use the same method which the colonial state had unsuccessfully used to prop up African entrepreneurship in the rural areas:

Looking back at the methods of the colonial regime of the past I notice that most of the Zambian businesses have developed in townships where competition from expatriate business was not allowed. For reasons which are more human, I intend to use their method and confine the areas of retail trade by resident expatriate businesses to the centre of big towns only.²⁸

The political agenda of the economic reforms, as far as retail trade is concerned, was seen in the implementation of the reforms. United National

²⁷ K.D. Kaunda, *Zambia's economic revolution* (Lusaka, 1988), 30.

²⁸ Kaunda, *Zambia's economic revolution*, 26.

Independence Party (UNIP) cadres expected some form of reward for their role in the independence struggle. It is plausible to suggest that the 1968–9 economic reforms were part of the solution to the problem. The reforms reflect the policy of Africanisation or indigenisation of the wholesale and retail trade in rural areas. Indigenisation of wholesale and retail trade was tried by the state during the colonial period. The [Indian] stores at present serve the community in a way that African traders cannot, and until such a time as the Native Authorities feel that the position has been reversed, I do not anticipate any closure of the store sites. Once good African traders begin to emerge, however, then I have no doubt that the Native Authorities will progressively close down the [Indian] stores.²⁹

As observed earlier, these attempts to prop up African traders were thwarted by Indian merchants who undermined the policy of the colonial state. Consequently, by independence there were not many 'good African traders' to replace the Indian merchants in rural areas. The colonial District Commissioner was expecting an economic solution to the Indian merchant dominance in the rural areas. Yet, as we have pointed out already, African traders remained largely under-capitalised and were usually at the mercy of the Indian merchant who provided goods as a wholesaler. In the end, most African traders became fronts for the Indian merchants.

Attempts were made to help Africans soon after independence, but without success. In the Eastern Province, for example, where Indian merchant dominance was greatest, the provincial administration decided to facilitate African entry into the wholesale and retail business through the Eastern Province Co-operative Marketing Association (EPCMA).³⁰ Africans were encouraged to buy shares in the Co-operative to establish a wholesale shop 'in order to counteract foreign profiteering'.³¹ The project was a deliberate government attempt to initiate an economic approach to dealing with the Indian dominance in the wholesale and retail business in rural areas. The economic approach failed to replace Indian merchants by African traders in the rural areas.

²⁹ NAZ EP 1/1/37, Land Leases: Trading General, District Commissioner at Fort Jameson to Commissioner of Lands, Lusaka, 16 November 1957.

³⁰ For details of the history of the EPCMA see B.J. Phiri, *The impact of the Eastern Co-operative Union Limited (ECU) on the agricultural development of Eastern Province of Zambia, 1957–1984: A Case Study*, Research report Submitted to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), April 1986.

³¹ *Tsopano*, 19 February 1966.

The implementation of the economic reforms followed a well-planned programme and procedure. In 1967 the UNIP government put structures in place which were later used to implement the reforms. The Provincial Development Committees (PDC) and the District Development Committees (DDC) were initially put in place to spearhead development projects in the provinces and districts. The DDCs and the PDCs started by identifying wholesale and retail shops that were owned by non-Zambian Indians and other expatriates, to be earmarked for immediate take over. In the Eastern Province alone, a total of 176 shops were identified for immediate take over by Zambian citizens.³²

Before 31 December 1968 all outgoing non-Zambia Retail Trade Licence Holders were requested to negotiate with Zambians who were expected to take over the stores before 1 January 1969. On obtaining a letter from the DDC that the particular Zambian qualified, the applicant was directed to go to the Zambia Consumer and Buying Corporation (ZCBC) Shop Manager who was requested to take stock in the retail shop to be taken over; and payment for the shop was to be done in instalments.³³

HOW DID NON-ZAMBIAN INDIAN MERCHANTS RESPOND?

Non-Zambian Indian response to the take over was calm and took several forms. Some chose to transfer their shops to their relatives and friends of Indian origin, instead of selling the shops to indigenous Zambians.³⁴ Others demanded cash payments because they wanted to leave the country and return to India. For example, S.I. Pander offered to sell his shop to Mrs. N. Mbewe, the Woman Regional Secretary at Katete for K1,600 cash. Although the mechanism that was put in place to facilitate a smooth take over of non-Zambian owned shops was straightforward, the sales could not be concluded in time in several cases. The Zambia Consumer and Buying Corporation (ZCBC), a state owned enterprise, took stock of the shops to be taken over. Yet, in a number of cases transfers could not be accomplished because of several factors. A considerable number of Zambians who successfully negotiated to take over non-Zambian Indian shops were party cadres and did not have operating capital. Consequently,

³² NAZ EP 4/20/86, Economic Reforms 1969–1970: DEV 120/19 Economic Reforms Take Over of 176 Shops, 18 October 1968.

³³ NAZ EP 4/20/86, Economic reforms, 1968–1970.

³⁴ NAZ EP 4/20/86, DEV 20: G.Kapenda, Chipata to District Secretary, Katete, 11 August 1970.

by May 1969 in the Katete District alone, only nine shops were taken over by Zambians. Twenty-eight shops remained closed. During the same period only one Zambian succeeded in opening a wholesale shop in the district.³⁵ Some shops remained closed because certain non-Zambian Indians wanted their children who were born in Zambia to reach adult age and then take over the family business. In retrospect, this response is understandable considering the fact that some of these Indians struggled very hard to accumulate the initial capital when they first came to colonial Zambia as shop assistants.

Within a few years of the take over of non-Zambian Indian shops, what were previously viable or even booming service centres began to decline. Buildings left behind by departing non-Zambian Indian merchants slowly fell into a state of disrepair and eventually collapsed. The once vibrant economic centres became ghost service centres with virtually no economic activity worthy talking about. The Indian merchants, both Zambian and non-Zambian, regrouped in towns like Lusaka, Livingstone, Chipata, and on the Copperbelt where they did booming business. People from the rural areas started following the Indian merchants into the towns. Thus throughout the 1970s and the 1980s the dilapidated buildings remained a constant reminder of the failure of the take over of non-Zambian Indian shops in rural parts of Zambia. There were exceptional cases where Zambians did quite well following the acquisition of shops. There were also cases of Zambians who appeared successful only because they became fronts of the previous non-Zambian owners of the business. Such shops remained open as long as the non-Zambian Indian received his dues and was satisfied with the returns. This was mostly the case when a previous owner of a retail shop was also a wholesaler. The wholesaler continued to supply goods to his previous shop, now 'under new ownership and management' at wholesale prices and received the profits in return. At an appointed time during the month the wholesaler, who was really the owner of the retail shop, took stock of the goods in the retail shop and his profits. He paid the Zambian manager, who was more or less like his previous Indian shop assistant, his salary. The Indian bourgeoisie continued to accumulate profit and surplus value as before, while the Zambian worked in the shop.

³⁵ NAZ EP 4/20/86, DEV 20: Economic Reforms, 1969–1970, S.P. Nyirenda, District Secretary at Katete to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Foreign Trade, 15 May 1969.

The problem of failure by Africans to take over wholesale businesses owned by non-Zambian Indian merchants was widespread in the country. By April 1970 the Petauke DDC observed that African traders were facing serious difficulties in obtaining licences for wholesale trade in the district. Many Africans simply did not have adequate resources to run such business. Insufficient working capital contributed to Messrs. Mphande and Lolani to fail to take over in a joint venture the wholesale trade in Petauke. The two African traders teamed up to pull their resources together, but did not succeed because they could not meet the target for the price of the wholesale shop. Consequently, the Petauke DDC resolved that the two non-Zambian Indians should be allowed to continue operating the wholesale trade, otherwise the Zambians who took over the retail trade shops in the district would have problems obtaining goods for their retail shops.

The Chadiza and Petauke cases demonstrate the failure by indigenous Zambians to take over businesses that required a lot of resources. The cases also demonstrate the failure by the government to appreciate the nature of wholesale trade and how it was intertwined with the retail trade. The government did not seem to have drawn any lessons from the colonial state, which faced similar problems in its related programme from which President Kaunda got the idea. In the end, several non-Zambian Indian wholesale and retail shop owners continued to obtain licences through Zambians to run their businesses.³⁶

The above notwithstanding, relations between Zambia and India remained friendly. India played an important role in the decolonisation of Africa, Zambia included. The post-colonial leaders, including President Kenneth David Kaunda, were sensitive to this. Arguably, therefore, Zambian leaders took great care to ensure that domestic politics and economic policies did not lead to antagonistic foreign relations with friendly countries like India. It was in this respect that unlike in Idi Amin's Uganda, the economic reforms as far as wholesale and retail business was concerned, were targeted at non-Zambians and not Zambians of Indian origin.

The paper has demonstrated the extent to which Indian merchant capital from the colonial days to independence in the Eastern Province has contributed to changing commodity production and consumption among Africans. While Indians in the Eastern Province have remained dominant

³⁶ NAZ EP 4/5/12, Chipata District Development Committee, 1967–1972, Meeting of 13 March 1972; see also NAZ EP 4/5/16, Chipata District Development Committee Meeting of 2 June 1970.

in the retail and wholesale business, they have nonetheless had a long lasting impact on Africans. Up coming indigenous Zambian traders in the province continue to face stiff competition from Indian traders as they did in the early colonial period.

Chipata, the provincial capital of the Eastern Province, is undoubtedly an Indian town in a rural Zambian province. The impact of the Indian community is in evidence everywhere. They are not just owners of shops and retail outlets in the province, but they are also employers of many indigenous people. There is no doubt that the introduction of Indian merchant capital in Eastern Province introduced new forms of consumption patterns as well as demand for European manufactured goods.

BUSINESS, CONSUMPTION AND POLITICS:
ROBINSON NABULYATO'S BANAMWAZE STORE, 1949–1969¹

Marja Hinfelaar

INTRODUCTION

This study of Banamwaze Store, a shop that was owned and managed by prominent political leader Robinson Nabulyato, challenges the stereotyped characterisation of the ineffective African businessman. Literature on businesses in Zambia has been largely restricted to Indian, Greek and Jewish businessmen.² The notable exception is a sociological study of African businessmen by Beveridge and Oberschall based on extensive fieldwork in rural and urban Zambia between 1970 and 1972.³ The limited amount of literature could be due to the fact is that the overall impact of African business has been limited as compared to the aforementioned communities. Before independence, the development of indigenous businesses was limited by colonial legislation, which disallowed Africans to engage in trade except in designated areas. In the rural areas, Africans were limited to trade and business in native reserves, which were always located outside the administrative centres. By 1948, a year before Nabulyato opened his business, Africans held a total of 4,000 trading and 1,000 hawking licences, but as a result of the small size of their companies, the African trade accounted for about 5% of all trade.⁴ With the removal of the above hindrances after independence, African businesses initially expanded rapidly, also as a result of the economic reform policies which aimed at

¹ This article is dedicated to the memory of Godfrey Nabulyato. Godfrey was instrumental in donating his father's private collection to the National Archives of Zambia and in publishing his father's memoirs.

² H. Macmillan, *An African Trading Empire: The Story of Susman Brothers & Wulfsohn, 1901–2005* (New York, 2005); A. Sardanis, *Africa: Another side of the coin. Northern Rhodesia's final years and Zambia's Nationhood* (London, 2003); B.J. Phiri, *A History of Indians in the Eastern Province of Zambia* (Lusaka, 2000).

³ A.A. Beveridge, A.R. Oberschall, *African Businessmen and Development* (Princeton, N.J, 1979). Their study has a limited historical depth, focusing primarily on the development of post-colonial African businesses.

⁴ A.A. Beveridge, 'Economic Independence, Indigenization, and the African businessman: some effects of Zambia's economic reforms,' *African Studies Review*, 17 (1974), 477–90, 478.

favouring African businesses. In the 1970s, the decline of the Zambian economy halted the growth of indigenous businesses.

Nabulyato's case study counteracts this narration of underachievement of African businesses. As Seleti rightly noted: the historical study of African business provides an opportunity to study 'African initiative and rationality', thus challenging underdevelopment theorists who present Africans solely as passive objects.⁵ This case study was largely made possible because of the existence of Nabulyato's private archival collection. Arguably, an important reason why studies of African businesses are underrepresented is the general lack of a paper trail, caused by a lack of documentation by the owners and an underrepresentation in colonial and post-colonial archival collections.⁶ While we are still awaiting the complete set of accounts of the Banamwaze enterprise, the collection as it stands provides a unique insight into the challenges of running local enterprise, including the pricing, marketing of products, community responses and the general evolution of Nabulyato's (business) mind and his reaction to economic policies at the national level.

A study of this kind therefore is able to detail the historical trajectory of a local business. Nabulyato was one of the handful of businessmen who had, in Seleti's words, the 'ability and perception necessary to combine latent resources and opportunities,' successfully combining various business activities.⁷ The small shop, in combination with the transport business and (cattle) trade, enabled Nabulyato to become part of Africa's commercial elite. A study conducted on African businesses in Southern Rhodesia concluded that the African commercial elite remained 'too small, economically too insignificant and socially too fragmented and diverse to ever develop a consistent influence on local or even national politics'; this holds partially true for Zambia as well. Nabulyato's experience as an entrepreneur shaped his principles as a political player at the national level, but ultimately he was unable to influence economic policies. Indeed, as the second part of the paper will show, his personal experience of economic decline in post-colonial Zambia exposes Nabulyato's

⁵ Y.N. Seleti, 'Entrepreneurship in colonial Zambia', in: S.N. Chipungu (ed.) *Guardians in their Time: Experiences of Africans under Colonial Rule 1890-1964* (London, Basingstoke, 1992), 147-79, 147. It is a pity therefore that Seleti, in his conclusion, focuses on failure rather than successes.

⁶ The National Archives of Zambia acquired numerous private collections after a concerted effort in 2003, see M. Hinfelaar, G. Macola, *A Guide to Non-Governmental Archives in Zambia* (Lusaka, 2004). These included the Nabulyato papers.

⁷ Seleti, 'Entrepreneurship in Colonial Zambia', 169.



Fig. 11.1 Kenneth Kaunda (Source: National Archives of Zambia)

intense frustration with the inherent contradiction of UNIP's policies as regards to the 'Zambianisation' of the economy and political elite's duplicity regarding their ideological opposition to wealth creation and consumption. However, looking from a local perspective, the impact of the so-called 'new social bourgeoisie' cannot be ignored. As has been observed by Beveridge, the presence of businessmen led to a new form of stratification and usually led to friction with the traditional authorities.⁸

NABULYATO'S PUBLIC CAREER

I start with a brief background of Nabulyato's public career at the national level, for it provides an important context of Nabulyato's motivation to become an entrepreneur. Moreover, it will serve to show how the business and political careers cross-fertilised each other. This section leans heavily on Nabulyato's memoirs, which were written in the late 1980s.⁹

Nabulyato was born on 28 October 1916 in Banamwaze village, in Namwala district of the Southern Province. He was the first born of his mother Nanja (daughter of Senior Headman Shakopa) and his father Shintongo Nabulyato (son of Senior Headman Mwanakwale, shortened to Mwaakwe):

After I was born, my father was recruited into the British Military Forces, first, as a carrier, and, later, as a soldier. I therefore spent my early childhood with my matrilineal uncle Shikalimbwe Shakopa, my mother's elder brother. In those days, the main concern of young Ila boys was to look after cattle. I was no exception to it. My uncle was an enterprising man. He was the first in his area to use a plough pulled by 4 oxen. He was able to do this thanks to the help of two of his Lozi friends, Mubita and Katumwe, who had settled in Shakopa's village after travelling to South Africa and learning the art of taming oxen while working on European farms near Johannesburg.¹⁰

Exposure to the world beyond cattle was a result of his stay with the second guardian, Chief Shaloba (Chabang'amba), the husband of his mother's eldest sister. In this period, Nabulyato received education at a nearby Methodist school, Nanzhila mission, where he was marked as a talent; he proceeded in 1935 to Kafue Training Institute where he was taught various trades like carpentry, blacksmithing, building, bookkeeping and typing. The institute also offered courses in Teacher Training, Evangelist Training

⁸ Beveridge and Oberschall, *African Businessmen and Development*, 4.

⁹ Robinson Nabulyato, *African Realities: A Memoir* (Lusaka, 2008), edited by G. Macola.

¹⁰ Nabulyato, *African Realities*, 1.

and courses in Crop Management and Animal Husbandry. Nabulyato subsequently became a teacher at Nanzhila mission from 1942 and 1944, before attending the Jeanes Teachers Training School at Chalimbana, with a view to obtaining the Higher Teacher's Certificate.

Nabulyato cites Rev. L.W.S Price, a 'coloured' Methodist Minister at Nanzhila Mission, as an influence to his political awakening, amongst others, exposing him to the works of Marcus Garvey, commenting that 'this is where doubts about British rule in the then Northern Rhodesia grasped me.' In addition, he was influenced by the works of George Padmore and Dr. Aggrey's writings and one of his teachers at Kafue Training Institute, J. Roberts. He radicalised quickly and started running into problems with the Methodist Missionaries, describing them as: '[T]he disguised agents of Imperialism.'¹¹

Nabulyato's consequent involvement in the nationalist movement led him to serve as the first General Secretary of the Northern Rhodesia African Congress from 1948 to 1953, when Kenneth Kaunda replaced him. In 1949, as a direct result of frictions with the missionaries resulting from his political activities, Nabulyato left his teaching post at Kafue Training Institute and returned to his home village Banamwaze. The anti-Federation activities took him on tours throughout Northern Rhodesia and to the United Kingdom in 1952. Nabulyato left the political party in 1953, but was immediately nominated to the Ila Native Authority Council and the Southern Province's African Provincial Council. In 1954, Nabulyato became one of the four African Members of the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia. In 1959, he took part as an independent candidate in the elections to the Legislative Council (LegCo), but lost to Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, ANC's National President.

Although he joined the United National Independence Party (UNIP) between 1959 and 1960, a rather unusual choice for a Southerner who more commonly backed the African National Congress (ANC), Nabulyato left the Zambian national political scene for close to a decade. After independence, government engaged Nabulyato in various assignments, amongst them a trade mission to Italy to lay the foundation of the establishment of a Fiat manufacturing company in Livingstone.

Nabulyato's career changed considerably when in the beginning of 1969, President Kaunda appointed him as Speaker of the Zambian National Assembly. He held this position uninterruptedly until the latter part of

¹¹ According to G. Macola, this quotation can be traced to George Padmore's, *How Britain Rules Africa* (London, 1936), Nabulyato, *African Realities*, 17.

1988, when he felt he could no longer support the ruling party. Political observers and commentators have suggested that during the Second Republic Speaker Nabulyato shaped the Zambian Parliament into a 'true people's parliament'. He not only allowed serious criticism of government policy by backbenchers, but also protected the Members' right to speak freely in the House. He earned the name or title of 'Mr Discipline' because of his strict demand for discipline among Members of Parliament.¹² After the introduction of multi-party democracy, he was reinstated as Chair of the National Assembly in 1991, and served for seven more years. Remarkably, Nabulyato cited the Banamwaze business as his main source of income, a position that, following the so-called Leadership Code during the UNIP era, deprived him of a full salary as Speaker. He passed away in 2004 at the age of 87 years.



Fig. 11.2 Robinson Nabulyato's grave and his store in the background

VENTURING INTO BUSINESS

From 1949 Nabulyato initiated his business undertaking, which came to consist of storekeeping, trading, transport, cattle and small agricultural

¹² Nabulyato, *African Realities*; B.J. Phiri, *A History of Indians*, xi.

production in Namwala District. The start of this business domain was signified by the opening of the Banamwaze store in his home village within the Ila-Tonga reserve.

Since the early colonial days, Namwala District had been exposed to foreign shopkeepers and traders. It saw a fair turnover of European and Indian traders, like Cavadias, Ellis, Wulfsohn, Long, Butts, Manning & Hughes, etc. who over time had established themselves in various locations throughout the district. By 1961, Indians had taken over all the European shops and the District Commissioner noted that by this time the area seemed 'overtraded.'¹³ In addition to the expansion of the Indians,

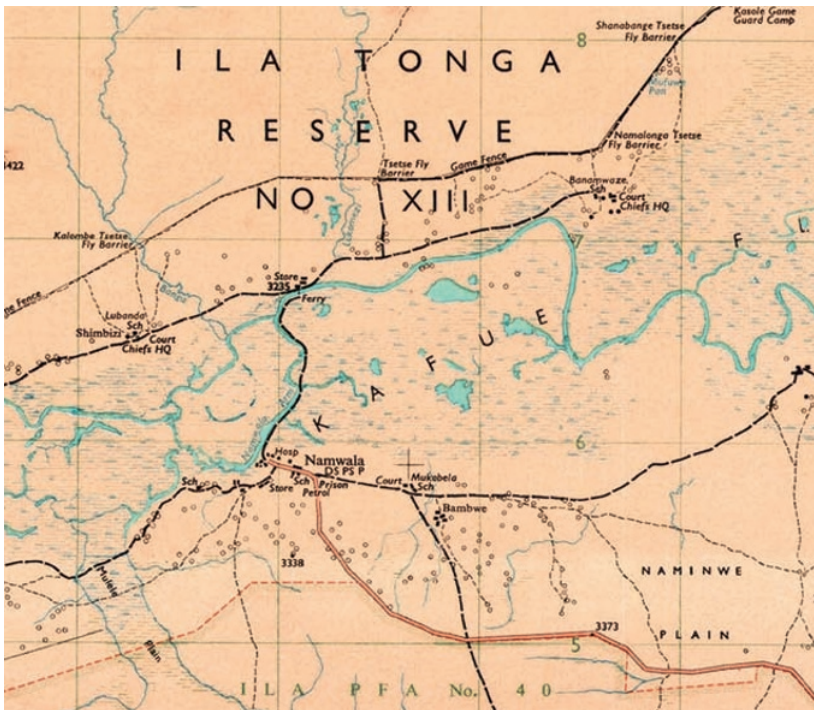


Fig. 11.3 Map showing Banamwaze's location in Namwala District (Source: National Archives of Zambia)

¹³ National Archives of Zambia (NAZ), Namwala District Notebook, Vol. III, 343. On the topic of Indian shops, the District Notebook further noted that 'it is notable for continual sharp practice combined with bad manners towards the African public and the situation has several times obtained whereby a sharp warning had had to be issued to avoid an entirely justified boycott.'

African-owned businesses were on the increase from the 1940s onwards, with local colonial officers considering Joseph Baptiste as the only 'African trader in a big way' and describing Mr. Nabulyato as the one 'who runs a small but well stocked store at Banamwaze.' Nabulyato remembers the start of his business as follows:

Having brought my association with Kafue [Training Institute] to an end, I returned to Banamwaze, where I used my savings to open a small village shop, the Banamwaze Store. I invested £25 in the store. The licence fee cost me 2 shillings and 6 pence. My young brother Oswell Shaabwa and I settled down to work.¹⁴

Given Nabulyato's eventful career as a teacher and a political leader, his decision to return to his home area to start a rather modest business venture seems an unusual choice. Indeed, at hindsight, going home did not deter his political career, but it was still atypical for nationalist's leaders to leave the urban centres and it begs the question what inspired him. The return to his home area is not entirely surprising in light of Nabulyato's upbringing in Ila society. As has been pointed out, Ila society by nature was very entrepreneurial and competitive.¹⁵ The income derived from the cattle economy made them less dependent on opportunities offered by the missionaries, commercial farms and urban employment.¹⁶ Namwala District's labour migrant statistics clearly support this penchant.¹⁷

However competent in the cattle trade, few ventured in other enterprises and Nabulyato's business venture was therefore out of the ordinary. We can speculate that this course of action was influenced by various factors. Exposure to shop keeping during his childhood may have been one, in view of the fact that Nabulyato worked as a 'store-boy' for a Greek shop owner:

I knew the whole family of Cavadia & Nephews very closely way back in the 1930s when they I ran businesses in Namwala and Pemba. Their Greek pioneer leaders in business then were Seidman Cavadia and Peter Cavadia who came to Namwala between 1918 and 1929 (...) I even worked for Cavadia as a boy at Namwala.¹⁸

¹⁴ Nabulyato, *African Realities*, 19.

¹⁵ R.J. Fielder quoted in G. Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa: A Biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (New York, 2010), 11.

¹⁶ Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa*, 11.

¹⁷ NAZ, Namwala District Notebook Vol. III.

¹⁸ NAZ, HM79/PP/1/F6 General Personal Correspondence, R.M. Nabulyato to Mary Cavadia, 9 May 1985.

Nabulyato's ventures have also been attributed to an unusual degree of exposure he received while receiving education and his political career which took him outside his home area.¹⁹ In his memoirs Nabulyato attributes his entrepreneurial capabilities to his uncle and the vocational training he received at the Kafue Training Institute as an important factor to the enhancement of his skills in cattle keeping and agriculture:

I also began to buy and breed cattle so as to use oxen for ploughing. This was the art I had learnt from my late uncle Shikalimbwe Shakopa and refined through the Kafue courses in Crop and Animal Husbandry.²⁰

Besides the pull factor, we also have to briefly consider the push factors influencing Nabulyato's return to Banamwaze. In his memoirs he recalls the racist attitudes of some of his white colleagues at Kafue Training Institute as an important reason for his departure and the tension that arose from his leadership function in the nationalist movement. Nabulyato's independency as an entrepreneur allowed him to continue his public career without any interference.

From an economic perspective, Nabulyato's homecoming in the late 1940s fits neatly with the rise of African businesses as a result of Northern Rhodesia's post-war economic expansion. The specific impact of the economic development on production and consumption in Southern Province is well known and needs little introduction. As Vickery describes, the rail line had facilitated the establishment of (European) shops and stores from the 1910s onwards. Labour migration outside the province had always been limited as stores, white commercial farms, the railway and administration created local wage labour opportunities that seemed to have been the preferred option. From the 1920s onwards, Tonga's were already selling cattle and maize to the same Katanga-based markets.²¹ Southern Province's economy, in short, offered unprecedented opportunities and it is within this context that we also have to consider the opening of Robinson Nabulyato's shop in 1949.

¹⁹ Interview Mr. C. Moonga, March 2011: 'Nabulyato got interested in doing other things, besides rearing cattle. He was exposed to new ideas, because he was travelling a lot. Especially when he became a councillor around 1954.'

²⁰ Nabulyato, *African Realities*, 19.

²¹ K. Vickery, 'The Emergence of a Plateau Tonga Peasantry: Economic Change, 1890–1940', in: C. Lancaster and K.P. Vickery (eds.), *The Tonga speaking Peoples of Zambia and Zimbabwe: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Colson* (Lanham MD, 2007), 83–106, 92.

BANAMWAZE STORE AND LOCAL CONSUMPTION

Namwala district, as elsewhere, had undergone a dramatic change in terms of material culture in the early colonial period. Imported materials overtook locally manufactured products. These products ranged from fishing nets, grain sacks and clothing, which used to be manufactured from tree bark; pots, which used to be made of clay but were replaced by enamel ware; beautifully decorated wooden combs, now made out of plastic; building materials, no longer confined to local materials, but supplemented by metal roof sheets and cement.²² Consequently, local trade increasingly relied on transport and links to local and international trading networks to obtain consumption goods.

The Banamwaze store, the heart of Nabulyato's business venture, was run as a typical family business. Working with his wife, his brother, his children (five boys and a girl) and cousins, Nabulyato also employed casual employees. The shop was not as big or well stocked as the Asian shops in the area.²³ The store itself was a simple undertaking, selling basic products that were in local demand like cooking oil, salt, sugar, candles, paraffin, sweets, etc. Godfrey, one of Nabulyato's sons, recalls labour migrants as customers, who were generally recognisable by their style of dress and goods. They contributed to the expansion of local economy, simply because they had more money to spend. However, in Godfrey's memory, their presence did not significantly change the range of products in the shop: migrants would buy more goods, but not of a different variety. Migrants would usually carry their own goods from town and only occasionally order luxury goods through the shop.²⁴

Nabulyato was linked to the Greek trading network; the majority of the supplies came from the Greek-owned Good Hope shop in Choma. Hindered by a lack of transport, he initially made use of the Greek transport network. In the early 1950s, a few years after the establishment of the business, Nabulyato acquired a vehicle, which was supplemented by a motorised boat in 1956, a remarkable feat, considering the capital requirements for such investments.²⁵ The range of Banamwaze business undertakings and consumer items had expanded and now included trade in

²² As seen in the ethnography picture collection of Livingstone Museum.

²³ Interview Mr. C. Moonga.

²⁴ Interview Godfrey Nabulyato, August 2010.

²⁵ We have to take into account that during this period Nabulyato's income was supplemented by his income derived from his position in the Federal Parliament.

animal skins, transportation of materials and the sale of blankets and pillows.

Nabulyato's customers included colonial government officials who clearly enjoyed cooperation with the 'progressive' Robinson Nabulyato. The various government departments readily rented his boat to travel the district. In addition, they would exchange ideas about the development potential for the area, as can be seen in the following exchange with District Commissioner Chittenden:

The next time you are in Namwala I would like you to come and have a talk with me about your rice growing ideas. I wish to get some idea of the type of your lands os [sic] that I can order the best seed for you (...) ²⁶

This business relationship between government authorities and the 'progressive' man appeared to have briefly continued in the post-colonial era. In a letter to the Officer of the District Agricultural Officer, Nabulyato comments that 'It is unfortunate that I cannot any longer be available to help with projects as planned by Government. I also appreciate the difficulties you have to meet with from the people who resent development.'²⁷

Nabulyato's customers also included traditional authorities, who appeared to have been more troublesome. His correspondence with the local chiefs deal mainly with justification of the costs of his services, as Nabulyato often found himself under pressure to provide a free service to the locally respected leaders.²⁸ Clearly, they were important customers to him, but Nabulyato was, in Gann's description, part of the 'new men' who often found themselves in disrespect and disobedience of the chiefs.²⁹ Indeed, Nabulyato often found himself caught between traditional and colonial authorities in matters as obtaining gun licences, or general legal issues:

Since I came to this District in Sept 1949 (...) Chiefs with educated Africans constitute the District Council which makes rules of the District. The same chiefs, now with their Native Court Assessors, constitute the Appeal Court.

²⁶ NAZ, HM79/PP/1, D.C. K.M. Chittenden to R. Nabulyato, 24 March 1953.

²⁷ NAZ, HM79/PP/1, R.M. Nabulyato to C.M. Ceelo, Office of the District Agricultural Officer (Namwala) 22 December 1969.

²⁸ NAZ, HM79/PP/1 E.g. In reply from a letter from Chief Muwezwa asking for a loan of 50 pounds (Nyambo village, Muwezwa Court, 22/1/1962), to be refunded on his return from 'the line of rail': 'I wish to visit Lusaka in order to look for a Landrover costing between 600 and 700 pounds (...)'.

²⁹ L.H. Gann, *A History of Northern Rhodesia, Early Days to 1953* (London, 1964), 379.

This creates a confusion [sic] in them having two powers in one which are distinct- Governing and Judicial Powers (...) The Chiefs when in Judicial Power are prone to accepting bribes.³⁰

Nabulyato's disdain for traditional authorities did not dissipate in post-colonial Zambia, but continued to be a sore subject matter:

Namwala is once more going into retreat, for the tribal leaders, who nationally and enthusiastically needed to lead the blind, are in desolation (...) the sharp spearing leaders have been assigned to other developments entities in the Republic.³¹

Another group who consumed Nabulyato's goods can be identified as commercial fishermen, who rented his boats to enable them to cast wide nets on the river.³²

EXPANSION IN THE 1960S

Going through economic expansion as a result of increased maize and cattle sales, Namwala District saw a small housing boom in the early 1960s.³³ This in turn promoted Nabulyato's business and enabled him to expand the business by making further investments in transport and to open mobile shop. In Nabulyato's words:

I bought two motorboats to transport people and goods on the Kafue River between Banamwaze and Namwala. Due to the presence of numerous hippos in the river, people found this to be a safer means of transport than canoes. Early in 1961, I purchased a 4-½ ton iron boat with a custom-made canopy and inboard diesel engine. This enabled me to expand my transport business on the Kafue River. After securing hawker licences for Namwala, Mazabuka, Mumbwa and Lusaka districts, my boats began to ply the Kafue with merchandise to be sold to local fishermen.³⁴

The range of products expanded as Nabulyato got involved in the transport and trade of building materials, including the supply of local timber.

³⁰ NAZ, HM79/PP/1, R.M. Nabulyato to District Commissioner Namwala, Banamwaze Store, Namwala, 22 April 1950.

³¹ NAZ, HM79/PP/1C.M. Ceelo, Office of the District Agricultural Officer, Namwala 16 December 1969 to R.M. Nabulyato.

³² Interview Dr. Gilbert Mudenda, April 2011. This is based on the memory of the late Sacika Sitwala, a lawyer, who grew up in Banamwaze with his uncle, a teacher and fisherman.

³³ NAZ, Namwala District Notebook, Vol. III.

³⁴ Nabulyato, *African Realities*, 59.

Some of these materials Nabulyato sourced from Lusaka, transporting the goods by river from Kafue town to Banamwaze with his newly acquired boat. A return trip could take up to three weeks and was only undertaken during the rainy season when floods prohibited transport by road. Nabulyato's income from the Banamwaze business was only a supplement to other business activities. To explain for his astounding wealth in the late 1960s, informants inform me that we have to consider his involvement in others trades, especially cattle. The size of his herd was, by local standards 'respectable' and as a result, according to Ila standards, Nabulyato was considered successful and earned due respect.

Political independence in 1964 substantially increased business opportunities for African businessmen. Nabulyato was able to obtain a store in Namwala *boma*, previously owned by Indian traders. Due to its location, namely in the administrative centre of Namwala District, Nabulyato was able to expand the range of products to products like hoes and hardware. Nabulyato's shop also turned into a small financial centre for teachers' salaries, due to the absence of a bank in Namwala. The size of the shop was considerably bigger than the Banamwaze village store, but according to one eye witnesses, Nabulyato was unable to manage it at the same level as the previous Asians owners. This informant cited the lack of experience in this trade, but we could equally attribute this to a general decline of business.

Nabulyato's expansion into Namwala town, was a direct consequence of the Mulungushi reforms (1968), which had put a limit on expatriate trading and the Matero Speech (1969), which dictated that wholesaling in smaller rural towns was to be Zambianised. Before independence, Nabulyato cooperated with the Indian shopkeepers, depending on them for the supply of goods which were restricted to Africans, including guns and bullets for hunting. He had always regarded them as fierce competitors.³⁵

In conclusion, from rather modest beginnings in 1949, Nabulyato's business had expanded remarkably. Based on the tax return in the late 1960s, Nabulyato's entrepreneurship amounted to the following:

K36, 336.00
 Trading store at Banamwaze and 1 at Lubanda
 1.5 tonne motorboat

³⁵ NAZ, HM79/PP/1, R.M. Nabu to Mr. Sambono [illegible], Namwala, 28 June 1962.

- 1 mobile shop on the Kafue River travelling between Namwala and Kafue Railway Bridge
- 2 small motorboats
- 1 lorry truck
- 1 tracker with a trailer

This was besides his personal property, which consisted of:

- 2 Residential houses, 1 at Banamwaze, 1 at Namwala
- 1 Land Rover
- One car
- Cattle and sundry chattels, etc³⁶

THE IMPRINT OF NABULYATO'S BANAMWAZE STORE

Nabulyato's business venture was as formal and as disciplined as the man himself. From its inception, the Banamwaze business was duly licensed and tax registered. In 1952, Nabulyato opened a current account with Barclays in Choma in addition to a personal savings account. Nabulyato's bookkeeping skills and business acumen were already legendary by then. As Mr. Moonga explained: Nabulyato's particular skills lay in the fact that he was able to critically self-evaluate his business, ensuring it was making actual gains. Withstanding the pressure of community for discounts and free services, however, was not always easy, as we can witness in the following example of the pricing of school uniforms in which he tries to defend his position:

If I sell *all* uniforms per year, I make a total surplus (i.e. money above price-cost to me) of £24-7-11. Putting this against cost of bringing uniforms here which is 30 per year, I find I lose a sum of 5-12-1d. Now if I add expenses of store buildings, shelving, storage as well as labour charges which work out at 5/- per year (or 5d per month), my total loss is comes to 5-17-1d per year. When people talk of uniform is *dear* and I know I am helping and gaining nothing from selling uniforms, I feel hurt and I find the only course open to me is either to drop selling uniforms or to bring cheaper type of uniforms which won't last long but will *bring me more personal business than service to the people* for which I shall be sorry for I like to help than to make more money for myself. (...) [his emphasis]³⁷

³⁶ NAZ, HM/PP/SP1/3/3.

³⁷ NAZ, HM79/PP/1 R.M. Nabulyato to G. Mwakambi [illegible], Namwala 11-1-1962.

In the same vein, Nabulyato experienced societal pressures on modes of transactions. While the business was strictly based on cash transactions, as testified by his son Godfrey, at the same time we can read in Nabulyato's papers that he was occasionally subjected to the local barter system, as can be witnessed by the exchange with Chief Muwezwa. Nabulyato response to the chief's offer of paying *moombe mufungushi* for the [boat] trip is: 'that its value is too little to cover the costs of the trip unless he is willing to pay with a she-*ngombe*...you know we Baila value or attach more honour to the she-*ngombe* than oxen.'³⁸

Yet, Nabulyato's motivation to open a business was, in his recollection, predisposed by a 'civilising mission' to his community. Mission-trained Nabulyato, regarded his homecoming as part of a wider undertaking, namely as a quest to uplift his own people. In his own words:

Since I could also rotate crops, villagers learnt from what I was doing and began to copy my farming methods. When I settled in Banamwaze at the end of 1949, people could still be found starving in the midst of plenty. Today, people in Banamwaze only starve when there is a drought or when floods and locusts damage their crops. I am happy to have given some exemplary service to the area. When I relocated in Banamwaze, my ambition was to face the realities of life with the local people (...)

Nabulyato's quest to enhance education at the local school has to be regarded in the same light:

I made another contribution to Bamwaze in 1951, when I organised people to make and burn bricks for a school, teachers' houses and three dormitories for children from distant villages (...) Upon being informed of the initiative, the Northern Rhodesian government supplied the school with door and window frames, doors, cement and corrugated iron sheets. This effort resulted in Banamwaze being provided for the first time with a decent school.³⁹

Of course, building a political base in his home constituency may well have been another part of the motivation for the above community investments.

The pursuit for status and eminence, always in competition with others, shines through Nabulyato's writings as he continuously compares the outcome of his labours to his competitors:

³⁸ NAZ, HM79/PP/1, R.M. Nabulyato to Chief Muwezwa, Banamwaze 3 March 1962.

³⁹ Nabulyato, *African Realities*, 19.

The North Bank of Kafue River in Namwala District, where I serve as a businessman, is a difficult area. Several European and African traders including co-operatives have failed and still fail to operate there successfully (...) ⁴⁰

Despite this apparent interest in the welfare and education of the Namwala community, at a personal level Nabulyato appeared aloof from village life, as he desisted from socialising with the community. He is remembered as a remote figure, driving his Landrover through the area without giving anyone a lift. ⁴¹ His detachment caused him to be called *Bowa* (after the word *Boer*). Rev. I. Mumpansha remembers people being intimidated by him, a characteristic, he argues, that helped him later in life when he entered parliament; he was a natural leader and everything he said was taken seriously. ⁴² Nabulyato was not only a very solemn person; he was very frugal as well. ⁴³ As a result of his sternness, customers did not necessarily always enjoy going to the Banamwaze shop. An example which typifies his attitude was that he refused to show the products, because as soon as he took it off the shelf, he considered the product sold. Audrey remembers vividly stories of her grandmother and mother who used to frequent the store, especially how Nabulyato used to chase them when they did not buy, because they were seen to be wasting his time. ⁴⁴ Indeed, while in the shop, Nabulyato spent most of his time reading, in between serving the customers. He read various types of books, but mostly non-fiction, with a specific interest in constitutional matters. His dress code, it is remembered, always suited the occasion. ⁴⁵

To some extent we can attribute Nabulyato's bitterness with the community as a consequence of his failure to garner local political support. Whereas Nabulyato clearly achieved the highest respect in the Ila community in terms of *uweza* (literally 'successful hunt', but also denoting wealth accumulation), he was unable to capture the Ila ethos like Nkumbula did. ⁴⁶ Moreover, Nabulyato's political choices, standing in the first instance as an independent for Federal Parliament and in the second

⁴⁰ NAZ, HM79/PP/1/F1, Letter R. M Nabulyato to Kenneth Kaunda 12 November 1973 (marked confidential and personal).

⁴¹ Interview, Dr. Gilbert Mudenda, April 2011.

⁴² Interview Rev. I. Mumpansha, May 2011.

⁴³ Interview Rev. I. Mumpansha, Mumpansha remembers when Nabulyato lived at Kafue Training Institute, he would receive 7 buns for the week. He would eat one every day and consume the last one on day 7 when it was so hard that it had to be soaked in tea. Others would have consumed the buns on the first day.

⁴⁴ Communication with Audrey Mwanyungwi, February 2011.

⁴⁵ Interview with Mr. C. Moonga.

⁴⁶ Interview with Dr. Gilbert Mudenda.

instance allying himself with UNIP, wiped his political support in his home area.⁴⁷ In Nabulyato's own words:

My adhesion to UNIP was not well-received in Namwala, where Nkumbula's ANC remained dominant. Once, a Congress meeting was convened at Banamwaze, my home, with the aim of discrediting me and my family as sell outs. The meeting was addressed by Nkumbula. There was commotion; drums were beaten, and the whole of Namwala district seemed to converge on Banamwaze. The ANC youth went berserk beating everyone they met who was not a member of their party and especially those whom they suspected of belonging to UNIP or who hailed from different provinces of the country.⁴⁸

This lack of local political support continued after independence, as can be witnessed in the transfer of Indian shops to Zambians. This process was in the hands of the local district development committee and was highly politicised. The perceived lack of support left Nabulyato embittered. In a confidential letter to Kenneth Kaunda he complains about the lack of support from fellow businessmen and cooperatives throughout the years:

It has taken over 20 years of individual trial and error to build up my business. This after having failed to get response to my organizing co-operatives or companies in 1948 with Mr. S.H. Chileshe, Rev. M.S. Lucheya, Mr. J. Mwela and others. As a Provincial Chairman, then, of Zambian African Traders' Association, I similarly failed to get response in 1968, in Southern Province, when dealing with economic reforms regarding the formation of co-operatives or companies in preparation for take-over of foreign business operating in Zambia (...) ⁴⁹

DECLINE OF BUSINESS

The decline of the Banamwaze enterprise in the 1970s can clearly not be attributed to Nabulyato's business ethics and acumen. Two main factors are most likely at the heart of business' demise: Nabulyato's prolonged absence and the decline of rural trade in the 1970s. Nabulyato's presence, turned out to be the prerequisite for its success; the period from 1969, after his appointment as speaker of parliament, is characterised by long periods of absence. Despite the fact Nabulyato's wife and children remained

⁴⁷ Interview with Dr. Gilbert Mudenda.

⁴⁸ Nabulyato, *African Realities*, 58.

⁴⁹ NAZ, HM79/PP/1, R. Nabulyato to Kenneth Kaunda, Lusaka 12 November 1973 (marked confidential and personal).

behind in Banamwaze 'to look after the business affairs', the company went into decline. They might have lacked his particular commitment, bookkeeping skills, discipline and precision.⁵⁰

External factors were most definitely at play. As Beveridge pointed out, after the economic reforms, Zambian businessmen got caught between the price controller, the state supplier and the state competitor. Additionally, when businessmen made good profits, they were no longer allowed to take much of that profit as income. Individual tax rates had been raised to 90% for those in the above 30,000 kwacha bracket and company rates became a high 45%.⁵¹ Nabulyato asserts in his memoirs that African businessmen like him were ruined by this lethal combination of socialism, economic mismanagement and, particularly for Southern Province cattle keepers, the rise of preventable cattle diseases:

In Lusaka, I received my salary between January 1969 and April 1976, when it was discontinued on account of my owning a business in Namwala. This clashed with Zambia's socialist laws against so-called capitalists! [...] as a result of my long absence, our business in Namwala took a turn for the worse. The transport business collapsed in 1976, when the 4 ½ ton iron boat sank at Chonamabwe, Banamwaze. All my cattle died of tsetse fly bites in 1978, when, due to the Itezihitezhi dam having flooded the Kafue plains for longer periods than in the past, my cattle had to be kept upland, in the dry and tsetse-infested bush. Mrs Nabulyato and I have been ruined irreparably by politics. Had I remained at home twenty years ago, things would undoubtedly have been different. Perhaps, as one of my closest friends once remarked, my 'reward is in heaven'. Perhaps the socialists – whom I see preaching poverty in public, but amassing wealth in secrecy – have a better clue!⁵²

Economic liberalism, as envisaged and promoted by Nabulyato, did not filter into the national economic development plans, until the demise of UNIP in 1991. By then, it was too late for Nabulyato to resuscitate his business. This bitter experience clearly influenced his writings from 1980s onwards.

BUSINESS AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Until the 1940s, Nabulyato's writing exposed him as a well-read, radical thinker, influenced by writers like Marcus Garvey:

⁵⁰ Still, Nabulyato's wife kept the store running until her death in the early 1990s, and then the enterprise collapsed entirely.

⁵¹ Beveridge, 'Economic Independence, Indigenization', 485.

⁵² NAZ, HM79/PP/1/F1, Letter R.M. Nabulyato to Kenneth Kaunda 12 November 1973 (marked confidential and personal).

No trace of cowardice has been found in Marcus Garvey, even by his bitterest foes for he was courageous. His dream of “Africa for the Africans” shall surely come to its climax. All Europeans have no room in Africa for exploitation as we, Africans, have no room in their countries for anything.⁵³

Little of these radical thoughts can be observed in later life. In fact, Nabulyato was considered to be a conservative and a ‘disciplinarian’. In this section I want to speculate in what ways Nabulyato’s business interests and experience changed his outlook. How do years of navigating the Kafue River, traversing the poor road networks in the area, negotiating relationships with various consumers shape his political thought? I will consider the most direct impact, namely his role as a representative of the business community and perhaps more importantly, as a product of the entrepreneurial spirit which was so characteristic of the area.

As a member of the Legislative Council in the 1950s, Nabulyato already promulgated the interests of the African businessmen, promoting their representation in relevant authorities:

I refer to your letter of 7 December, 1957, asking for an amendment to be made to Section 24 (d) of Business Ordinance, 1957, to provide for two members to sit on the Appeal tribunal so as to allow African traders to be represented [so far provision for Indian traders only] (...) I regret that it is not proposed to proceed with your suggestion at present.⁵⁴

Suggestions at improving infrastructure in his area, which had been a major hindrance in his business, are also a recurring theme in Nabulyato’s writings and evidence. It implies that in his capacity as a Speaker of Parliament, he attempted to influence this process. In a letter to the Minister of Power, Transport and Works he writes:

This is an appeal to you to the effect that since the Lusaka/Kaoma/Mongu Road is completed, the Mumbwa P.W.D. will either be withdrawn, heavily depleted as they will have no regular road work or they must turn attention to Mumbwa/Namwala Road which needs improvement, together with the erection of two bridges at Nansenga and Kasaka streams en route.⁵⁵

Nabulyato also positioned himself in relevant business organisations, seeing he was board member of the Credit Organization of Zambia, the

⁵³ Nabulyato, *African Realities*, 17.

⁵⁴ NAZ, HM79/PP/1, Economic Secretary to the Government of N.R. to R.M. Nabulyato, Legislative Council Chamber, Lusaka, 10 January 1958.

⁵⁵ NAZ, HM79/PP/1/F8, R.M. Nabulyato, Speaker of the National Assembly (no place), to Minister of Power, Transport and Works, 27 October 1972.

Agricultural Development Corporation, Zambia Consumer Buying Corporation and Zambia Safaris Ltd.

In the 1970s Nabulyato's notebooks were filled with little philosophical reflections, which are informative of his business and political experiences in Namwala. One of them is marked 'Village attitude of/to Democracy':

People value hard work but when one works hard, the following arises: a) work hard and you get apparently unpopular for it with neighbours in the village because they can't do likewise b) As for elections, nowadays people don't understand when a man/woman says on the platform "I can do this & that". Hence when a man loses election, his people are happy because they think he wanted to make himself different from the rest of them (...)⁵⁶

Macola describes how during the UNIP days, Nabulyato tirelessly defended the African business community whose interest had increasingly been sidelined by the party. This expressed itself in harsh criticism of nationalisation and defence of free enterprise, in Nabulyato's words:

Ushering in the nationalisation of the economy, these ideologies resulted in the people being deprived of the means to earn an independent livelihood. Private enterprise was sabotaged and everyone was reduced to looking to the government for everything. By the time African leaders realised that private enterprise sustained more people than governments ever could, unemployment, starvation and misery had already set in. A state-led economy produces more thieves than honest citizens.⁵⁷

Nabulyato's attendance at official state visits around the world, especially those that took place in communist countries, lent further credence to his convictions. But clearly, within UNIP this kind of reflection was not welcome and forced Nabulyato to withhold his critique from the public. In parliamentary report to USSR produced in 1977, Nabulyato states that 'This Report is confidential for I intend to make it critical of some situations we observed. [...]. I dare have to report that our observations show that USSR is basically a poor and badly organised country. [...] (...)'. And he observed that 'the Communist Party in USSR caters mainly for 16 million people who are its Members. The rest out of the 260 million people fend for themselves which means living in dire poverty and starvation as the cream of production and consumption is under control of the Party.'⁵⁸

⁵⁶ NAZ, HM79/PP/10, Handwritten notes in Office Diary 1971.

⁵⁷ *African Realities*, xxiii.

⁵⁸ *Robinson Nabulyato*, 105–6.

Nabulyato's concerns about the negative impact of UNIP's policies on the private sector were supported by data, despite the economic reforms of the late 1960s, Europeans and Asians were still better off than the 'average' indigenous businessman.⁵⁹ This contradiction, Macmillan argues, was a result of policies that encouraged the emergence of entrepreneurs, but not of 'capitalism.'⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

Looking at Zambia as a whole, we might not be able to discern any noticeable differences between rural businesses in terms of the kind of products that were traded. However, when it comes to stratification, we can distinguish some regional differences. Clearly the cattle economy of Southern Province, and Ila society in particular, serves to remind us how important it is to consider the context, a factor that was neglected in the study by Beveridge and Oberschall. In Nabulyato's case study, it is evident that Banamwaze store made a limited impact in terms of wealth creation and stratification; this pattern continued to be determined by the cattle trade. The specific economic background also determined the political stance; being an entrepreneur enabled people like Nabulyato to have the means to take a comparatively independent political position.

⁵⁹ Beveridge, 'Economic Independence, Indigenization,' 487.

⁶⁰ H. Macmillan, 'The Devil You Know': The Impact of the Mulungushi economic reforms on retail trade in rural Zambia, with special reference to Susman Brothers & Wulfsohn, 1968–1980', in: J.B. Gewald, M. Hinfelaar and G. Macola (eds.), *One Zambia, Many Histories: Towards a History of Post-colonial Zambia* (Lusaka, 2009), 187–212, 195.

BUYING PINEAPPLES, SELLING CLOTH: TRADERS AND TRADING STORES IN MWINILUNGA DISTRICT, 1940–1970

Iva Peša

Between 1940 and 1970 the number of traders and trading stores increased significantly throughout Mwinilunga District, in the North-Western Province of Zambia. Whereas previously trading stores had been limited to the *Boma*¹ and Ikelenge, and outlying villages had merely been serviced by occasional passing traders, from the 1940s onwards trading enterprises run by European or African traders were set up in all corners of the district.² Why did the number of traders increase so rapidly and how did this increase influence the patterns of production and consumption of the local population?

The main aim will be to highlight the pivotal role which traders played in linking production to consumption, thereby influencing both. As levels and patterns of production and consumption underwent major changes during this period, Mwinilunga provides an interesting case study to discern the influence of traders hereupon. Did the presence of traders stimulate the acquisition of consumer goods, and did this acquisition in turn encourage higher levels of agricultural output, for instance? During the colonial period traders not only bartered or sold consumer goods such as salt, cloth and soap, but also bought agricultural produce locally. Production and consumption were physically linked in the trading store, as the selling of cassava directly enabled the buying of cloth in the same store.³ What happened after independence in 1964 when separate (semi-) government institutions, mainly marketing boards, took over the buying of agricultural produce, whereas trading stores started focusing primarily on the sale of consumer goods?

¹ The term *Boma* will be used to refer to the district administrative centre, the town of Mwinilunga, in order to differentiate it from the district as a whole.

² National archives of Zambia, Lusaka (NAZ) SEC2/131, Kasempa Province annual report 1929–30 and NAZ SEC2/156, Western Province annual report 1949 – a comparison of these documents shows an increase in the numbers of traders.

³ NAZ SEC2/137, P.L.N. Hannaford, Mwinilunga District annual report 1955.

CARAVANS AND EARLY COLONIAL RULE – PRECEDENTS OF TRADE

The people of Mwinilunga have long been connected to regional trade networks, involving the exchange of iron tools, locally manufactured baskets, salt and other scarce goods.⁴ From the eleventh century onwards items from as far away as the Indian Ocean coast started reaching the area, but it was especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that long-distance trade goods, coming from the Atlantic coast via Angola, became available in large quantities.⁵ Products such as beads, cloth, fire-arms and gunpowder, but also tobacco and liquor, were obtained from Portuguese traders and African intermediaries, the most significant of which were the Ovimbundu.⁶ In exchange for these goods the inhabitants of the area offered beeswax, rubber, ivory and slaves, but also cassava.⁷ Cassava, a crop introduced to the area by the long-distance trade itself, served to feed the caravans, which could consist of up to 6,000 individuals travelling for months at a time. Cassava production increased during this period, as sale of the crop enabled the obtaining of other highly desired items in return.⁸ The link between (agricultural) production and consumption, which would prove so important during the colonial and post-colonial periods, was thus already apparent during this earlier period. Although by the turn of the twentieth century the long-distance caravan trade had virtually collapsed due to a combination of factors including intertribal warfare, slavery, the imposition of colonial rule and the ensuing demarcation of international boundaries, trade had established some

⁴ For references to the broader region see: J. Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests: Toward a history of political tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison, 1990), 58–61 and J. Vansina, *How societies are born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville and London, 2004), 60–7.

⁵ See: Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests*, J.A. Pritchett, *The Lunda-Ndemba: Style, change and social transformation in South Central Africa* (Madison, 2001), 210–11 and R. Gray and D. Birmingham (eds.), *Pre-colonial African trade: Essays on trade in Central and Eastern Africa before 1900* (London, etc., 1970).

⁶ E. Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian rule: The politics of ethnicity* (Cambridge, etc., 1975) 1–40 and A. von Oppen, *Terms of trade and terms of trust: The history and contexts of pre-colonial market production around the Upper Zambezi and Kasai* (Munster, etc., 1994) 45–99 and 211–35.

⁷ J.J. Hoover, *The seduction of Ruweji: Reconstructing Ruund history (The nuclear Lunda; Zaire, Angola, Zambia)* (Yale, 1978), 340–53 and J.L. Vellut, 'Notes sur le Lunda et la frontière Luso-Africaine (1700–1900)', *Etudes d'histoire Africaine*, III (1972), 78–84.

⁸ Vellut, 'Notes sur le Lunda', 139, Von Oppen, *Terms of trade and terms of trust*, 91, A. von Oppen, "Endogene agrarrevolution" im vorkolonialen Afrika? Eine fallstudie, *Paideuma*, 38 (1992), 269–96 and J. Vansina, 'Histoire du manioc en Afrique central avant 1850', *Paideuma*, 43 (1997), 255–79.

enduring patterns.⁹ This was particularly so in the sphere of material expectations: ‘the custom is for a black trader to appear twice a year to purchase rubber and ivory. If he does not appear the village becomes uneasy – the ladies impatient for their new clothes and gentlemen half wild for tobacco.’¹⁰

When at the outset of the twentieth century the British tentatively established colonial rule in Mwinilunga, it was evident that they could not hope for fast economic returns. The area seemed to hold potential for neither mining nor large-scale agricultural development.¹¹ Nevertheless, it was attempted to make the colonial venture profitable, most notably by seeking avenues for trade. Besides encouraging the production of goods such as beeswax, groundnuts and livestock for export to other areas, the colonial administration established a local market for staple crops such as cassava, finger millet and sorghum – providing an impetus to the rise of the *Boma* as a trade and distribution centre. However, major exports from the area never materialised, mainly because of high transport costs, and local markets remained limited in size.¹² A frequent complaint by colonial officials concerned the ‘apathy’ of producers in the area, particularly when they failed to satisfy demands to feed labourers or dependants of the administration.¹³ However, markets were often far away, small or erratic in nature, offered prices which were low or fluctuated excessively, and in short were too unreliable to spur producers to significantly increase their output. As a result, most producers confined themselves to selling whatever ‘surplus’ they had left from previous harvests when a market was available, not opening up new fields or growing crops especially for sale.¹⁴

Though initially limited, the colonial administration, missionaries and traders did provide a market where individuals could sell their goods. Moreover, this sale enabled access to various consumer goods. The motivation for selling part of the harvest or for disposing of honey could easily be traced back to wanting to purchase ‘an arm length of cloth’ or ‘a bar of

⁹ See: Bustin, *Lunda under Belgian rule*, Hoover, *The seduction of Ruweji*, Vellut, ‘Notes sur le Lunda’ and Pritchett, *The Lunda-Ndembu*.

¹⁰ E.A. Steel, ‘Zambezi-Congo watershed’, *The geographical journal*, 50:3 (1917), 187.

¹¹ Pritchett, *The Lunda-Ndembu*, 33–5.

¹² See: NAZ KSE and SEC2 files.

¹³ NAZ KSE6/1/1, G.A. McGregor, Balunda District annual report, 1909.

¹⁴ I. Peša, ‘Cinderella’s cassava: A historical study of agricultural adaptation in Mwinilunga District from pre-colonial times to Independence’ (unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Leiden, 2009).

soap'.¹⁵ Agricultural production, consumption and trade became increasingly intertwined, and this affected some of the core values of society – including attitudes towards work: 'The Lunda people are extremely fond of calico, and later on they will be found to improve in physique and will turn out a good working population.'¹⁶ Because of a desire towards 'articles they now look upon as necessary' – such as various types of calico, shirts, blankets, enamel basins and beads – the district administration expressed justified hopes that the population could be spurred to produce crops in plenty, as well as seek employment to earn tax income.¹⁷ This familiarisation with consumption goods and with production for a market laid a basis for the later colonial period, when levels of trade increased markedly.

TRADE AS A BOOMING BUSINESS

The 1940s and 1950s witnessed a rapid increase in the number, volume and geographical dispersal of traders and trade throughout Mwinilunga District. To start with, this increase was enabled by infrastructural development. Previously roads in the district had been little more than 'paths through the bush'.¹⁸ This started to change during the 1930s with the construction of rudimentary motor roads connecting Mwinilunga to Solwezi and to neighbouring areas in Angola and Congo. After 1945 expansion continued, as all chiefly capitals were linked to the *Boma* through roads passable by motorised vehicles.¹⁹ This enabled European and African traders to more easily traverse the district, using modes of transport such as bicycles, motor cars and lorries – access to which had become increasingly widespread.²⁰ Traders would buy (agricultural) produce in the villages and thereafter sell this at local markets, on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt or in Congo and Angola. A wide range of consumer goods was carried in return, thereby familiarising even outlying villages with items such as sugar, tea and blankets.²¹ By facilitating access to markets

¹⁵ Interview with Mr. Samakai, Ikelenge, 23 March 2010 and interview with Mr. Wombeki, Nyakaseya, 4 and 16 May 2010.

¹⁶ NAZ KSE6/2/1, J.M. Pound, Lunda sub-District Quarterly report, December 1913.

¹⁷ NAZ KSE6/1/4, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga sub-District Annual report, 31 March 1921.

¹⁸ E. Burr, *Kalene memories: Annals of the old hill* (London, 1956), 10.

¹⁹ NAZ KSE4/1, Mwinilunga District notebook.

²⁰ NAZ SEC2/957, R.N. Lines, Mwinilunga District tour report July 1949.

²¹ NAZ SEC2/958, D.G. Clough, Mwinilunga District tour report, November 1950.

infrastructural development attracted traders to the area, providing an incentive for increased levels of production and consumption. The District Commissioner in 1949 noted that: 'All road extensions and improvements in this district have so far lead to increased production.'²² Whereas prior to 1945 the *Boma* and Ikelenge, where a large mission station was situated, had been virtually the only places in the district where consumer goods could be obtained and local produce could be sold, by means of expansion of the road network traders and trading stores started penetrating even smaller and more remote villages throughout the district.

A set of broader (inter)national developments was at play as well. Particularly significant in this respect was the expansion of mining enterprise on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, which necessitated both increased amounts of labour and food for workers rations. The number of African employees on the mines rose from 5,000 in 1925 to 30,000 in 1930 and peaked at 38,000 in 1964. While the early years of operation still witnessed occasional overproduction of food on a national level, during the 1939–53 period all agricultural produce was consumed internally and costly imports had to be resorted to.²³ As demand outstripped supply, the call for food even resonated in Mwinilunga District. Although transport costs seemed to pose a clear impediment towards the profitable sale of agricultural produce from the area, due to the distance of 306 miles (492 kilometres) separating the *Boma* from the line-of-rail, such sales became an established fact, especially during the years 1947–51.²⁴ At the peak of commercial activity in Mwinilunga in 1949 120 tons of cassava, 45 tons of maize, 30 tons of finger millet and 30 tons of sorghum were marketed along the line-of-rail.²⁵ Next to providing a large market for (agricultural) produce, the Copperbelt was also a place where a variety of consumer goods could be obtained. Clothing, bicycles and other items were purchased in bulk along the line-of-rail and sold to individual consumers or petty traders within Mwinilunga District.²⁶ Andrew Sardanis, who owned several stores throughout the district, pointed towards the 'backload advantage'. The problem of high transport costs over the long haul from Mwinilunga to the Copperbelt and back was lessened by the fact that there was always a backload, be it in the form of agricultural produce or

²² NAZ SEC2/957, R.N. Lines, Mwinilunga District tour report, August 1949.

²³ K.P. Vickery, 'Saving settlers: Maize control in Northern Rhodesia', *Journal of Southern African studies*, 11:2 (1985), 212–34.

²⁴ NAZ SEC2/157, Western Province Mwinilunga District annual report, 1949.

²⁵ NAZ SEC2/156, R.C. Dening, Mwinilunga District annual report, 1949.

²⁶ NAZ SEC2/137, P.L.N. Hannaford, Mwinilunga District annual report, 1955.

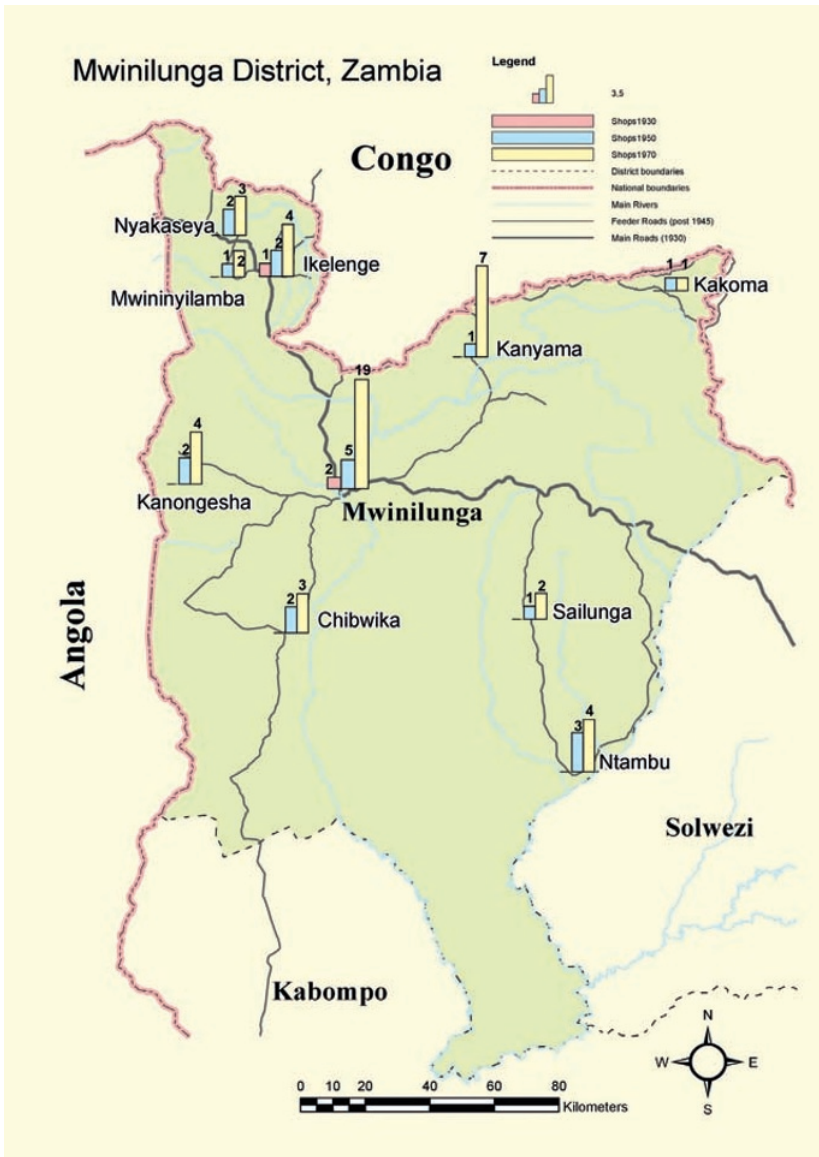


Fig. 12.1 Map portraying the establishment of licensed trading stores throughout Mwinilunga District in 1930, 1950 and 1970. Note the expansion of the road network after 1945 (Source: NAZ Mwinilunga District Annual Reports, map drawn by Eric Dullaert)

consumer goods. Therefore traders' lorries never had to remain empty, making trade profitable and efficient.²⁷ The existence of markets – not only on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, but equally importantly in neighbouring Angola and Congo – coupled with infrastructural developments, acted as major catalysts, attracting numerous traders to the area.

TRAJECTORIES OF TRADE

Who were these traders and how were their enterprises organised? Far from being a homogenous category, there were various types of traders in Mwinilunga District, operating in different markets. For example, there were European traders, some of whom had started trading in the area even before the establishment of colonial rule. Whereas initially they concentrated on buying items such as rubber and ivory, from the 1930s onwards beeswax and honey predominated.²⁸ The variety of transactions was much wider, though. Consumer goods including clothes, salt, soap and cooking utensils were traded in exchange for a range of agricultural produce and locally manufactured goods (mats, baskets, hoes, axes, etc.).²⁹ European traders' activities intensified from the 1940s onwards, particularly with respect to handling agricultural produce. Once they had obtained a licence from the district administration, traders could establish a store, a (semi-)permanent depot, or send a *capitao* to collect and buy agricultural produce from surrounding villages.³⁰ Although trading stores remained concentrated in areas where population density and production were relatively high, such as the *Boma* and mission centres, from the 1940s onwards some stores did open up in smaller settlements.³¹ The positive effects hereof were noted by the District Commissioner: 'The extension of produce buying facilities has resulted in the increased production this year of many crops. The opening of a road has awakened an interest in agriculture as a money producing occupation.'³² Traders benefitted from encouraging agricultural production and offering high prices to

²⁷ A. Sardanis, *Africa: Another side of the coin: Northern Rhodesia's final years and Zambia's nationhood* (London and New York, 2003).

²⁸ NAZ A5/2/1 Loc. 4003, G.A. McGregor, Balunda sub-District annual report, 1908–9 and NAZ SEC2/41, Development of Mwinilunga: Benguela railway, 1937.

²⁹ NAZ KSE6/1/5, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga sub-District annual report, 1926 and NAZ NWP1/2/17, F.M.N. Heath, Mwinilunga District tour report, June 1947.

³⁰ NAZ SEC2/956, Jones, Mwinilunga District tour report, September 1948.

³¹ NAZ SEC2/963, P.L.N. Hannaford, Mwinilunga District tour report, September 1955.

³² NAZ SEC2/963, P.L.N. Hannaford, Mwinilunga District tour report, September 1955.

producers, as the money earned by the sale of foodstuffs was likely to be ploughed back into their stores through the increased purchase of consumer goods. Traders argued that if individuals were able to sell cassava, they could spend this money on the purchase of matches, cloth and other items from the trading store.³³ This proved true, as: 'at some village stores the daily turnover during the food buying season from March to August increases tenfold. Such a practice does much to raise the standard of living in the rural areas.'³⁴ Evidently, the sale of agricultural produce enabled, and was motivated by, the purchase of consumer goods. However, European traders were not merely attracted to Mwinilunga District because of the high profits they aspired to make. Several farmers and missionaries (most notably W.F. Fisher of Hillwood farm) engaged in trade as a side-business, as an attempt to make the total sum of their enterprises in the district profitable. Furthermore, some traders, such as Sardanis, were attracted to the area by transport contracts with the government, in order to supply goods, passengers and sometimes foodstuffs to the *Boma*.³⁵ Whatever their motives might be, these traders sought to make their ventures profitable, and for this they depended to a large extent on co-operation with other traders, most notably Africans.

Many African traders operated on a somewhat smaller scale than their European counterparts. Due to restrictions imposed by the colonial government, coupled with a lack of capital and transport facilities, the initial establishment of African trading enterprises proved problematic.³⁶ Nevertheless, there was a steady increase in their numbers after 1940. For example, there were hawkers who collected small amounts of consumer goods, in the range of £4 to £8, from the Copperbelt or other commercial centres, which they thereafter traded within the district for agricultural produce or locally manufactured goods.³⁷ One example of such a small-scale trader is Mr. Ndoji. He hawked goods between Ntambu and Ikelenge/Nyakaseya area, using a bicycle acquired with earnings from employment in Kitwe and Ndola. Relying on a network of kin, he sold dried fish from village to village and thereafter bought goods such as salt,

³³ NAZ NWP1/2/78 Loc. 4913, F.R.G. Phillips, North-Western Province annual report, 1956 and NAZ SEC2/156, R.C. Dening, Mwinilunga District annual report, 1949.

³⁴ NAZ LGH5/5/8, Mwinilunga District development plan, 10 September 1956.

³⁵ NAZ KSE6/1/5, F.V. Bruce-Miller, Mwinilunga sub-District annual report, 1926 and Sardanis, *Africa another side of the coin*.

³⁶ NAZ SEC2/955, F.M.N. Heath, Mwinilunga District tour report, November 1947.

³⁷ NAZ SEC2/154, F.M.N. Heath, Mwinilunga District annual report, 1947.

cloth, trousers and shoes in Fisher's store before returning to Ntambu. Reselling these goods, keeping them for personal use or utilising them to purchase additional dried fish, Mr. Ndoji would make one or two such round trips per year. However, the lack of an established market, competition from other traders, transport difficulties and government licensing requirements all prevented the expansion of his enterprise.³⁸ In the food buying process African traders did, nevertheless, play a pivotal role. They acted as intermediaries, handling individual transactions with agricultural producers and thereafter offering the produce in bulk to European traders or the colonial administration.³⁹ Officials noted that: 'African traders have practically a monopoly in the meal buying business.'⁴⁰ Furthermore, because they established themselves in remote villages and areas where Europeans did not operate, African traders played a key part in spreading trade geographically.⁴¹ The transport, collection and distribution of supplies could, however, present difficulties. Whereas some owned bicycle carts, other traders depended on lorries, often operated by Europeans, coming from the Copperbelt with loads of consumer goods, but this dependence had negative effects – in particular limiting the available range of trade items.⁴² Notwithstanding obstacles, African traders succeeded in providing goods and buying produce from individuals who would have otherwise lacked a market.

The conduct of trade was also influenced by the colonial administration. Employees, road labourers, schools, dispensaries and others had to be provided with food, and the expansion of district staff during the 1940s and 1950s raised demands even further.⁴³ Securing regular and steady supplies of food was thus imperative to the colonial administration. A 'Boma meal store' was set up where the buying, storage and distribution of agricultural produce was handled. The administration either relied on direct sales by producers, or on bulk provisions from European or African traders.⁴⁴ The importance of such transactions was manifest:

³⁸ Interview with Fascen Ndoji, Ntambu, 12 October 2010.

³⁹ NAZ SEC2/135, D.B. Hall, North-Western Province annual report, 1951 and W.G. Reeves, North-Western Province annual report, 1952.

⁴⁰ NAZ SEC2/135, D.B. Hall, North-Western Province annual report, 1951.

⁴¹ NAZ SEC2/963, R.S. Thompson, Mwinilunga District tour report, June 1955.

⁴² NAZ NWP1/2/37 Loc. 4903, D.G. Clough, Mwinilunga District annual report, 1950.

⁴³ Sardanis, *Africa: Another side of the coin*, 69 and NAZ SEC2/133, N.S. Price, Mwinilunga District annual report, 1935.

⁴⁴ NAZ NWP1/2/17, H.H. Thomson, Mwinilunga District tour report, February 1947.

The closing of the Boma meal store would disrupt the whole economy of the District. It is true to say that since it was started, the District has changed from a District of food shortages to one having a surplus for export.⁴⁵

In 1962, for instance, the district administration required 90 tons of cassava, 35 tons of maize, 15 tons of beans, 15 tons of fish, 10 tons of meat, 5 tons of fruits and vegetables and 2 tons of rice for its own supplies, the majority of which were procured locally.⁴⁶ The administration, by providing a stable market for agricultural produce, could stimulate producers to increase output. However, by imposing buying control on traders, for example by issuing trade licences, and by agreeing or even fixing (bottom) prices for produce, the administration could also regulate or more negatively influence levels of trade and production.⁴⁷

Due to the geographical location of Mwinilunga District, adjacent to both Angola and Congo, cross-border trade had always been of vital importance. In spite of the limits posed by the demarcation of international boundaries, customs regulations and import/export control, this trade, conducted via formal and less formal channels and based on long-established historical ties, was by no means ever completely prohibited or blocked.⁴⁸ Especially during the period of protracted boom on the Congolese mines from the 1940s onwards, which resulted in the growth of towns such as Kolwezi just across the international boundary, markets for produce from Mwinilunga District became available.⁴⁹ Exports consisted of items such as livestock and cassava meal, which after being bought by traders within Mwinilunga were either sold on Congolese markets directly, or transferred to middlemen in bulk. In return consumer goods such as bicycles, cigarettes and clothes in particular, were imported from the Congolese line-of-rail.⁵⁰ Next to regulated trade, there was also a good deal of unregulated trade and smuggling going on. Certain goods for which no market could be found within Northern Rhodesia, or which could be marketed more profitably across the border, were sold in Angola and Congo.

⁴⁵ NAZ SEC2/960, K.J. Forder, Mwinilunga District tour report, June 1952.

⁴⁶ NAZ NWP1/2/102 Loc. 4919, Department of Agriculture, North-Western Province annual report, 1962.

⁴⁷ NAZ SEC2/136, R.C. Dening, Mwinilunga District annual report, 1953 and NAZ MAG 2/2/25 Loc. 114, Provincial team minutes, North-Western Province, May 1953.

⁴⁸ NAZ NWP1/2/63 Loc. 4910, R.S. Thompson, Mwinilunga District tour report, August 1954.

⁴⁹ See: J.L. Vellut, 'Mining in the Belgian Congo', in D. Birmingham and P.M. Martin (eds.), *History of Central Africa II* (London etc., 1983), 126–62.

⁵⁰ NAZ SEC2/966, M.A. Hinds, Mwinilunga District tour report, September 1958.

During the early days of colonial rule there was a lively trade in rubber and ivory, which were exported from Mwinilunga to traders in Angola, in exchange for guns, gunpowder, calico and liquor.⁵¹ Unrecorded trade persisted, even after independence, in order to avoid custom regulations and maximise profit margins. Beeswax, honey, livestock and other items were sold in exchange for consumer goods, some of which were scarce or difficult to access within Northern Rhodesia itself.⁵² By moving across international boundaries and looking for profitable markets nearby, people in Mwinilunga could access various avenues of trade. The existence of alternative markets in Congo and Angola, in itself providing an impetus to increase production, consumption and trade, also alleviated the marginal position of Mwinilunga vis-à-vis the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, caused by distance and ensuing transport difficulties.

In 1929 the outlook for trade in Mwinilunga had still been gloomy: 'Local trade is very small, as natives have very little money. All stores now open are run by farmers as a sideline merely. There is no living for a trader pure and simple.'⁵³ However, by 1950 the situation had changed and more positive views seemed justified: 'Local people are only beginning to realise that being near a road and European traders' stores makes it possible for them to have access to a market where they had none before.'⁵⁴ Different groups of traders, all operating in separate niches yet also complementing one another, not only offered a market for local produce, but also spread a variety of consumer goods. These consumer goods could be deployed in multiple ways, for instance as status symbols, to accumulate wealth and to cement or challenge social relationships.⁵⁵ Gender relations, age hierarchies and ways of asserting authority were all influenced by the availability of trade items. To give only one example, whereas elders had previously dominated the marriage choices of youths, by working hard young men could accumulate wealth, purchase goods – most notably cloth, bangles and beads – and increasingly negotiate the marriage partners of their own preference.⁵⁶ Consumer goods were not frivolous, but socially embedded

⁵¹ NAZ KSE6/1/1, C.H. Bellis, Balunda District annual report, 1910.

⁵² NAZ SEC2/952, N.S. Price, Mwinilunga District tour report, June 1939.

⁵³ NAZ KSE6/2/2, Mwinilunga sub-District quarterly report, 30 June 1929.

⁵⁴ NAZ SEC2/958, D.G. Clough, Mwinilunga District tour report, November 1950.

⁵⁵ See: T. Burke, *Lifebuoy men, Lux women: Commodification, consumption, and cleanliness in modern Zimbabwe* (Durham and London, 1996) and J. Prestholdt, *Domesticating the world: African consumerism and the genealogies of globalization* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2008), for examples of the social embedding of consumer goods.

⁵⁶ Various interviews, including: Zakewa Kahangu, Nyakaseya, 26 April 2010 and Marciana & Suzana, Nyakaseya, 29 April 2010.



Fig. 12.2 The house of Thomas Kapita, a prosperous trader, at Ikelenge, 1954 (Source: NAZ KSE4/1, Mwinilunga District Notebooks, Photograph by R.C. Dening)

and held meaning.⁵⁷ It is exactly therefore that individuals could be spurred to work hard and produce crops in order to obtain items such as salt, sugar and bicycles. The economy of the district as a whole was stimulated by this close link between production and consumption, which was enhanced by traders. Following independence, however, established practices were transformed in far-reaching ways.

MARKETING BOARDS, MULUNGUSHI REFORMS & PINEAPPLES – TRADE AFTER INDEPENDENCE

During the 1960s and 1970s the number of traders throughout Mwinilunga District continued to increase. Although the obtaining of Zambian independence was far from a complete rupture with the colonial past, certain changes did materialise. These changes will be illustrated by examining three cases, namely agricultural marketing boards, the Mulungushi reforms and the pineapple trade.

⁵⁷ Pritchett, *The Lunda-Ndembu* and V.W. Turner, *Schism and continuity in an African society: A study of Ndembu village life* (Manchester etc., 1957), provide numerous examples of this.

ARMB AND NAMBOARD – DELINKING PRODUCTION FROM
CONSUMPTION?

After independence the humanist rhetoric of Kenneth Kaunda's UNIP government afforded a major role to government-controlled marketing boards in stimulating agricultural production. A desire was professed to close the development gap between the Copperbelt and the line-of-rail areas on the one hand, and the neglected rural areas, such as Mwinilunga, on the other.⁵⁸ Whereas the colonial Maize Control Board and Grain Marketing Board had exacerbated the gap between white commercial farmers and black small-scale producers, the Agricultural Rural Marketing Board (later National Agricultural Marketing Board)⁵⁹ aimed to even out differences by providing credit opportunities, transport subsidies and agricultural inputs, nominally without discriminating between individuals.⁶⁰ How did these marketing boards influence trade in Mwinilunga District?

Although marketing boards and individual traders existed side by side, the ARMB and NAMBOARD held a near-monopoly on trade in agricultural produce between Mwinilunga and the urban centres of Zambia.⁶¹ Individual traders continued to supply local markets, certain niches within urban markets and occasionally even export produce, but the marketing boards handled the majority of all agricultural trade. When the ARMB started buying produce in Mwinilunga District in 1965 it faced many difficulties, as proper marketing infrastructure and depots were lacking. Problems persisted because existing depots remained closed, were far removed from areas of production and offered government-controlled prices which were generally too low to attract producers.⁶² Furthermore, the marketing boards had a limited buying repertoire. Only maize, beans, groundnuts, finger millet, rice and selected fruits and vegetables (most notably pineapples) were accepted at the depots within Mwinilunga.⁶³ This meant that the staple crop cassava, which had been

⁵⁸ Pritchett, *The Lunda-Ndembu*, 239 and A.P. Wood (ed.), *The dynamics of agricultural policy and reform in Zambia* (Ames, 1990), 21–58.

⁵⁹ Abbreviated as ARMB and NAMBOARD respectively.

⁶⁰ Wood, *The dynamics of agricultural policy and reform*, 23 and NAZ Annual report of the ministry of agriculture, 1965.

⁶¹ NAZ Bulletin of agricultural statistics, January 1970.

⁶² NAZ LGH5/2/5 Loc. 3612, North-Western Provincial development committee, March 1968.

⁶³ NAZ LGH5/5/12, J.F.M. Chipili, North-Western Province marketing officer, 30 July 1970.

marketed in large quantities during the colonial period, henceforth remained confined to the local market and individual traders. No longer being able to function as a cash crop, cassava was degraded to the status of 'subsistence crop', primarily serving to feed the local population. The government rather promoted maize cultivation, although maize was much less suited to the natural environment and agricultural system of the area, as well as requiring the adoption of expensive inputs – particularly for hybrid varieties fertilisers and pesticides proved imperative to yield a good crop.⁶⁴ In spite of obstacles, a substantial amount of produce was marketed by individual producers and small-scale co-operatives at the NAMBOARD depots. During the 1969/70 season a total of 180 tons of maize, 9.6 tons of groundnuts, 5 tons of beans, 24 tons of rice, 10 tons of vegetables and 480 tons of pineapples were purchased within Mwinilunga District.⁶⁵ However these figures compared unfavourably to other areas, where levels of production and sale were much higher. Despite optimistic rhetoric Mwinilunga remained a remote area, and the development gap with the line-of-rail showed few signs of narrowing.

Furthermore, marketing boards disrupted the links which had previously existed between production and consumption. ARMB and NAMBOARD merely handled the buying of agricultural produce, without selling consumer goods. Contrastingly, individual traders came to focus mainly on the sale of consumer goods, though some did continue to buy produce such as beans and pineapples for sale at local or urban markets.⁶⁶ During the colonial period it had still been possible to sell agricultural produce in the same store where pots and pans were purchased, for example. Groundnut sales would rise in the months when children bought their school uniforms, as both transactions could be conducted in the same store. Therefore, the desire to buy a school uniform provided a stimulus to sell part of the groundnut crop in order to raise money.⁶⁷ After independence, with the advent of marketing boards, this physical link increasingly disappeared. Individuals could no longer rely on a single trader, but instead had to sell their produce at a marketing board depot in order to raise money to purchase the desired goods from a different trader. This situation was further aggravated by the recurrent failure of marketing

⁶⁴ C.G. Trapnell and J.N. Clothier, *The soils, vegetation and agricultural systems of North-Western Rhodesia – Report of the ecological survey* (2nd edn., Lusaka, 1957) and (NAZ) Annual report ministry of agriculture, 1964.

⁶⁵ NAZ LGH5/5/12, Marketing of produce North-Western Province, 23 July 1970.

⁶⁶ NAZ LGH5/1/10 Loc. 3608, Mwinilunga rural council, March 1968.

⁶⁷ Interview with Andrew Sardanis, Lusaka, 12 December 2009.

boards to pay producers on time.⁶⁸ Individuals could be left without cash in their pockets for months, making it impossible to buy goods on the spot: ‘People were given small receipts, but no cash (...) [they] could not survive like this when they had to wait for more than one year for cash.’⁶⁹ The ‘backload advantage’ was also negatively affected. Marketing boards lacked loads to carry when coming to buy agricultural produce from Mwinilunga, except when delivering agricultural inputs. Traders, on the other hand, were often unable to fill their lorries before collecting consumer goods from the line-of-rail. Transport costs were exacerbated because vehicles remained half-filled or even empty during their long journeys. This raised the cost of consumer goods and lowered the potential profits of agricultural produce, although the far-reaching measures of government price control levelled things out to a certain extent.⁷⁰ Thus, although marketing boards did offer an outlet for agricultural produce from Mwinilunga District, they also distorted previous links between production and consumption, affecting the profits and attractiveness of trade.

MORE TRADERS, MORE TRADE?

Throughout the colonial period European trading stores – owned by individuals or companies, such as Norton, Pioneer, Northern Transport, W.F. Fisher and A.F. Serrano – operated side by side with African traders.⁷¹ However, debates about limiting the role of European traders and promoting African trade did arise occasionally. The difficulties in doing so, and the interrelated nature of European and African traders, are illustrated by the following excerpt:

stocks [in African stores] are very limited (...) [they] seldom have the things you want, European stores usually have everything you want (...) If we say we do not want European stores in our villages then we are also saying that all the things in our homes should be taken away. I do not think any of us here today is wearing clothing bought in an African store (...) Where do you think Africans get their knowledge of trading, if our teachers leave us how are we to carry out our duties to our people?⁷²

⁶⁸ NAZ LGH5/2/8 Loc. 3613, H.D. Ngwane, Acting resident secretary North-Western Province, 17 September 1968.

⁶⁹ NAZ CO4/1/3, North-Western Province development committee minutes, 9 October 1967.

⁷⁰ Wood, *The dynamics of agricultural policy and reform*, 24.

⁷¹ See: NAZ SEC2/135, R.C. Dening, Mwinilunga District annual report, 1952.

⁷² NAZ African Provincial Council North-Western Province, May 1958.

In spite of potential pitfalls, the policy of Zambianisation was implemented after independence. Through a series of economic reforms, starting with the Mulungushi reforms in 1968 and followed by the Matero reforms in 1969, the freedom of expatriate (European and Indian) traders was severely restricted in favour of Zambians. These reforms came down to the virtual prohibition, with the exception of several goods, for expatriate traders to carry on their enterprises in rural areas.⁷³

In Mwinilunga District, judging from the list of trade licences issued in 1971, all expatriate traders had by then indeed closed down their stores or transferred (nominal) leadership to Zambian managers. D.T. Rea, Evangel Trading Company and CBC, who had operated a number of stores throughout the district after independence, no longer appeared as licensed traders. Instead Zambian traders, predominantly local individuals, dominated the lists.⁷⁴ Some of these traders ran profitable stores, gradually building up capital and expanding their enterprises. Mr. Kahangu, for example, started a business in the 1940s, using money his mother had saved from rice sales in Ntambu. He would buy wax locally and sell this to European traders, Fisher in particular. With the profits he purchased various goods, such as salt, soap and liquor, but most notably clothing, in order to resell these in his small store in Ntambu. After independence, Mr. Kahangu involved his son in the business and they started buying cattle from Zambezi District, later opening the first butchery in Mwinilunga *Boma*. The success of this business enabled them to acquire a vehicle, and eventually expand into the buying and selling of pineapples, shuttling between Ikelenge and the Copperbelt.⁷⁵ Others, such as Mr. Lemba, were less successful. After having served as a tribal representative in colonial Mufulira, Mr. Lemba retired and invested his savings in opening a trading store in the northwest of the district. Selling a variety of goods, ranging from pots and pans, to screws, clothes and tinned food, he eventually went out of business because he had given too many goods on credit to customers and failed to recover the debts.⁷⁶ Cases such as these exemplify that the void

⁷³ A.A. Beveridge and A.R. Oberschall, *African businessmen and development in Zambia* (Princeton, 1979), 46–54, H. Macmillan, “The devil you know’: The impact of the Mulungushi economic reforms on retail trade in rural Zambia, with special reference to Susman Brothers and Wulfsohn, 1968–1980’, 187–212 in: J.B. Gewald, M. Hinfelaar and G. Macola (eds.), *One Zambia, many histories: Towards a history of post-colonial Zambia* (Leiden and Boston, 2008) and H. Macmillan, *An African trading empire: The story of Susman Brothers & Wulfsohn, 1901–2005* (London and New York, 2005), 247–50.

⁷⁴ NAZ LGH5/1/10 Loc. 3608, Mwinilunga rural council, 17 December 1971.

⁷⁵ Interview with Martin Kahangu, Ntambu, 30 September 2010.

⁷⁶ Interview with Philip Lemba, Lusaka, 21 January 2010.

left by the disappearance of European-owned stores could not simply be filled by Zambian traders. The following correspondence between Ikelenge co-operative and the District Governor in 1969 is equally illustrative:

I write to remind you of the store which was Fisher's. We are looking forward for the money promised to us because we want to start. It was from this store where people were being fed, this I mean to say it was from this store where all necessities were found i.e., Kapenta mealie meal and other essential things. We are looking forward from you as you said you will do your best as for us to open this store [sic].⁷⁷

In spite of (financial) encouragement by the government, local traders frequently lacked the capital, knowledge and business ties to effectively take over or replace the larger trading chains which had existed. Macmillan has argued that 'the old-established retail trading networks, with their decades of managerial experience, and their international lines of credit, intelligence and supply' ran 'small shops in remote places' with remarkable ability and efficiency.⁷⁸ One local example was the chain of stores run by W.F. Fisher, where numerous people came for supplies of cloth, foodstuffs and other essential items, as well as for the sale of goods, ranging from beeswax to cabbage. In case of petrol shortage the district administration relied on Fisher, who secured petrol from Congo, rather than their own channels of supply.⁷⁹ Fisher, through years of experience, had developed ingenious solutions to problems of transport, capital and international supplies, issues with which local traders frequently struggled.⁸⁰ Therefore, the numerical increase in traders during the 1970s was not necessarily due to a rise in trading activity *per se*. European trading chains were replaced by a large number of (small-scale) local traders, who were by no means inherently less able to run successful enterprises, but nonetheless faced manifold challenges.

PINEAPPLES: THE YELLOW GOLD

Initially spread through the pre-colonial long-distance trade, the pineapple was probably introduced to Mwinilunga District via Congo during the

⁷⁷ United National Independence Party archives, Lusaka Zambia (UNIPA), 5/3/1/40, Ikelenge co-operative store to District Governor, 19 April 1969.

⁷⁸ Macmillan, 'The devil you know', 212.

⁷⁹ NAZ LGH5/2/7 Loc. 3612, J.A.B Stewart correspondence, 15 September 1964.

⁸⁰ Interview with Paul Fisher, Hillwood farm Ikelenge, 27 September 2008.

early colonial period.⁸¹ Individual producers, missionaries and the colonial administration all played a role in disseminating the crop and promoting its cultivation. Initially pineapple cultivation was limited to local consumption, small amounts being sold to the European population of the district.⁸² However, due to the acidity of its soils Mwinilunga District proved to be more suitable to pineapple cultivation than any other place in the country. Therefore, sale of the crop, which was considered to be a 'luxury fruit' and fetched high prices on urban markets, tentatively increased during the 1950s.⁸³ Together with their other loads, traders started carrying pineapples to the Copperbelt for sale. Only after independence, however, did the production and sale of pineapples really take off. Whereas in 1965 43 tons of pineapples had been marketed, by the 1969/70 agricultural season this figure had risen to 480 tons, sold at a price of 3 ngwee per pound of weight.⁸⁴ Within the single month of February 1968 the sale of 66,443 lbs of pineapples had raised K1,328.66 – thus bringing large amounts of cash into producer's pockets.⁸⁵ The potentials of pineapple production in Mwinilunga, together with the existence of profitable markets, spurred the government to invest in a pineapple canning factory, erected under the parastatal G.M. Rucom Industries in 1969. The factory proved to be unprofitable from the beginning, though. In 1974 it already suffered temporary closures, and 'farmers preferred to sell their pineapples to the Copperbelt where they received high prices rather than at the factory.'⁸⁶

ARMB and NAMBOARD, though handling large amounts of the pineapple trade, never had a monopoly. Local traders supplemented the marketing boards, either by transporting pineapples from the areas of production to the canning factory, or by selling fresh pineapples at urban markets. The potentially high profits of this trade enabled some traders to purchase their own vehicles and expand their enterprises considerably. Traders continued to sell pineapples at urban markets even after the

⁸¹ J.E. Mendes Ferrão, *The adventure of plants and the Portuguese discoveries* (1994) and various interviews within Mwinilunga district.

⁸² NAZ SEC2/133, N.S. Price, Mwinilunga District annual report, 1935.

⁸³ NAZ MAG2/5/91 Loc. 144, Tour Minister of agriculture North-Western Province, 6 January 1968.

⁸⁴ NAZ LGH5/2/2 Loc. 3611, Marketing of produce North-Western Province, 23 July 1970 and NAZ MAG2/17/86 Loc. 199, Pineapples, July 1970.

⁸⁵ NAZ MAG2/5/91 Loc. 144, Tour Minister of agriculture North-Western Province, March 1968.

⁸⁶ NAZ Rural development seminar: Programme for the nation, 19 September 1974.

canning factory had (temporarily) closed down.⁸⁷ Despite the difficulties facing the canning factory (transport proved cumbersome, the buying of produce was not handled efficiently and levels of pineapple production were insufficient to keep the factory running throughout the day), the fact that a market existed for pineapples spurred many producers to grow the crop.⁸⁸ Not only in the northwest, where cultivation had started and was most viable, but throughout the whole district producers opened up new fields of pineapples or extended existing ones. However, after the closure of the canning factory and the subsequent contraction of the market, the crop started rotting in the fields. Mainly due to transport difficulties, excess pineapples could not be absorbed by urban markets. Although some individuals continued to maintain small fields of pineapples, most were discouraged and simply abandoned the crop.⁸⁹

Pineapples were sometimes referred to as ‘yellow gold’, because they brought large amounts of money into the district, enabling individuals to buy more and better goods.⁹⁰ The period when the canning factory was still in operation is remembered as a time when people ‘started building good houses and wearing nice clothes.’⁹¹ One woman who cultivated a large pineapple field together with her husband proudly recalled that she ‘had cloth of which other women were jealous’ and she ‘could eat lots of meat every day while others were just eating vegetables.’⁹² Thus, the prospect of obtaining material goods (consumption) could act as incentive to cultivate pineapples (production). Traders played a key role in this process. By locating profitable markets, especially in urban centres, traders promoted and spread pineapple cultivation throughout the district. A fact which could not be offset, however, was that markets were influenced by broader economic and political factors and could prove highly volatile. During the colonial era pineapple cultivation remained rather limited, but after independence it expanded with remarkable speed, only to slump again equally suddenly after the canning factory closed down. Traders continued to sell some fresh pineapples on the Copperbelt, but they could not compensate for the disappearance of the main market for the crop,

⁸⁷ Interview with Mr. Kamafumbu, Ikelenge, 6 March and 25 April 2010 and interview with Mr. Saipilinga, Ikelenge, 8 April 2010.

⁸⁸ Pritchett, *The Lunda-Ndembu*, 60–1.

⁸⁹ This view is based on interviews, especially with Paul Fisher and with John Kamuhuza, Ikelenge.

⁹⁰ Interview with John Kamuhuza, Ikelenge, 4 April 2010.

⁹¹ Interview with Mr. Saipilinga, Ikelenge, 8 April 2010.

⁹² Interview with Mrs. Kamafumbu, Ikelenge, 25 April 2010.

the cannery. Even today the potential for pineapple production remains. Mwinilunga is still known as 'pineapple country' within Zambia,⁹³ and if large-scale markets became available and transport difficulties were overcome, producers and traders could resume the marketing of the crop once again.

PRODUCTION, CONSUMPTION AND TRADE

Traders, though affected by broader economic and political factors, could influence production and consumption in far-reaching ways. By locating markets and offering prices which were attractive to producers, traders could encourage the production of certain crops and goods.⁹⁴ A prime example is rice cultivation in the 1950s. Prices offered for rice were substantially higher than for other produce, as profitable markets for the crop existed within the district, at urban centres and even in Congo. This stimulated rice cultivation to such an extent that district officials expressed concerns, as 'no attention is paid to other staple foodstuffs which are badly required for local consumption.'⁹⁵ By adjusting pricing policies, traders could influence which goods were, but also which goods were not produced within the district. After independence the government policy to promote maize cultivation resulted in high prices being offered for the crop by marketing boards, in addition to providing technical support and inputs to farmers. This indeed led to an increase in maize cultivation throughout the district, at the expense of cassava, a crop not accepted at marketing board depots. Nevertheless cassava remained the staple food crop of the area. Individual producers, though growing maize for the market and occasionally for their own consumption, continued to rely on cassava, which offered distinct benefits, such as being drought-resistant and flexible in its labour demands.⁹⁶ The persistence of cassava cultivation was rather due to the preference and agency of individual producers than a response to trade incentives. Traders further had to reckon with issues such as the instability of markets, transport difficulties, (inter)national

⁹³ Remark frequently made by people in Lusaka and on the Copperbelt when talking about Mwinilunga.

⁹⁴ W.W. Rostow, 'The stages of economic growth', *The economic history review*, 12:1 (1959), 1–16.

⁹⁵ NAZ SEC2/957, T.M. Lawman, Mwinilunga District tour report, July 1949.

⁹⁶ NAZ MAG2/5/91 Loc. 144, Tour North-Western Province, 6 January 1968 and Von Oppen, *Terms of trade and terms of trust*, 126–7.

pricing policies and consumer demands.⁹⁷ Although these factors could negatively influence the possibility and profitability of trade, traders expressed remarkable ingenuity in dealing with such problems. The case of the pineapple canning factory is illustrative. Traders overcame transport difficulties and offered high prices in order to promote pineapple cultivation. After the closure of the factory, although this was a major setback, traders nevertheless continued to seek urban markets where pineapples could be sold, providing an alternative outlet for the crop.⁹⁸ Next to influencing production, traders also stood at the base of changing trends in consumption.

During the period under study, patterns of consumption underwent radical changes in Mwinilunga District, as locally procured or produced goods were increasingly replaced by items obtained through the mediation of traders. The pre-colonial long-distance trade brought goods such as beads, guns and cloth to the area, but the transition accelerated in the 1930s and 1940s when store-bought goods became truly widespread throughout the district.⁹⁹ Cloth and tailored clothes replaced animal skins and bark cloth; mass-manufactured hoes, axes and knives replaced the tools produced by local blacksmiths; salt and soap supplied by traders replaced the varieties which had previously been extracted from grasses and roots. Such transitions could be motivated by issues of quality, consumer taste or the availability of labour and expertise. Salt purchased from traders had a different – arguably ‘better’ – taste than salt which was obtained by burning certain types of grass, whereas axes could be purchased in stores without having to rely on the expertise of blacksmiths.¹⁰⁰ In order to obtain these goods, individuals had to offer traders either money or goods, such as agricultural produce or beeswax. Thus, by spreading consumer goods, traders could simultaneously encourage increased levels of productivity. Clothing, bicycles and brick houses with iron-sheet roofs were only available to individuals who sold part of their harvest, earned money through paid employment, or otherwise.¹⁰¹ According to colonial officials, the desire to obtain certain goods was such, that there

⁹⁷ NAZ SEC2/962, R.S. Thompson, Mwinilunga District tour report, August 1954.

⁹⁸ Interview with Mr. Saipilinga, Ikelenge, 8 April 2010.

⁹⁹ E.L.B. and V.W. Turner, ‘Money economy among the Mwinilunga Ndembu: A study of some individual cash budgets’, *Rhodes-Livingstone Institute journal* 18 (1955), 19–37.

¹⁰⁰ These observations are derived from numerous interviews conducted in the Ikelenge/Nyakaseya area during March–May 2010.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Solomon Kanswata, Mwinilunga, 26 March 2010 and Turner, ‘Money economy among the Mwinilunga Ndembu’, 19–37.

was the risk of 'over-selling' of produce. They complained that: 'the Chiefs, as well as the people, prefer money and a 'tightened belt' for a few months than well stocked grain bins in their villages.'¹⁰² Connections between consumption and production were yet more multifaceted. Bicycles could assist in the marketing of crops over long distances, whereas fertilisers and pesticides could increase agricultural yields, just to name a few examples.

CONCLUSION

To recapitulate the argument, traders constituted an indispensable link in the chain of production and consumption. During the colonial period traders combined the purchase of agricultural produce and the sale of commodities within the same store, and it has been argued that this direct link contributed towards the economic boom in the district during the 1940s and 1950s. After independence, however, marketing boards changed the situation. It was no longer possible to rely on a single trader for both the sale of produce and the purchase of consumer goods. Although the numbers of traders continued to increase during the post-colonial period, this was rather because of the replacement of European-owned trading chains by a large number of small-scale local traders, than due to an absolute increase in the volume of trade. The scarcity or instability of markets, marketing board policies and the disappearance of the backload advantage all affected the viability of trade in the district. However, because consumer goods had by then become so widespread, individuals and traders continued to forge the link between production and consumption through their own agency. Because of pineapple sales individuals gained access to goods such as bicycles, vehicles and clothing. Traders, though having to take account of factors such as the availability of markets, (inter) national pricing policies and political agendas, exposed remarkable ingenuity in locating markets, stimulating production and spreading a wide range of commodities throughout the district.

¹⁰² NAZ SEC2/193, Kaonde-Lunda Province newsletter, July 1941.

INDEX

- Advertisements 10, 12, 143–165
 Mail-order 152, 173
 African Lakes Company (ALC) 217, 220–2
 African National Congress (ANC) 162,
 241, 253
 Northern Rhodesia African National
 Congress (NRANC) 241
 Alpers, Edward 17
- Banamwaze Store 237–257
 Barotse, Kingdom 35
 Barotseland 93–113
 Belinga, Samuel O. 4
 Bemba 17, 19, 22, 33–5, 90
 Beveridge, A.A. 237, 240, 254, 257
 Birmingham, David 19
 Bisa 23, 25–6, 30
 Bontinck, François 78
 Brandon, Ruth 169
 British South Africa Company
 (BSAC) 97–8, 215–6, 220–3
 Burke, Timothy 145, 152
- Campbell, Dugald 90
Castle Lager 143–153, 198
 Chewa 34, 229
 Chikunda 22, 29–30, 33
Chipalo 101
 Chipata (Fort Jameson) 189, 192, 200,
 215–236
 Chipungu, Samuel N. 206
 Chokwe (Tshokwe) 22, 30–1, 35–6, 48–9,
 58, 64
 Civilising mission, The 145, 156, 251
 Clothing 6, 12, 17, 96, 99, 107–9, 143, 148,
 158, 162, 167–185, 198, 202, 210–12, 214,
 246, 252, 263, 268, 273
Chitenge 175–6, 179–81, 203
 Cloth 20–39, 189, 228, 230, 259–61,
 275, 279
 Design 180–4
 Salaula 176, 179
 Secondhand 168, 171, 174, 176, 179
 Clyde Mitchell, J. 2, 6, 157
 Codrington, Robert 216–7, 220
 Colson, Elizabeth 6–7, 127–8
 Congo Evangelistic Mission (CEM) 81
 Copper 39, 57
- Copperbelt 3, 5, 23, 67, 75, 82, 85, 87, 91,
 96, 130, 143–165, 170, 174, 234, 262–3,
 266–7, 269, 271, 274, 276–7
- Deane, Phyllis 1
 Dickens, Charles 117, 127
 Dotson, F. & L. 194
- Eastern Province Co-operative Marketing
 Association 232
 Ellsworth, Ronald 124, 127
 Epstein, A.L. 2, 147, 160
- Faith, Nicholas 115, 118
 Family, Nuclear 143–5, 148,
 153, 158
 Firearms 3, 10–11, 17, 20–39, 41–64, 67, 249,
 260, 268, 279
 Dowry 57–9
 Legislation on 52–5
 Mourning 60–1
 Fisher, W.F. 266–7, 273, 275
- Gamitto 25–6
 Gann, L.H. 247
 Garvey, Marcus 241, 254–5
 Giraud, Victor 34
 Gluckman, Max 2
 Gray, Richard 19
 Grillo, R.D. 135
 Guyer, Jane 4, 158
- Hagemann, Mike 215
 Hamer, E.D. 133, 135
 Hansen, Karen Tranberg 109, 152
 Harries, Patrick 5
 Hemptinne, Jean-Félix de 77, 85
 Herbert, Eugenia 97–8
 Honey, Martha Spencer 218
 Hunting 52–4, 57–8
- Ila 240–1, 244, 251–2, 257
 Industrial revolution, The 1–2, 116,
 120, 129
 Iron 51–2
 Blacksmiths 51–2
 Ivory 20–1, 24–5, 29–31, 33–8, 41, 44, 48–9,
 57, 260, 265, 268

- Johannesburg 93, 102, 106, 108, 110, 112, 123, 202, 213, 240
- Johnston, Harry 215, 220
- Juma Merikano 27, 46
- Kafue Training Institute 240-1, 244-5
- Kalabo 93-113
- Kanduza, Ackson 206
- Kasai 75
- Katanga 50, 57, 75, 77-8, 80-4, 90-1, 170-1, 245
- Kaunda, Kenneth David 8, 93, 162-3, 219, 231, 235, 241, 253, 271
- Kazembe, Kingdom 17, 25
- Mwata 22, 32, 35
- Keller, Bonnie 128
- Kiewiet, de 130
- Kololo 32, 35
- Labour migration 5-7, 11, 85, 87, 90, 93-113, 121-3, 127, 150-65, 167, 170, 173-4, 190, 202, 213-4, 221, 244-6
- Labour recruitment 99-113, 123-4, 171
- Leya 211-2
- Licht, Walter 129, 132
- Livingstone, David 27-8, 69
- Livingstone, Town 128, 189-214, 215, 234, 241
- London Missionary Society 68, 84, 88, 155
- Lovejoy, Paul 17
- Lozi 22, 32, 35, 96, 99-101, 128
- Luapula Province 167-185
- Luba 18, 22-4, 26, 29, 36-7, 42, 80-1, 90
- Luba Kasai 48-50, 59, 60-3
- Luba Lubilanji (Baluba Lubilanji) 44, 62-3
- Lumpungu A Kikolo, Chief 42-64
- Lumumba, Patrice 85
- Lunda (Ruund) 18, 22-4, 29-30, 34-7, 49, 58, 69, 71, 74-5, 79-81, 91, 262
- Lunn, John 132-4
- Lusaka 177, 182, 193, 234, 249, 254
- Macmillan, Hugh 216, 257, 275
- Macola, Giacomo 17, 256
- Mandala, Elias C. 207
- Mandala Stores 171-3
- Mansa 167-185
- Marketing Boards 278-80
- Agricultural Rural Marketing Board (ARMB) 270-3, 276
- National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBOARD) 270-3, 276
- Marx, Leo 117-8
- Masebo, Sylvia 181-4
- Masekela, Hugh 123, 127
- Matero Reforms 249, 274
- Mawiko (Wiko) 99, 101
- Mbunda 93, 111
- McKenna, Frank 132-4
- Miller, Joseph 4, 17
- Mkunga, Chiwomba 201
- Moore, R.J.B. 155-6, 159
- Mpezeni, Paramount Chief 216-7
- Msiri (M'siri) 3, 19, 22, 33-8, 42, 50, 67, 75
- Mufuzi, Friday 128, 215
- Mukuni, Chief 197-214
- Mulenga, Angela 181
- Mulungushi Reforms 12, 219, 249, 270, 274
- Muntimba, Maud 206
- Mwalukanga, George 206
- Mwinilunga District 13, 259-80
- Nabulyato, Robinson 13, 237-257
- Namwala District 240, 243-8, 250, 252-4
- Nayee, Riverbhai V. 196
- Neo-patrimonialism 9
- Ngongo Leteta, Chief 42, 49-50
- Ngoni 18, 22, 33, 35, 216
- Nkumbula, Harry Mwaanga 241, 252
- North Charterland Exploration Company (NCEC) 216-7, 220, 227
- Nsapu Nsapu, Chief 43
- Nshila* 143-150, 153, 160, 163
- Nyamwezi 18-19, 29
- Nye, David 118
- Nyengo 98-99
- Oberschall, A.R. 237, 257
- Onselen, Charles van 124
- Ovimbundu (Mbundu) 21, 29, 30-1, 33, 35-6, 41, 48-9, 64, 69-70, 80, 260
- Padmore, George 241
- Phiri, Bizeck J. 201
- Pineapples 270, 272, 274-9
- Pirie, Gordon 121-4, 127
- Plymouth Brethren 73, 77, 84, 90
- Pokrant, R.J. 184
- Powdermaker, Hortense 158-9
- Railway 11-12, 115-140
- Central African Railways (CAR) 126
- Colour bar 135-9
- Industrial Work Discipline 129-137, 140
- Irregularities 124-5
- Railway African Workers Union (RAWU) 132, 138, 140
- Rhodesia Railways 130-1, 134-8, 140, 193
- Western songs on 118-9

- Rhodes, Cecil 70–1, 121, 215
 Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) 99–100
 Rhodes-Livingstone Institute 1–2, 10
 Roberts, Andrew 17
 Robinson, Ronald 116
 Rodney, Walter 17, 206
 Rubber 31, 39
- Salisbury, Lord 115
 Sardanis, Andrew 263, 266
 Schivelbusch, Wolfgang 119
 Seleti, Ngalaba Y. 201, 238
 Sembene, Ousmane 120–1, 126
 Sendwe, Jason 85
 Sewing machine 6, 12, 167–185
 Shapiro, Frank 216
 Sharma Brothers' Trading Store 189–214
 Shamkeral Motiram Sharma 190, 195–6
 Vithaldas Motiram Sharma 190, 195–6
 Singer, Isaac 168–9
 Singer, I.M. & Co. 169, 179
Sipilingas 11, 67, 78, 85, 90
 Slavery 4–5, 20–2, 25, 28–31, 33–8, 41–2, 44, 48–9, 51–2, 57, 61–3, 90–1, 260
 Songye 11, 42–64
 South African Chamber of Mines 94, 105
 Springer 11, 70–91
 John 71–91
 Helen Emily (Chapman) 70–91
 Sublime, Industrial 118
 Technological 118
 Susman Brothers and Wulfsohn Trading Store 190, 200, 243
 Swahili 18, 22, 26, 29, 31, 33, 35–6, 64, 67, 77, 91
- Tailors 167–185
 Taxation 97–8, 150, 219, 262
 Taylor, Bishop William 68–9
 Thomas, Nicolas 160
 Thompson, E.P. 130–2
 Thoreau 131
 Tippu Tip (Hamed bin Muhammed) 29–31, 36, 41, 44, 47–8, 67
 Tolstoy 117
 Tonga 3, 6, 116, 127, 245
 Traders 12–13
- African 202, 223, 225–6, 232, 235–6, 237–257, 259, 262, 266–9, 273–4
 Arab 41, 44, 46–8, 50–2, 56, 62–4
 European 191, 202, 220–2, 226, 231, 237, 243, 245–6, 252, 257, 259, 262, 265–9, 273–4
 Indian 12–13, 189–214, 215–236, 237, 243, 246, 249, 253, 257, 274
 Jewish 191, 194, 202, 237
 Tshombe, Joseph Kapend 81, 85
 Moïse 85
 Tumbuka 18
- Ulere* 103, 105, 112
 United Church of Zambia (UCZ) 91
Union Minière du Haut-Katanga 75–7, 85, 88
 United Methodist Church (UMC) 67–91, 240–1
 Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) 68–9, 73–4, 81, 84
 United National Independence Party (UNIP) 8, 162, 231–3, 240–2, 253–4, 256–7, 271
- Vail, Leroy 18
 Vera, Yvonne 126–7
 Vickery, Kenneth P. 245
- Warlords 18, 30, 33–6
 Wealth-in-people 4–5, 9
 Welensky, Roy 133–40
WENELA (WNLA), Witwatersrand Native Labour Association 105, 112
 Wesley, John 68
 Westbeeche, George 96
 Wiese, Carl 33, 216
 Wilson, Godfrey 3, 171
 Wissmann, H. Von 62, 69
 Witwatersrand 5, 76, 96, 103, 121
 Wordsworth 117–8
- Yao 23, 25–6
 Yeke 3, 22, 35–6, 67
 Young, Crawford 77
- Zambia Consumer and Buying Corporation (ZCBC) 233