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Forged in the Great War: people, transport, and labour, the establishment of colonial rule in Zambia, 1890-1920

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People, Transport, and Labour, the
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1890-1920

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Forged in the Great War:
People, Transport, and Labour,
the establishment of Colonial Rule in
Zambia 1890-1920

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African porters, soldiers, and stretcher bearers, between Makua and Fife April 1915.
Courtesy of Livingstone Museum Archives, Zambia

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Dedicated to the memory of

Charlotte Elisabeth Gewald

1966-2012

Margaretha Gerarda (Gertie) Janssen

1966-2012

Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,
Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!
T.S. Eliot, *The Wasteland* (1922)

Contents

List of maps and photos	<i>ix</i>
Acknowledgements	<i>xi</i>

INTRODUCTION 1

War, people, and labour: The establishment of colonial rule in Zambia, 1890-1920	1
Zambia is not South Africa	3
Zambia's neglected history	5
The coming of colonial rule	11
Structure of the book	13

1. TISSUE-THIN PAPER ADMINISTRATION 18

Introduction	18
The weak colonial state	19
The Ngoni Campaign	21
BSAC administrators	23
The greatest domestic event, <i>Chitemene</i>	31
Prohibiting a way of life	33
Preservation of natural resources	36
Need for order	37
Failure in the face of on-the-ground realities	39
Conclusion	42

2. NEW ECONOMIC ORDER 43

Introduction	43
Labour and transport in Central African history	44
Labour	48
Tax	54
European adventurers and African transport labour	55
Railroad in Zambia	60
Building the rail line	64
The continued importance of carriers	70
Conclusion	72

3.	WORLD WAR ONE	73
	Introduction	73
	The coming of war	73
	The war in Northeastern Rhodesia	76
	War and soldiers	78
	Carriers	79
	The recruitment of labour	80
	Turn to chiefs	81
	Chiefs and the high demand for labour	83
	Support and physical sanction	84
	Finance	86
	Firearms	87
	Evasion	88
	Appeals to the abstract	90
	Conclusion	91
4.	WAR, THE LIMITS OF TECHNOLOGY, THE APPLICATION OF HUMAN LABOUR, AND THE EXTENSION OF COLONIAL RULE	93
	Introduction	93
	Nsumbu Island	95
	Motor transport	102
	Hot and bothered	107
	Short description of the Tanganyika Naval Expedition	108
	Labour recruitment and transport of Spicer Simson	111
	In the domain of shattered Msiri	112
	Labour recruited in the context of mines and labour recruiters	113
	In the domain of intense industrialisation	114
	Conclusion	116
5.	WORLD WAR ONE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COLONIAL RULE	117
	Introduction	117
	Limitless funds	118
	The demand for labour	119
	The collapse in food production	123
	Influenza	127
	Watchtower	134
	Conclusion	137
	Conclusion	139
	Sources and bibliography	144

List of maps and photos

Maps

1. Map of Zambia *xiv*

Photos

- 1.1 Cricket and tennis at Fort Rosebery circa 1910 28
- 1.2 Cricket and tennis at Fort Rosebery circa 1910 28
- 2.1 Stephen Kappata, People used to walk long distance to look for employment in the railline 60
- 2.2 Railway building near Broken Hill, c. 1906 69

Acknowledgements

As a child in 1977, I accompanied my family in the back of a clapped-out Land Rover on a guided tour of Kansanshi copper mines in northwestern Zambia. It was December, the height of the rainy season, and it rained incessantly; the Land Rover's canvas canopy failed miserably. Drenched to the bone, we eventually reached the top of a mine dump and looked down upon the world around us. A geologist accompanying us pointed to a stand of trees in the far distance, in what was then Zaïre, and told us that they had been planted by Arabs in the nineteenth century. Later, as we slithered and splashed our way back to Solwezi, we passed the remains of a rusting steam engine. For me, an impressionable child with a passion for history, the presence of trees planted by Arabs in the very heart of Africa, as well as the remains of an abandoned steam engine were the highlights of that cold and sodden trip. Now, nearly 40 years later, I can contextualise the stand of trees and the rusting remnants of the steam engine as the material detritus of a largely forgotten past, but then, as a child, they evoked stirring images of Wilbur Smith's *Shout at the Devil* and, later, William Boyd's *The Ice-Cream War*, books devoured by flushed white boarding-school boys in search of titillation and adventure in southern Africa at the time. Here, in the heart of Africa, at the furthest reaches of the South African Empire, lay a history far beyond the endlessly repetitive school histories of the many and varied treks that had gone to make up the mind-numbingly boring *Groot Trek* (Great Trek) so beloved of Christian Nationalist education in apartheid South Africa. Here lay a history of Swahili traders, Arab sailors, African slaves, American gun-runners, Afrikaner mercenaries, and cynically cruel German soldiers, in short, a schoolboy's dream come true. Fortunately, with the passing of time, the exoticism of youth has passed and my appreciation of Wilbur Smith has evaporated; none the less the images of a history beyond the one taught at school inspired me to make the study and career choices of my life, and thankfully I have never regretted my decision to study African History.

Countless academics have attempted to teach me, but two stand out in particular: Julian Cobbing and Robert Ross, maverick historians, but certainly the most inspiring teachers, mentors, colleagues, and friends that I could have ever wished for, but for them I would never have ended up as a happy archive rat. There are a number of historians who have unselfishly contributed to this work, whilst never losing sight of my family and providing me with a bed. In

Cambridge and Canterbury, Giacomo Macola will always amaze and inspire me, and I treasure his uncompromising friendship and support. In Lusaka and Chilanga, Marja Hinfelaar has consistently gone out of her way to help not only me but so many more. In London and Gaborone Neil Parsons has consistently cared for me and my family. In Johannesburg Karim Sadr has taken time to feed and care for me. In Oxford Jan-Georg Deutsch remains a true comrade. In Edinburgh Paul Nugent continues to inspire me and an ever-increasing host of historians. In Providence Nancy Jacobs has been my friend and confidante.

Beginning in the early 2000s Zambian historiography took off again after many years of being stuck in the doldrums. In Zambia itself, Professors Phiri and Musambachime, and Doctors Kalusa and Mufuzi have steadfastly continued to work as historians in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Miles Larmer, David Gordon, Jamie Monson, Luise White, Karen Trandberg Hansen, Lawrence Dritsas, Joan Haig, Joanna Lewis, John McCracken, Ken Vickery, Hugo Hinfelaar, the many Central African Research Theme (CART) participants, and many many more have all contributed to this book, and they are to be thanked for this. In Leiden former students Enid Guene, Iva Pesa, Mary Davies, Sander Wellens and David Drengk have all become true historians in their own right. My many colleagues and office mates, Rijk van Dijk, Mirjam de Bruijn, Klaas van Walraven, Sebastiaan Soeters, Jan Jansen, Sabine Luning and others have provided support and debate through the years. In dark times Rita Kesselring was my muse, providing me with love, support, and all the right reasons to carry on. Zambian studies will be so much the richer with her presence. I wish to thank Mike and Ingrid Puffett, on their farm near Chilanga, for unselfishly providing a place for my family and I to stay whilst in Zambia, and for consistently supporting us throughout the years. My father, although we have worked together on fieldwork in Mali, Namibia and South Africa, I still hope that we may one day once again climb to the top of a mine-dump in Zambia, and that your wish for one pick-handle wide, three pick-handles long and four pick-handles deep in the earth of Zimbabwe will not be granted too soon.

Shortly after our trip to Kansanshi in December 1977, my sister and I lost our mother. The memory of that last trip as a close-knit family has influenced my life ever since, and undoubtedly accounts for the fact that I chose to return to Zambia as an adult. My return to Zambia coincided with the slow but inevitable demise and death of Gertie Janssen in February 2012, to be followed by the death of my sister in the following month. Their illnesses have dogged and haunted me throughout the research and writing of this book. Every chapter is linked in my mind to a stage or event in their final years. I thus dedicate this book to Gertie Janssen and Charlotte Gewalt: independent, strong, and intelligent women, but above all two caring and loving mothers who died long before they could grow

old. My daughters, Sieme Mariama and Meta Liesbeth, have always supported me, as has my nephew, Christopher Callum; it is my sincere hope that we shall travel far and grow old together.

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Mieke Zwart and Tom Leighton assisted with the editing and layout of this book.

Leiden, August 2015.

Map 1 Map of Zambia



Introduction

War, people, and labour: The establishment of colonial rule in Zambia, 1890-1920

In 1918, Theodore Williams, a young man with six years of service in the employ of the British South Africa Company in colonial Zambia, wrote to his mother. A dedicated and loving son, Williams corresponded diligently with his parents, sisters, and brothers in England or on their family estate in Jamaica. Bright, observant, and astute, his diaries, field notes, and letters are among the richest historical sources for Zambia in the early twentieth century. In contrast to many of his generation, Williams survived the Great War. In the dying months of that war, when it was becoming ever more probable that Germany would surrender, Williams wrote to his mother to discuss what was in store for Northern Rhodesia in the aftermath of the war:

Solwezi, August 5th 1918, My dear Mother, ...The only local product is native labour [transport has been crossed out and replaced with labour] and that is chiefly useful to the mines 100 miles away in the Congo. In other words the place is not worth spending money on. It is no use introducing cultivation or industries because of the distance to markets and the difficulties of transport. And so it is over most of N.R. [Northern Rhodesia]. In the Barotse it is different, where the natives are immensely rich in cattle.¹

In a nutshell Williams summed up the importance of Colonial Zambia for Imperial Britain, at best it was a source for labour, specifically labour for transport. In 1918 the fabulously rich copper deposits of the Copperbelt still lay hidden, whilst the copper deposits of the Congo had conveniently fallen into the hands of Belgium's King Leopold. Northern Rhodesia was the Cinderella of the Empire, at the furthest reaches of the Empire, penniless and untidy, and hidden deep within it, not a heart of gold, but of copper, which would be instrumental in bringing about the greatest social transformation in Central Africa since the coming of the Iron Age a thousand years earlier.

¹ Rhodes House, Oxford, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781. Williams (Theodore R.) Administrative Officer, Northern Rhodesia: Diaries, 1912-21. 3 Volumes; letters home, 1912-24. 3 Volumes.

In 1891, the territories of what would later become Northern Rhodesia and later still the Republic of Zambia, became subject to the British Crown and part of the Empire. Henceforth the peoples of Zambia found themselves subject to the authority of the British Crown. Although by dint of International Law it was undeniably true that from one day to the next the peoples of Zambia had become subject to the authority of Queen Victoria, this did not in any way equate with an on-the-ground presence of her office bearers, let alone that any British official was able to exercise any administrative authority in Zambia. Yet, thirty years later Northern Rhodesia was unquestionably part and parcel of the British Empire, and its kings, chiefs, headmen, and people recognised (if not necessarily accepted) the authority of approximately 300 officials who taxed and administered the land in the name of King George V.

Since 2005, there has been an upsurge in publications dealing with Zambia's past, yet none of these publications deals explicitly with the manner in which the colonial state came to be established in Zambia, let alone the central role and importance of World War One in the establishment of colonial rule in Zambia. In essence, this book seeks to discover and describe how British colonial authority came to be imposed in colonial Zambia between 1890 and 1920, and argues that the unique circumstances associated with the prosecution of World War One in Central Africa facilitated and enabled the establishment of the colonial state in Zambia.

Three points underscore this work:

- The establishment of colonial rule in Zambia took place along lines that differ substantially from the manner in which colonial rule came to be established in Zimbabwe or South Africa.²
- On account of the specific conditions that exist in Zambia, there is a complex dialectical relationship between labour and transport in the territory.³
- British Colonial rule only came to be effectively established in Zambia in the course of, and on account of, World War One.⁴

² Jan-Bart Gewald, 'Researching and Writing in the Twilight of an Imagined Conquest: Anthropology in Northern Rhodesia, 1930-1960', *History and Anthropology*, 18, 4 (2007), pp. 459-487.

³ Jan-Bart Gewald, 'People, Mines and Cars: Towards a Revision of Zambian History, 1890-1930'. In: K. van Walraven, S. Luning, and J.B. Gewald (editors), *The Speed of Change : Motor vehicles and People in Africa, 1890-2000* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 21-47

⁴ This in contrast to Edmund Yorke, who argues that World War One undermined the colonial state being established. Edmund James Yorke, *Britain, Northern Rhodesia and the First World War: Forgotten Colonial Crisis* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) & 'A Crisis of Colonial Control: War and Authority in Northern Rhodesia, 1914-1919', PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1983.

Zambia is not South Africa

The rich corpus of material produced by the anthropologists of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute (RLI) has come to dominate our understanding of Zambian societies and Zambia's past.⁵ George Shepperson, the author of *Independent African*, one of the seminal works of Central African history, was well aware of the great advantage that exists for historians in the 'vast weight of anthropological material', which could be profitably mined by historians.⁶ Nonetheless, the current historiography dealing with the colonisation of Zambia between 1890 and 1920 is seriously flawed and needs to be revised.

Although history is not the object of professional inquiry by anthropologists, they do have ideas about the past, and in the Zambian context anthropology has to a large extent come to determine the country's historiography.⁷ At the basis of all of this anthropological research lies the work of Audrey Richards, Godfrey and Monica Wilson, Max Gluckman, and the anthropologists who made up the Rhodes Livingstone Institute.⁸ It is to the credit of the RLI, that Zambia has a unique and richly detailed corpus of anthropological research that can be delved into for historical purposes. Indeed, so rich is the anthropological tradition in Zambia that when historical research has been conducted and historical debates have erupted, the products of the RLI's anthropological research have often formed the basis for historical research and historical debates.⁹ In other words, even the historical debates in Zambia are anthropological in origin.¹⁰

⁵ This point is made in a review article by David Gordon, 'Rites of Rebellion: Recent Anthropology from Zambia'. In: *African Studies*, 62, 1, 2003, pp. 125-139.

⁶ George Shepperson, 'The Literature of British Central Africa: A review article'. In: *Human Problems in British Central Africa*, The Rhodes Livingstone Journal, 23, 1958, p. 12. George Shepperson & Thomas Price, *Independent African, John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1958).

⁷ Nowhere was this more so than in the case of Barnes and the Ngoni, whereby the Ngoni have come to form the stereotypical image of violent conquest in Zambia that came to be applied to the rest of the territory. John Barnes, *Politics in a changing society: A Political History of the Fort Jameson Ngoni* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954).

⁸ Those interested in an introduction to the history of the RLI are advised to read, L. Schumaker, *Africanising Anthropology: Fieldwork, Networks, and the Making of Cultural Knowledge in Central Africa* (London: Duke University Press 2001).

⁹ Recently Miles Larmer has gone so far as to suggest that the differing legacies of socio-anthropological research carried out in Northern Rhodesia and Belgian Congo have determined the manner in which contemporary politics are carried out. (Paper presented at International workshop: Wage labour, capital and precarity in global history and Africa, Leiden 13-14 March, 2015)

¹⁰ Examples would include the material published by Megan Vaughan & Henrietta Moore that re-examined the work of Audrey Richards, Lyn Schumaker's historical study of the RLI, and the rumbustious debate that developed between James Ferguson & Hugh Macmillan in the *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Megan Vaughan & Henrietta Moore, *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition and Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890-1990* (London: James Currey, 1994); Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology* & James Ferguson, 'Mobile Workers, Modernist Narratives: A Critique of the Historiography of Transition on the Zambian Copperbelt, part I',

The anthropologists of the RLI worked from within a paradigm dominated by the experience of colonial conquest in South Africa.¹¹ This had as a consequence that the anthropologists who dominate Zambian historiography did not consider how colonial rule came to be established in Zambia.¹² Unintentionally, the RLI anthropologists transferred their understanding of colonial conquest in South Africa to the Northern Rhodesian situation. Given that they were primarily concerned with the sociocultural effects of migrant labour, and conditions existent within Northern Rhodesia in the 1950s, it is understandable that they should have unwittingly operated within a historical paradigm that did not apply to Northern Rhodesia. Concerned as they were with the present, there was no need for them to ever truly analyse the manner in which colonial rule came to be established in Northern Rhodesia.

As James Ferguson has eloquently shown, Zambia is known in the anthropological literature for its urbanisation and labour migration to the cities of the Copperbelt.¹³ Leaving aside the merits of the many and varied debates dealing with the sociocultural effects of migrant labour in Zambia, it is of interest to note that the root cause of what drove Zambian men to engage in migrant labour was never seriously investigated. Instead of researching what had initiated the involvement of Zambian men in migrant labour, this migrancy was taken as a given by the RLI anthropologists, as well as those who later examined the work of the RLI. Researchers, commentators, and academics have unquestioningly assumed that young men became migrant labourers for the reasons given by a meta-narrative which had its origins, not in the empirical data of Zambia's past, but in a South African past which had been transferred to Northern Rhodesia and which argued that colonial conquest had impoverished the rural areas, resulting in the movement of people to the mines.

In arguing that a paradigm that was applicable to South Africa came to be applied to Zambia, this book contributes to a discussion that was initiated by Gordon, Widlok, and Sunseri – each of whom, in their separate fields, have drawn attention to the manner in which the South African experience continues

Journal of Southern African Studies 1990, 16, no. 3, pp. 385-412; 'Mobile Workers, Modernist Narratives: A Critique of the Historiography of Transition on the Zambian Copperbelt, part II', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 1990, 16, no. 4, pp. 603-621; 'Modernist Narratives, Conventional Wisdoms, and Colonial Liberalism: Reply to a Straw Man', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 1994, 20, no. 4, pp. 633-640; 'Urban Trends on the Zambian Copperbelt: A Short Bibliographic Note', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 1996, 22, no. 2, p. 313.

¹¹ Gewald, 'Researching and Writing'.

¹² Where they did consider it, as in the case of the work of Barnes on the Ngoni in eastern Zambia, it was primarily because the ethnographic detail so clearly brought the aspect of violent conquest to the fore. Barnes, *Politics in a changing society*. Notably this book has as its frontispiece a photograph of 'man points upwards and sings that, because they conquered the Ngoni, the Whites must have come from heaven'.

¹³ James Ferguson, *Expectations of modernity: myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).

to inform and obscure the dominant view of both anthropology and history about southern Africa as a whole.¹⁴ In other words, the South African experience has effectively placed terms and concepts out of bounds, and thereby appropriated them and robbed them of all meaning other than that dictated by the South African experience.¹⁵ Similarly Thomas Spear, in discussing the work of Mahmood Mamdani, has drawn attention to the danger of assuming that the ‘experiences of settler colonialism reflected those of all Africa’.¹⁶ In the same way, historians working on Mozambique and Namibia have indicated that the overwhelming reliance on South African models has shaped the writing of history in ways, which do not bear relation to the observed data.¹⁷ This reliance has, as Sunseri correctly concludes:

... led Africanists elsewhere to adopt one of the major weaknesses of this literature, the inability to show how peasants and labour migrants, men and women, contributed to the shaping of colonial political economies.¹⁸

Informed by these perspectives, this book seeks to free Zambia’s past from the South African paradigm.

Zambia’s neglected history

Since the beginning of the new millennium, and above all following 2005, there has been an upsurge in historical research and literature in Zambia,¹⁹ an upsurge that has heralded a new post-colonial and post-nationalist historiography. Prior to 2000, Zambian historiography had, to all intents and purposes, consistently been

¹⁴ Thaddeus Sunseri, ‘Labour Migration in Colonial Tanzania and the Hegemony of South African Historiography’. In: *African Affairs* (1996), 95, pp. 581-598. Robert Gordon, *The Bushman Myth: The Making of a Namibian Underclass* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p. 6. Thanks to Thomas Widlok for making this point. Thomas Widlok, *Living on Mangetti: ‘Bushman’ Autonomy and Namibian Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). See in particular Chapter 1, ‘Cultural Diversity’, pp. 15-41.

¹⁵ Mark Gevisser, *Lost and Found in Johannesburg* (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2014). Deals with the lasting impact that South Africa’s unique legislation and past has had on all aspects of life in South Africa, be they sexual, gender, race, ethnic, religion, spatial or otherwise.

¹⁶ Thomas Spear, ‘Neo-traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa’. In: *Journal of African History*, 44 (2003), p. 9, fn. 23. With thanks to Thaddeus Sunseri.

¹⁷ Patricia Hayes, *et al.*, eds, *Namibia under South African Rule: Mobility and Containment, 1915-46* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998) & Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Labourers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (London: James Currey, 1994).

¹⁸ Sunseri, ‘Labour Migration’, p. 585.

¹⁹ David M. Gordon, *Nachituti’s Gift: Economy, Society, and Environment in Central Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); David M. Gordon, *Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012); Miles Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia: Labour and Political Change in Post-Colonial Africa* (London, I.B. Taurus, 2007); Giacomo Macola, *The Kingdom of Kazembe: History and Politics in North-Eastern Zambia and Katanga to 1950* (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 2002) & Giacomo Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa: A Biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

made subject to the domination of the nationalist project and, associated with this project, the overriding interest of Development. Histories of Zambia, in particular those completed in the post-colonial period, were primarily concerned with showing up the inequities of colonial rule and the seemingly linear development of all strands of society towards the nation state: Zambia. That is, history, in and of itself, did not exist in Zambia; instead it was consistently interpreted and viewed from within the paradigms of the Zambian nation-state and development theory.

Throughout the more than 50 years of independence Zambia's elite has sought to emphasise and maintain the idea and ideal of 'One Zambia One Nation', and this has been reflected in the historiography.²⁰ Indeed, it is the idea of One Zambia One Nation that appears to be the lasting legacy of UNIP (United National Independence Party), a legacy that remains and provides continued stability in an otherwise turbulent region. Yet since 2000 a new historiography has developed unfettered by the constraints of UNIP Nationalist Historiography.²¹ A historiography, which is not only post-colonial but also post-nationalist. No longer does research conducted on aspects of Zambia's history need to be constrained by the demands of the nationalist paradigm; instead Zambian history is literally at a new frontier. Effectively for the first time since independence it has become possible for historians to conduct research on aspects of Zambia's past that, to all intents and purposes, had been considered somehow improper and out of bounds. In the present, research into the history of motor-vehicles, UPP, Mushala, birds, or any other controversial aspect of Zambia's past no longer carries the implicit baggage of being inappropriate, or topics of research that by definition demanded a specific approach and the taking up of a specific politically acceptable position. The effective liberalisation, for want of a better term, of Zambian history has heralded a new dawn.

As with so much academic endeavour in Zambia, professional history writing can be said to have begun with the Rhodes Livingstone Institute, in particular with the work of Lewis Henry Gann.²² Generally dismissed as an apologist for

²⁰ In itself, this is hardly surprising given the example of what happened in Congo DRC, where dissension and strife literally tore the country asunder and triggered a series of civil wars.

²¹ Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar & Giacomo Macola, eds, *One Zambia, Many Histories: Towards a History of Post-Colonial Zambia* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

²² Particularly important in the context of this book, which initially began life as a study in the social history of transport in Zambia, is Gann's observation in other work, writing about sources in Northern Rhodesian history, in which he throws in an aside on copper development in colonial Zambia:

'The new development led to a tremendous influx of new capital, which was accompanied by profound social and economic changes. One of the most important of these concerned transportation. Originally transport had largely depended on African carriers and later on bicycles, rickshaws, and donkey carts. Ox-waggons, which played so important a part in opening up the south, could not be employed on a large scale north of the Zambesi because of the existence of extensive 'fly' belts, with fluctuating boundaries. Between 1904 and 1909 a railway was built from

colonial rule, Gann's work was solidly based on local source material and took on a position that was often at odds with the British Colonial Office and in sympathy with the white settlers of Rhodesia.²³ Qualified to speak, even if tongue in cheek, was the man who initially commissioned Gann to work for the RLI, Max Gluckmann, who noted that Gann's *The Birth of a Plural Society* was 'in several ways a pioneer study'. Writing of the expectations of himself and fellow researchers at the RLI, Gluckmann was honest enough to write:

I suppose that we anthropologists were no more egotistical than most people when we planned to have an historian who would produce a study of the development of British Central Africa as a mere adjunct to our own researches. I, at least, was thinking of something like 'a schoolboy's history', in which we would learn the bare dates when various things happened in various parts of the country. It is probably not easy for scholars working in countries where at least the outline of events is easily accessible to realize how scattered were the historical facts about Central Africa.²⁴

Far from merely writing on the white side of colonial history, Gann provided historians and anthropologists alike with the first professional synthesis of Zambian history. A history which, by dint of his extensive association with the RLI, was extensively informed by anthropological and sociological theory, and far more than white man's history or a mere 'Schoolboy's History'.

Presumably on account of his experiences as a German refugee who had been caught up in the maelstrom of the excesses of the nation-state, Gann was never one for glowing recommendations and claims for the future.²⁵ For Gann the future was unwritten and unknown, a territory and space the contents of which could never be comfortably encompassed in glowing rhetoric. Thus, although the past could be approached and discussed with reasonable certainty, the future was problematic. It is most likely that it was his ever-present refusal to rejoice in the perceived inevitable joys of the Zambian future that led to his work being dismissed. In addition his brutally honest approach to much that he saw must have contributed to his dismissal. These strands, a refusal to rejoice in the future, as well as an untimely honesty, can be discerned in the closing paragraph of his *Birth of a Plural Society*:

the Victoria Falls to the Belgian Congo, but off the railway line communications remained entirely inadequate. The decisive change came with the introduction of the motorcar. By 1927 all Government stations were supplied with motor transport, and in 1929 the Great North Road was opened for cars, linking Fort Jameson with the remainder of Northern Rhodesia rather than Nyasaland. The drivers at this time were all Europeans'.

L.H. Gann, 'The "Northern Rhodesia Journal" as an Historical Source Book', in *Human Problems in British Central Africa*, The Rhodes Livingstone Journal, 23, 1958, p. 52.

²³ Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology*, p. 308, no. 8.

²⁴ Max Gluckman writing in the Foreword to L.H. Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society: The development of Northern Rhodesia under the British South Africa Company 1894-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), p. vii.

²⁵ See in this regard Gann's candid autobiographical article: L.H. Gann, 'Ex Africa: An Africanist's Intellectual Autobiography'. In: *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 31, 3 (1993), pp. 477-498.

... the seeds of potential struggles remain; and as the plural society of Northern Rhodesia forms part of a more extensive one, it is probable that these will ultimately be decided on an arena wider than a purely local one. ... The new society possessed means of unlocking wealth far beyond the imagination of the most enterprising Bantu chief; and the resources of even a backward colonial economy producing primary goods for the world market proved to be far greater than those of the most advanced tribal society. ... Within its [the plural society] framework a social and economic revolution was set off, the outcome of which none can as yet foresee.²⁶

Not surprisingly, published as it was at the beginning of Zambia's Nationalist struggles, on the eve of Ghanaian independence and allied to Rhodesia's settler elite, Gann's work was not well received in Zambia, let alone the newly emergent academic community of historians of African History. George Shepperson, a historian of sophistication in his own right, realised the merits of Gann's work and resisted its rejection, yet noted:

... that while Mr. Gann provides an excellent etching of the elements of European society in Northern Rhodesia, much of the detail is missing and there is little colour.²⁷

The desire to fill in, in full colour, the history of Africa was given impetus by the Leverhulme conference on 'Historians in Tropical Africa' held in Salisbury in September 1960, and the launch of the *Journal of African History* in the same year.²⁸

Terence Ranger, surely one of the leading voices in the then emergent community of African historians, was nevertheless capable of seeing the qualities of Gann and his skill as a historian. Writing of Gann's second book, *A History of Northern Rhodesia*,²⁹ Ranger noted that:

We can be sure that any volume produced to mark the tenth anniversary of Zambia will have very different emphasis from Mr Gann's. Let us hope that it will be as good as Mr Gann's book is within its chosen field. For here is no mere apologia for the defunct Federation or for its white Northern Rhodesian architects; no 'official' history.³⁰

However, Ranger's prediction turned out to be no more than wishful thinking, for in the years following Zambia's independence there were but two books that approached the quality and scope of Gann's work. Richard Hall's *Zambia*, published in 1965 immediately after Zambia's independence, attempted to provide the country with a national history, akin to the 'schoolboy history' requested by Gluckman.³¹ Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia*, although published more than thirty years ago, remains a classic for its clear writing style

²⁶ Gann, *Birth of a Plural Society*, p. 191.

²⁷ Shepperson, 'Literature of British Central Africa', p. 34.

²⁸ Terence Ranger, 'Concluding Remarks'. In: A.H.M. Kirk-Greene (editor), *The Emergence of African History at British Universities* (Oxford: Worldview Publications, 1995), p. 169.

²⁹ L.H. Gann, *A history of Northern Rhodesia, Early days to 1953* (London, 1964).

³⁰ T.O. Ranger, 'Introducing Zambia', review of L.H. Gann, *A history of Northern Rhodesia, Early days to 1953*. In: *Journal of African History*, 1964, pp. 455-6.

³¹ Richard Hall, *Zambia* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965).

and innovative content.³² Far from being a stodgy, ‘one damned thing after another’, Roberts sought to survey the whole span of human history in the territory that became Zambia in 1964, and, more importantly so, to explain history in Zambia, rather than of Zambia.

The Republic of Zambia is an amalgam of people thrown together within a country with borders determined in boardrooms in Europe. Thus, Zambia’s eastern border with Angola runs parallel to the 22 degree latitude and was approved by the King of Italy, and Zambia’s border with Congo DRC was agreed upon in Europe and given form on the ground by no less than three border commissions.³³ Given the diversity of the peoples living within the borders of Zambia, it is not surprising that there have not been many detailed national histories. By and large studies dealing with Zambian history have tended to concentrate on either the Lozi kingdom in the west of the country or the Bemba polities in the east.

In the first years after Zambian independence, the first truly Africanist histories of Zambia were completed by a number of historians as PhD theses, a number of which were later published as monographs. The work of Andrew Roberts, *A history of the Bemba*, began life as a PhD thesis accepted at the University of Wisconsin in 1966.³⁴ Similarly Henry Meebelo’s *Reaction to Colonialism* began life as a PhD thesis at the University of London.³⁵ Likewise Mutumba Mainga’s *Bulozi under the Luyana Kings*, developed out of a PhD thesis submitted at London University in 1969, and Gwyn Prins’s *The Hidden Hippopotamus* began life as a PhD thesis examined at Cambridge University.³⁶ Roberts and Meebelo described the first contacts with, and detailed the arrival of, representatives of British colonialism in northeastern Zambia. Mainga and Prins concentrated on western Zambia primarily prior to the arrival of British colonialism. Gerald Caplan, who like Prins and Mainga also worked on Bulozi, extended his *The Elites of Barotseland* through to 1969.³⁷

Robert Rotberg’s, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa*, was encyclopaedic in its scope, but was, as the title suggests, particularly interested in

³² Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (New York: Africana Publishing, 1976).

³³ John W. Donaldson, ‘Pillars and perspective: demarcation of the Belgian Congo-Northern Rhodesia boundary’, *Journal of Historical Geography* 34 (2008), pp. 471-493.

³⁴ Andrew Roberts, *A history of the Bemba: political growth and change in north-eastern Zambia before 1900* (Harlow: Longman, 1973).

³⁵ Henry S. Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism: A Prelude to the Politics of Independence in Northern Rhodesia 1893-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971).

³⁶ Mutumba Mainga, *Bulozi under the Luyana Kings: Political Evolution and State Formation in Pre-Colonial Zambia* (London: Longman, 1973) & Gwyn Prins, *The Hidden Hippopotamus: Reappraisal in African History: the early colonial experience in western Zambia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

³⁷ Gerald L. Caplan, *The Elites of Barotseland, 1878-1969: A Political History of Zambia’s Western Province* (London: Hurst Publishers, 1970)

the rise of nationalism, as opposed to the establishment of colonial rule.³⁸ Similar to Rotberg in scope, if not focus, is Karen Fields' *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa*, which focussed on the interplay between religion and social and political movements in Central Africa.³⁹ Published shortly before Fields is the work of Fergus Macpherson, *Anatomy of a Conquest*, which consciously focussed on dealing with the establishment of colonial rule in Zambia.⁴⁰ Unfortunately this book, which is solidly researched and contains a vast amount of material based on oral research, is undermined by the simple fact that Macpherson, in an attempt to bring across the undoubted inequities of colonial rule in Zambia, often draws on material that relates to events in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and includes this in the texts dealing with Northern Rhodesia (Zambia).⁴¹ Although, to be fair, the work of Macpherson is meticulously annotated, the reader is often second-guessing as to know where the historical events being described by Macpherson actually took place.

Thoroughly Zambian in origin and published nearly 30 years after independence, *Guardians in Their Time* is an anthology that sought to document Zambia's colonial history.⁴² Central to this publication was a contribution by Samuel Chipungu, erstwhile Head of Department of History at the University of Zambia, entitled 'Accumulation from within: The *Boma* class and the Native Treasury in colonial Zambia'. In this Chipungu sought to nuance the existing scholarship with regard to the role of African elites, who collaborated with colonial authorities in Zambia, and sought to discover how 'the structures of colonial administration actually worked'.⁴³ In particular, Chipungu described the development of a class of people who, through their association with the colonial administration, were able to expand their material, political, and social standing.

In all of these many and varied publications there is not one that explicitly asks itself the question as to how a comparatively small group of men actually came to establish colonial authority in Northern Rhodesia. This book does and seeks to discover and describe how colonial authority came to be established in a territory more than three times the size of Great Britain. A reading of the archives indicates clearly that the colonial state was established, not by conquest but in a series of initially symbiotic ad hoc relationships between the junior

³⁸ Robert I. Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965).

³⁹ Karen E. Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985)

⁴⁰ Fergus Macpherson, *Anatomy of a Conquest: The British Occupation of Zambia 1884-1924* (London: Longman, 1981).

⁴¹ See in particular, Macpherson, *Anatomy of a Conquest*, pp. 56, 106-7, 122, 154, 202-3, & 213.

⁴² S. Chipungu, ed., *Guardians in Their Time: Experiences of Zambians under Colonial Rule, 1890-1964* (London: Macmillan, 1992).

⁴³ Samuel N. Chipungu, 'Accumulation from within: the *Boma* class and the Native Treasury in colonial Zambia'. In: Chipungu, *Guardians in their Time*, p. 74.

representatives of the British South Africa Company and a varied and disparate arrangement of resident power brokers.⁴⁴ Understaffed, under-financed, and explicitly warned not to rock the boat, these men sought to come to an arrangement with local power elites. In this, this book develops the ideas of Killingray, Lonsdale, and others, who argue that colonial authority and colonial administrations derived much of their power through their dependency and collaboration with local power elites.⁴⁵ The break out of war in August 1914 provided these young colonial administrators, for the very first time in their careers, with the funding and authority that would allow them to consolidate their authority and overwhelm that of their African allies. In a process that began before the war, the BSAC officials were able, during the course of the war, to make local power elites indebted to, and dependent upon, the authority of the BSAC administration. In exchange for funding, drawn from the War Office and disbursed by the BSAC administrators, chiefs and headmen supplied military labour for the war effort, and in so doing bound themselves to the BSAC administration. That is, far from violent conquest, the colonial state came about through a long process, in which initially the colonial administrators had very little power but which by the end of World War One had switched to the advantage of the colonial administration. The incipient administration's insatiable demand for labour throughout the war, coupled with the administration's ability to pay for it, had as a corollary that African Chiefs and Headman were bound to the administration as they provided labour in exchange for money.

The coming of colonial rule

In itself, the formal imposition of colonial rule in the course of the 1880s in the territories that surround Zambia did little to change the patterns of trade and transport that had developed in central Africa.⁴⁶ None the less, as colonial states, Germany, Belgium, and Great Britain increasingly gained effective control of the

⁴⁴ See in this regard the papers of Theodore Williams, who was stationed as a junior administrative officer in Mwinilunga. Rhodes House, Oxford, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781. Williams (Theodore R.) Administrative Officer, Northern Rhodesia: Diaries, 1912-21. 3 Volumes; Letters home, 1912-24. 3 Volumes.

⁴⁵ David Killingray, 'The maintenance of law and order in British colonial Africa', *African Affairs*: (1986), vol. 85, no. 340, p. 411-437 & John Lonsdale, 'The conquest State of Kenya'. In: J.A. de Moor & H.L. Wesseling (editors), *Imperialism and war : essays on colonial wars in Asia and Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), pp. 87-120.

⁴⁶ David Gordon, 'Owners of the Land and Lunda Lords: Colonial Chiefs in the Borderlands of Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 34, 2 (2001), pp. 315-337 & 'Wearing Cloth, Wielding Guns: Consumption, Trade, and Politics in the South Central African Interior during the Nineteenth Century'. In: Robert Ross, Marja Hinfelaar & Iva Pesa (editors) *The objects of life in Central Africa : the history of consumption and social change, 1840-1980* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

territories under their rule; as borders and boundaries acquired an on-the-ground reality, and duties, taxes, and port duties were enforced, so too the trade routes (where the bulk of goods were transported by African labour and which crisscrossed the continent regardless of colonial boundaries) went into decline and collapsed. In the period 1885 to 1905 African trade collapsed as colonial rule was imposed, and new forms of export, extraction, and transaction were imposed – at times in a very direct and brutal manner. The examples of Garenganze and Hehe are cases in point.⁴⁷ In contrast to the Germans in German East Africa, the English in Southern Rhodesia, and the Belgians in the Congo Free State, the BSAC, by the time it sought to establish its authority, simply did not have the ability to enforce its wishes on the African populations of Northern Rhodesia.

On paper and in terms of international law, the British South Africa Company (BSAC) was formally awarded jurisdiction in 1891 over the territories that would later become Zambia. However, this was not the same as an on-the-ground presence of an administration capable of governing, let alone taxing, the territory and its inhabitants. Furthermore, by 1897 the BSAC was to all intents and purposes bankrupt following a series of ever more violent and hare-brained attempts at securing profits for its shareholders. The sacking of Bulawayo and Matabeleland in 1893, and the Jameson Raid of 1895, coupled with natural disasters and full-scale insurrection and war in Southern Rhodesia (contemporary Zimbabwe) stretched the company to its limit, and meant that it was effectively unable to extend, let alone exercise its authority in Northern Rhodesia. Scattered on the fringes of a territory that is nearly the size of Germany and France combined, the BSAC officials, if they wished to travel around the country that was formally under their jurisdiction, were, as long as they did not travel by rail, at least until 1914, always dependent on African labour and goodwill. Without African labour nothing moved in Northern Rhodesia, and labour had to be purchased at going market rates, at least until the establishment of motorable roads and the wholesale introduction of petrol-driven motor vehicles after World War One.⁴⁸ The manner in which the colonial state gained effective on the ground control of the territories that would later make up the Republic of Zambia is the subject of this book.

⁴⁷ Jan-Bart Gewald, 'More than Red Rubber and figures alone: a critical appraisal of the Memory of the Congo exhibition at the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*: (2006), vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 471-486 & 'Colonial warfare: Hehe and World War I, the wars besides Maji Maji in south-western Tanzania', *African Historical Review*: (2008), vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 1-27.

⁴⁸ Jan-Bart Gewald, 'People, Mines and Cars'.

Structure of the book

The paper-thin administration and the men within it are discussed in Chapter One. The handful of men initially appointed to administer Northern Rhodesia were largely incapable of transforming the territory and its peoples into something that was in keeping with their envisaged ideal type of a colonial state.⁴⁹ The men recruited to administer the territory, drawn as they were, on the one hand, from BSAC mercenary units and, on the other, from English public schools and Oxbridge, differed substantially as to how this should be done. In some instances BSAC officials were capable of establishing a measure of influence and of living successful lives in calm districts with the backing of local authorities and people, and yet in other instances BSAC officials found themselves completely ostracised from society and living the lonely lives of paupers surviving on tinned food and waiting for relief.

Symbolic of the BSAC administrators' inability to control and administer the territory formally under their jurisdiction was their inability to enforce the ban on slash and burn agriculture, which is discussed in the second part of Chapter One. *Chitemene* agriculture allowed people to make a living as agriculturalists on the sparse soils of Northern Rhodesia.⁵⁰ However, this form of agriculture, by its very nature, dictated that people moved from place to place as soils were exhausted and new stands established. Not surprisingly this was anathema to an administration that sought to control and tax its subjects. Shortly after the formal introduction of taxation in a number of districts around 1903, district officials sought to end *chitemene* agriculture, ostensibly to protect the environment and ensure the conservation of natural resources. It was however the desire by the incoming administration to effectively tax its subjects that caused it to attempt to prohibit a system of agriculture that dictated the continual movement of people. Although the administration sought to enforce the ban, they were unable to do so until after World War One.

The formal establishment of BSAC colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia in 1891, in the wake of the company's failure to acquire the fabulously rich copper mines of Katanga in southern Congo, coupled with the ending of the long-distance caravan trade, heralded a new economic order in the region. The consequences of this new economic order are discussed in Chapter Two. The development of the mines in Katanga had an enormous impact on the societies living within the Northern Rhodesian territories that bordered Katanga. Sparsely

⁴⁹ James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁵⁰ Moore, H.L. & M.A. Vaughan, 'Cutting Down Trees'.

populated, in part on account of the extremely high concentration of copper sulphides in the soils, Katanga could not in and of itself supply sufficient labour, let alone foodstuffs for the mines being established. As such, the bulk of the labour used to establish and develop the mines of Katanga was drawn from Northern Rhodesia. In addition, the railroad, which linked the mines of Katanga to the Wankie coalfields in Southern Rhodesia and the harbours of South Africa, was built with Northern Rhodesian labour.

Although the Katangese copper mines relied on Wankie coal to power their steam driven machines, the mines were consistently desperately short of labour in the first twenty years of their existence. To supply sufficient labour to the Katangese mines, labour recruiters, such as Macdonald of the African Lakes Corporation ALC, played a major role, not only in recruiting labour, but also in enforcing BSAC legislation in the absence of any BSAC administrators. That is, in their desire to supply labour to the Katangese mines, labour recruiters recognised and submitted to BSAC jurisdiction, and in turn enforced BSAC legislation upon those whom they recruited for labour in Katanga from what was formally Northern Rhodesia. That labour-recruiting companies, such as the ALC and the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB), acted as cats-paws for the BSAC administration is well illustrated by the role played by these companies in enforcing the BSAC's wishes during the sleeping sickness epidemic that began spreading through parts of the territory after 1906. In the absence of an extensive on the ground presence in Northern Rhodesia, BSAC administration was usually not present and often carried out by others acting on behalf of the BSAC.

In 1911, when Northeastern Rhodesia and Northwestern Rhodesia were wedded into a single administrative unit administered from Livingstone, the writ of the BSAC was at best patchy and largely limited to the railway line that ran from Livingstone through to Sakanian on the border of Katanga. Beyond the railway lines, there were administrative posts that were at least nine days walking from the railhead. However, since at least 1900, and in some instances long before, labourers had been migrating from all districts of Northern Rhodesia and on to the mines, cities, and farms of Katanga, Southern Rhodesia, and South Africa. Strictly speaking these people were subject to the BSAC administration, but more often than not they existed beyond its ken.

The outbreak of World War One radically transformed Northern Rhodesia, and allowed the BSAC to establish colonial rule in the territory. Chapters Three, Four, and Five describe the manner in which, between 1914 and 1918 the BSAC established an effective on the ground presence that affected the daily lives of all people in Northern Rhodesia. In the years of the war, the various communities and cultures that made up the societies of Northern Rhodesia were thrown together by the war and forced to submit to the dictates of the British. During the

war, hundreds of thousands of men and women were recruited – and dragooned – throughout the whole of Northern Rhodesia into working as carriers in support of the British war effort. Thus men recruited in the far West of Buloziland could find themselves working together with men recruited in the Bangweulu Swamps as they transported foodstuffs grown by people in Kafue through the Congo pedicle for carriers operating out of Kasama who had been recruited from the Luangwa Valley.

Initially the incipient administration sought to hide the war from its subjects, yet, as Chapter Three indicates, the needs of war almost immediately made it imperative for the British authorities to involve the people of Northern Rhodesia in their war effort. Without the assistance of countless thousands of largely unnamed and unknown Northern Rhodesian men, women, and children conscripted into the British war effort, it would not have been possible for Britain to have defended the borders of Northern Rhodesia, let alone launch an invasion of neighbouring German East Africa. In order to succeed in its war effort in East Africa the British Empire needed and subsequently acquired the labour power of the people of Northern Rhodesia and thus established effective colonial rule in the territory.

With a frontline that existed at no less than 1000 kilometres from the nearest railway line under their control, the British were faced with a logistical nightmare: how to get sufficient troops and supplies to the front in the absence of any other form of transport other than human portage. This necessitated the mass recruitment of portage labour throughout Northern Rhodesia. Labour was recruited through the intercession of chiefs and headmen who, in exchange for porters delivered, received rewards in the form of cash payments, firearms, and support in their struggles with rivals and subjects. In the quid pro quo relationship that developed, Northern Rhodesian chiefs and headmen became increasingly dependent upon the British administration for their political survival. In exchange for labour supplied to the British, chiefs and headmen received goods, favours, and powers that could be re-distributed to subjects, and, at the same time, unwittingly chiefs and headmen lost their independence to the British.

By 1915, northeastern Northern Rhodesia was devastated by war and much of the country wracked by famine. It became impossible to transport sufficient supplies by portage to successfully conduct the war. Chapter Four discusses and describes what the implications of this were for the people and societies of northeastern Northern Rhodesia. In addition the chapter illustrates what the consequences were of a failed trust in industrial technology on the part of British military authorities. With the collapse of portage in Northern Rhodesia, military planners came up with innovative forms of transport, one of which consisted in

the mass hiring of a flotilla of canoes and paddlers from the Chambeshi, Bangweulu, and Luapula river systems. In exchange for cash money, BaTwa boatmen living in the Bangweulu swamps allowed themselves to be recruited en masse to transport war supplies from Kabunda on the Luapula River through the Bangweulu swamps and on to a staging post on the Chambeshi River just to the south of Kasama. Interestingly the mass mobilisation of the Batwa in exchange for cash was only for the duration of the war, where after they withdrew once again into the sanctuary of the swamps where they successfully evaded taxation by the colonial state.

In the absence of human portage and with access to limitless funding, British war planners sought to overcome the problems of transport by turning to new forms of technology. In the event, although Africa was at this stage at the cutting edge of technology, the equipment deployed did not live up to expectations. Instead of freeing up labour and being able to operate independently of human portage, both steam and petrol-driven motor vehicles continued to be reliant on extensive inputs of human labour. Thus, steam traction engines deployed in southern Congo required thousands of labourers for road and bridge building, as well as fuel and water transport. Similarly, petrol-driven motor vehicles deployed in Northern Rhodesia between Broken Hill and the frontline at Abercorn and Fife were inordinately expensive and required enormous labour inputs for road and bridge building. In addition fuel for the motor vehicles had to be transported by portage and canoe to fuel depots along the route. The petrol-driven motor vehicles did have one comparative advantage, though, and that was that they were fast. Tours by visiting commissioners could be completed in as many weeks as it had previously taken in months.

The incessant demand for food and labour on the part of the incipient colonial state between 1914 and 1918 had long-term transformative implications for the societies and cultures of Northern Rhodesia. Chapter Five discusses what the implications were of the continual demand for foodstuffs, coupled to the unending recruitment of labour to transport these foodstuffs, that led to a collapse in food production in large parts of Northern Rhodesia. The recruitment of young people in the prime of their lives meant that labour was no longer available to bring new areas under cultivation, and the soils already under cultivation became exhausted. In addition, the absence of labour precluded the production of labour intensive crops such as maize, millet, and sorghum, which were staple foodstuffs across much of Northern Rhodesia at the time. Along the railway line and in wide swathes along the transport routes to the frontline, food was hard to come by as ever-hungry carriers and military commissars scoured the land for food. By the middle of 1915 famine reigned in much of Northern Rhodesia, and the

colonial administration began distributing food relief, but only in exchange for labour for the war effort.⁵¹

To people in parts of Northern Rhodesia who were living close to the frontline for four years and later overrun by German forces in late 1918, it must have seemed as if the end of the world was at hand. This was particularly so when in late 1918 and early 1919 the global Spanish Influenza pandemic ravaged the population of Northern Rhodesia. In its aftermath young men and women, many of whom had served as frontline carriers in the war, began preaching an apocalyptic vision of the world: a world in which the end of time was nigh and Jesus Christ would arrive to save the righteous and expel the English. Unfortunately for the believers, the end of time had not arrived and Jesus Christ had not returned to earth to save the righteous, instead, in the four years of total war in East Africa, British colonial rule had come to be firmly established in Northern Rhodesia. Arrested and in chains the believers were summarily judged and marched into captivity. Henceforth the people of Northern Rhodesia were unable to determine their own destiny and were subjects of the British Crown till 1964, when the territory was awarded its political independence as the Republic of Zambia.

In contrast to the work of Yorke, who argues that the colonial state was threatened and nearly collapsed during the course of the war, this book argues instead that it was precisely on account of the war, and in particular the limitless funding made available to the BSAC by the War Office during the course of the war, that the BSAC was able to establish an effective administration in Northern Rhodesia.⁵² This book argues that, although the territories that would make up Zambia had officially become British in 1891, this did not equate to an on-the-ground presence of colonial authority capable of affecting the daily lives of people, let alone determining their destinies. The establishment of effective colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia only came about on account of the unique conditions that developed in World War One, conditions which necessitated the massive application of human labour, which could only be effectively obtained through purchase, which in effect bound Chiefs and Headmen to the incipient colonial administration. World War One did not weaken the colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia, instead it provided the BSAC with an opportunity to extend and impress its authority across the territory.

⁵¹ In effect this merely exacerbated the already difficult situation, as ever-more labour was withdrawn from the agricultural cycle.

⁵² Yorke, *Britain, Northern Rhodesia and the First World War* & 'A Crisis of Colonial Control'.

A tissue-thin paper administration

Introduction

In 1891, the British South Africa Company (BSAC) of Cecil John Rhodes secured an Order in Council that legally extended the company's Royal Charter to the territories that currently make up the Republic of Zambia. However, when the BSAC acquired formal jurisdiction over what is today Zambia, this did not equate to effective on-the-ground control and government of the territory and its people. On paper Zambia may have fallen into the hands of the BSAC, yet in the first instance the company did not even have a permanent presence in the territory, let alone the means to control and administer it. Added to this, the territory was split into two separate administrative entities, Northwestern and Northeastern Rhodesia, which were only amalgamated in 1911, twenty years after the initial Order in Council.

The following chapter deals with the nature of the weak colonial state as it was established in colonial Zambia between 1891 and 1914. In these years the colonial state existed primarily on paper, with an administration that was staffed by a mere handful of men who were consistently constrained in terms of spending. It was, in effect, no more than a paper tiger, a Potemkin village, created and maintained for the purpose of seeing off other claimants and maintaining a claim in terms of international law to the territories that would make up Northern Rhodesia. The sole military action, the Ngoni campaign of 1898, although it would come to be the cause celebre of colonial conquest, was initiated and prosecuted by forces from Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, with the Northern Rhodesian administrations left facing a *fait accompli*. The ramshackle nature of the BSAC administration in Northern Rhodesia is further indicated by the fact that until 1911 the territory was administered by two separate administrations, the officials of which were as alike as chalk and cheese.

By focussing on the issue of *chitemene* (slash and burn) agriculture, the chapter details and discusses the failure of the colonial administration to enforce its will on the people of Zambia prior to 1914, and illustrates the weakness of the colonial state as it existed in colonial Zambia between 1891 and 1914. The colonial administration, as it came to be established in Northern Rhodesia between 1891 and 1914, was far from being an unstoppable, overwhelming, and all-encompassing juggernaut that thundered over Zambia capable of demanding and enforcing subjection to the whim and will of the colonial state.

The weak colonial state

The bulk of the archival evidence of the BSAC administration in Zambia is to be found in the form of two archival holdings consisting of flimsy tissue-thin carbon copies of letters and formal documents.¹ Through the years the paper, which was not very robust to begin with, has begun to crumble into dust and disappear. In this, the archival record reflects the condition of the BSAC administration in Zambia in the first twenty years of its jurisdiction between 1891, when its authority was extended to Northeastern and Northwestern Rhodesia, and 1911, when the territories were amalgamated and Northern Rhodesia was established; flimsy, tissue-thin, and ultimately ephemeral.

For the first ten years the colonial presence, let alone administration, was weak and patchy, and present only in a handful of posts scattered around the territory. Added to which, landlocked in central Africa, Northern Rhodesia was in effect, in the eloquent words of Andrew Roberts:

...simply an awkwardly shaped piece of debris resulting from Rhodes's failure to obtain Katanga. The [British South Africa] Company now found itself committed to ruling what amounted to not one but two huge and sprawling territories: one in the west, with communications running south, and the other in the east, with communications running further east, to Nyasaland.²

In Northwestern Rhodesia there was no formal BSAC presence until 1897 when Robert Coryndon arrived to take up a position as Resident at the court of the Lozi King Lewanika in Lealui.³ In Northeastern Rhodesia three small company posts were established at Lake Mweru, Abercorn (Mbala), and Fort Rosebery (Mansa). Where, as Gann noted, "No taxes, ..., were levied, no important tribe (sic!) was subdued, and nothing serious was done to check the depredations of Arab slave traders."⁴ The presence of a handful of posts served more to shield the territory

¹ National Archives of Zambia (NAZ), BSAC 1 and BSAC 2. Thankfully, due to the sterling efforts of the staff of the National Archives and Dr. Marja Hinfelaar, the BSAC administration files appear to have been saved for posterity by having been digitalized.

² Roberts, *History of Zambia*, p. 175.

³ Prins, *Hidden Hippopotamus*, pp. 234-6.

⁴ Gann, *Birth of a Plural Society*, p. 61.

from the unwanted claims of other colonial powers than that it actually administered the land and its peoples.⁵ Sir Harry Johnston, founder of the Nyasaland Protectorate, is said to have drawn a map in 1890:

... of what he called British Central Africa studded with towns and a magnificent system of railways. A little note in very small print in the corner of the map pointed out that both towns and railways were “projected”. ... The impression was given to ... rival empire builders that Rhodes was already effectively occupying vast areas of what is now Northern Rhodesia.⁶

Similarly Cecil John Rhodes is said to have stated, “They (the British Government) will never cede (to the Germans) places called after the relatives of the Royal Family.”⁷ As a consequence. “Forts like Abercorn and Fife, right on the border of Tanganyika, were named after two Dukes who were directors of the British South Africa Company.”⁸ The same could be said of Fort Rosebery, named as it was after Lord Rosebery, the Prime Minister of Great Britain at the time.

Around 1900 administrators appointed by the BSAC began establishing administrative centres in the territories of Northwestern Rhodesia, operating from Kalomo, and Northeastern Rhodesia, operating from Fort Jameson (Chipata). However, in contrast to the Germans in German East Africa, the BSAC by 1900 no longer had the same ruthless ability to arm and deploy armies, as it had done with disastrous results in Southern Rhodesia. This was due to the simple fact that by 1897, six years after the Order in Council, the BSAC had to all intents and purposes bankrupted itself in a series of wars, skirmishes, and natural disasters in Southern Rhodesia. After establishing a presence in Southern Rhodesia through the building of a series of military forts in 1890, the dream of Cecil John Rhodes and his shareholders in the BSAC of finding a second Witwatersrand in Southern Rhodesia had failed to materialise. In the absence of spectacular mineral finds, the BSAC had begun to lash out around itself in ever more violent and hare-brained attempts at securing profits for its shareholders. In 1893 BSAC forces had overrun the Matabele kingdom and burnt its capital, Bulawayo, to the ground. In 1895 BSAC forces under the command of Leander Starr Jameson had failed in their attempt to invade and take over the South African Republic. In March 1896 the *rinderpest* epizootic had crossed the Zambezi and destroyed up to 80 % of Southern Rhodesia’s cattle herds. In the same month the *Chimurenga*, a war that soon spread across the whole of Southern Rhodesia, began and necessitated the direct intervention of the British Government in support of the

⁵ A point emphasised by Bruce Fetter, *Colonial Rule and Regional Imbalance in Colonial Africa* (Boulder, 1983), pp. 85-87.

⁶ Brelsford, *Generation of Men: the European Pioneers of Northern Rhodesia*, (Salisbury, Rhodesia: Stuart Manning Pty Ltd, 1965), p. 36.

⁷ Brelsford, *Generation of Men*, p. 36.

⁸ Brelsford, *Generation of Men*, p. 36.

BSAC. All of this meant that there was an effective cap on BSAC spending and a strong willingness on the part of the British Government to curtail the activities of the BSAC.⁹

The Ngoni Campaign

The thoroughly over-stretched nature of the BSAC administration in Northern Rhodesia is indicated by the reluctance of the BSAC to engage in any form of action that might not so much endanger its position in Northern Rhodesia as cost it money. As a consequence, when Collector John M. Bell wrote to the BSAC Administration with the request for a maxim gun, as he anticipated a “troublesome time with the Awemba this dry season”, he was advised to come to a negotiated settlement or stand down, but above all to avoid conflict.¹⁰ The *Chimurenga* that commenced in Southern Rhodesia in March 1896 ensured that, “for the best part of a year, while white lives were in peril in the south, there could be no question of the BSAC undertaking military campaigns eight hundred miles further north”.¹¹ The limited nature of the BSAC administration in Northern Rhodesia prior to 1914 is further indicated by the fact that the single full-scale military conflagration in the territory before 1914, the Ngoni War of 1898, was fought with troops drawn from The Nyasaland Protectorate and Southern Rhodesia. A contemporary observer who served in Northern Rhodesia noted that the war “arose over a highly strung official mistaking an ordinary Native dance [first fruits ceremony] for an act of hostility towards the Administration”.¹² Unwittingly in the aftermath of the war the Ngoni became the cause celebre of Zambian history, referred to by many who wished to emphasise the violent nature of conquest in Northern Rhodesia.¹³ A reading of the archival material, bereft of its bravura and jingoism, indicates that the war was little more than a murderous cattle raid initiated by settlers in Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia, who wished to drive the Ngoni off their lands and acquire Ngoni cattle and labour for their own plantations.¹⁴ The war was not initiated by the Deputy Administrator for Northeastern Rhodesia stationed in Zomba, let alone part of an

⁹ See Terence Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-7: A Study in African Resistance* (London: Heinemann, 1967) & Julian Cobbing, ‘The Absent Priesthood: Another Look at the Rhodesian Risings of 1896-7’ *Journal of African History*, Vol. xviii, No. 1, 1977.

¹⁰ NAZ, BS1/1 1896 Collector Chambezi District (2 files) Ikawa collector to administrator Blantyre reporting on various subjects: Arab slavetrade. A1/1/1 Ikawa 24/4/96 John M. Bell to the Administrator for Northern Rhodesia Blantyre.

¹¹ Roberts, *History of the Bemba*, p. 258.

¹² Colin Harding, cited in Barnes, *Politics in a Changing Society*, p. 93.

¹³ Macpherson, *Anatomy of Conquest & Chipungu, Guardians in Their Time*.

¹⁴ Livingstone Museum Archives (LMA), Accession 18, Copy by E.H. Lane-Poole of correspondence relating to the North Charterland Exploration Company (East Luangwa District) 1896. Also relating to the Angoni Rising 1897-1898.

elaborate plan for the final subjugation of Northern Rhodesia orchestrated by the BSAC Board of directors in London. The Fort Jameson (Chipata) District Notebook draws to the fore the farcical nature of the war:

It was not long before the Angoni began to show signs of insolence and the residents at Fort Young alarmed, applied to the protectorate for an armed force. Troops were despatched from Zomba...It was evident however that it was not the intention of the Angoni to make war upon armed troops and upon the arrival of the latter the situation ended in little more than a fiasco. Little or no resistance was offered. A few casualties occurred among the followers of Singu but none among the troops ... All the cattle in the country were confiscated. 1500 were sent down to Salisbury under Major van Niekerk and a large quantity were availed by the Armed forces. Of the remainder a certain number were kept in the country by the administration and the NC Coy but the majority were returned to the Angoni. There remained some thousands unaccounted for many of which were doubtless trampled to death owing to the bad herding by the troops.

The immediate consequence of the suppression of the Angoni was the occupation of their country by the Administration of N.E. Rhodesia. ... Singu was summarily shot, ...

A station and military post were established.¹⁵

The District Notebook indicates the wanton violence and rapacious greed of the BSAC mercenaries deployed in the war, an issue that is echoed, even if it is presented in the euphemistic language of a sports event, in the telegrams sent by the attacking forces to the Acting Administrator in Southern Rhodesia:

Weise and party relieved by Capt. Brake. Angoni made poor stand. About 20 killed by maxims. Impis reported broken up and retired to hills, being followed up. Full details not yet to hand.¹⁶

A contemporary report sent in from the scene of the battle stated:

There appeared to be several impis advancing to surround the Fort [Young] in lines. The seven pounders and maxims opened fire. The troops charged, the Angoni broke and fled. They were followed up for some miles and completely dispersed, losing 50 men killed and many wounded. Several of the dead and wounded were carried off. Singu's village and neighbouring villages were burnt.¹⁷

In the event, the Ngoni living in Northern Rhodesia were routed, driven off their land and robbed of their cattle.

There can be no doubt that Ngoni society as a whole was devastated physically and morally by the campaign. When John Barnes conducted his research among the Ngoni fifty years after the event, the impact of the war was such that informants inevitably saw and used the war as a point of departure whenever discussing social aspects of Ngoni life with the anthropologist. Yet, although Ngoni society was most certainly thoroughly affected and transformed by the war, the fact of the matter remains that for the majority of people living in

¹⁵ NAZ, KDG 5/1 Volume 1 Chipata District Note Book, Fort Jameson Vol I, verso 2.

¹⁶ LMA, Acc. 18, folio 17.

¹⁷ LMA, Acc. 18, folio 18.

Northern Rhodesia the incipient colonial presence went largely unnoticed until 1914.

BSAC administrators

In the first twenty years of BSAC administration in Northern Rhodesia, its district officials worked in isolated stations, usually over-stretched, frequently subject to disease, and largely left to their own devices. Upon the establishment of Northern Rhodesia in 1911, there were one hundred and sixteen administrative officers in the territory, roughly one officer for every 6,500 square kilometres.¹⁸ Spread around the enormous territory, these men were separated from one another, as well as from the railway line, by extensive distances. In 1913 Henri Rolin 'remarked that the average size of the nine large Districts of Northern Rhodesia was [each] two-and-one-half times that of Belgium'.¹⁹ In conditions such as these, the young men who were initially stationed in Northern Rhodesia had to be not only self-sufficient but also, more particularly, able to get along with the people amongst whom they were stationed.

In an article dealing with the sociology of imperialism, Tony Kirk-Greene has written of the crème de la crème of the Empire's administrators, the members of the Sudan Political Service: the legendary 'Blues who ruled the Blacks'.²⁰ Selected primarily from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and second to none, except possibly the Indian Civil Service, the gentlemen of the SPS were truly remarkable in terms of academic and athletic prowess.²¹ Kirk-Greene categorised and analysed the men who were successfully recruited into the SPS and noted, amongst other things, that:

History was the principal subject read ..., followed by classics ...- the Secretariat and district correspondence files are littered with Latin tags and an unusually high standard of doggerel and humorous verse obtained, including telegrams sent in rhyme. If there were such a creature as the average SPS man, he was likely to have had a Second ... from Oxford (plus a Blue, of course).²²

In contrast to the intellectual and sporting prowess of the gentlemen of the Sudan Political Service, the men who came to be employed by the BSAC in Northern Rhodesia were lesser mortals of a different calibre. Whereas the SPS recruited

¹⁸ Pressor Gifford, *The Framework for a Nation: An Economic and Social History of Northern Rhodesia From 1914 to 1939*, PhD thesis, Yale University, 1964, p. 135-6. Present day Zambia is 752,614 km², divided by 116 administrative officers, equals 6488.0517 km² per officer.

¹⁹ Gifford, p. 135, citing Henri Rolin, *Les Lois et l'Administration de la Rhodésie* (Bruxelles et Paris), 94.

²⁰ A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, 'The Sudan Political Service: A Profile in the Sociology of Imperialism', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1982), pp. 21-48.

²¹ See for example Wilfred Thesiger who served in the SPS, educated at Eton College and Oxford University, where he was awarded a boxing Blue for each of the four years that he was at Oxford.

²² Kirk-Greene, *Sudan Political Service*, p. 37.

primarily on the basis of academic excellence and athletic prowess, the BSAC was less particular in its selection of men for service in Northern Rhodesia.

In the initial years of BSAC administration north of the Zambezi, those appointed were a varied, not to say motley, collection of men who may have contributed greatly to the anecdotal readability of Brelsford's *Generation of Men*, but were certainly no match to the academic potential of SPS administrators. Indeed in the first twenty years of its administration, the BSAC relied on an assortment of freebooters and filibusters, some of whom were warlords who had established fiefdoms of their own. One such man was Harrison Clark, otherwise known as *Changa Changa*, who fielded an army of his own and made a living out of raiding and taxing long-distance trading and slaving caravans between the Kafue River and the Luangwa River valley. Although he eventually submitted to BSAC rule, until the BSAC was able to establish its own presence, 'Clark was treated as though he had rights and the British South Africa Police at Sinoia were instructed not to patrol the northern bank of the Zambezi on account of Clark's presence there'.²³ Clark ended his life as a mine compound manager at Broken Hill, and his sobriquet *Changa Changa* continued to live on through into the 1960s as the name ascribed to mining compound managers throughout Zambia.²⁴

Less well-known than *Changa Changa*, but of the same ilk, was a man named Ziehl who was employed by the North Charterland Exploration Company, one of the multitude of companies associated with the BSAC, which had been awarded mineral and prospecting rights in all of the territory of the Ngoni chief Mpezini.²⁵ Although the NCEC had been awarded mineral and prospecting rights, Ziehl, as Harrison Clark had done before, established his own militia 'dressed them in Blue uniforms and armed them with sniders'.²⁶ This group of men collected taxes and raided until the BSAC formally established its authority in the district and Ziehl was arrested by the BSAC police. Ziehl was sentenced to a jail term of two years but immediately released 'as it is considered inconvenient to hold him'.²⁷ That the company was not overly bothered by Ziehl's activities can be gauged

²³ Brelsford, *Generation of Men*, p. 25.

²⁴ Brelsford, *Generation of Men*, p. 29. The District Notebook for Mkushi, reports that the term *Changa Changa* was given to those who had been to the mines. NAZ, KSM 4/1, Mkushi District Notebook, Vol. 1, folio 134.

²⁵ Barnes, *Politics in a Changing Society*, p. 78.

²⁶ NAZ, BS1/35 1899-1910, African Lakes Company Ltd., disturbance at Chinde, coal concessions, appointments, African Trans-continental Telegraph Ltd. North Charterland Exploration Co. Ltd. (A1/4/4/1), Sharpe, the residency in Zomba, 8th May 1899, to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

²⁷ NAZ, BS1/35 1899-1910 (A1/4/4/1), Sharpe, the residency in Zomba, 8th May 1899, to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

from the fact that following these events Ziehl established himself as a cattle trader selling to the BSAC.²⁸

Upon the establishment of Northern Rhodesia as a single administrative unit in 1911, the forms of administration in Northeastern and Northwestern Rhodesia differed substantially. In Northwestern Rhodesia, the BSAC had sought to administer the inhabitants and the territory assigned to it as it would a business with company assets that needed to turn a profit. Those employed within the administration were drawn 'from the ranks of the British South Africa Company Police, from the clerical service of Southern Rhodesia, from labour agencies, and they were mainly on contract'.²⁹ In contrast, in Northeastern Rhodesia a 'proper civil service with recruitment direct from England, often of university graduates', along with salary grades and possibilities for promotion had been established.³⁰ With the amalgamation of Northeastern and Northwestern Rhodesia in 1911, the system of administration as it had developed in Northeastern Rhodesia came to dominate, and with that the introduction of administrators drawn primarily from outside of southern Africa and often with a university degree. The historian Gann noted:

More emphasis was now placed on education, and from 1914 onwards the Administration attempted to engage University trained people only. The average Native Commissioner was no longer an ex-labour recruiter or a former police sergeant; he was the son of a barrister or a merchant who had learnt to play games at a public school, taken a 'Second' or a 'Third' at Oxford, or just failed to get through the 'Indian Civil'.³¹

The contrast in education that came to exist between the colonial officials in Northern Rhodesia and those in Southern Rhodesia became substantial:

Reading the District reports written in Northern Rhodesia after 1911, one is struck by the literate and straight-forward analysis of problems. Most of the younger men in Northern Rhodesia in the years immediately preceding the 1914-1918 war had been recruited from Oxford and Cambridge. As Englishmen and University graduates, they had a perspective different from that of Southern Rhodesian district officers, who were usually South African educated and frequently not University graduates.³²

One such university graduate, who as a new recruit considerably improved the academic qualities of the BSAC's administrators after 1912, was Theodore Williams (Trinity College, Oxford). The many letters of Theodore Williams,

²⁸ The most comprehensive material dealing with Ziehl is to be found in Jack Thomson, *Ngoni, Xhosa and Scot: Religious and Cultural Interaction in Malawi* (Zomba: Kachere Books, 2007), pp. 113-123.

²⁹ Brelsford, *Generation of Men*, p. 35.

³⁰ Brelsford, *Generation of Men*, p. 35.

³¹ Gann, *History of Northern Rhodesia*, p. 152.

³² Gifford, 'Framework for a Nation', p. 133. His analysis of the Civil Service Lists for Northern and Southern Rhodesia of 1921 are particularly interesting, not to say staggering. At the time Northern Rhodesia, with 39 university graduates, had the identical number of officers – 110 – in its District Administration as Southern Rhodesia had in its Native department, with merely 6 university graduates, p. 133, fn. 67.

indicate that in as far as his administrative contacts were concerned he operated within a world of fellow Oxbridge graduates. Williams arrived in Northern Rhodesia in 1912, and initially stayed with Judge Beaufort, who, as he wrote to his mother, ‘was at Queens in 1879’. In addition the other ‘Oxford men here of my time are Helm of Wadham,...Eccles of Worcester,...Lloyd of Magdalen,... [and] Cartmel Robinson of Merton’.³³ Williams first posting was to Mwinilunga, where he was subject to the Magistrate Solwezi, Frank Melland, ‘an old Merton man’.³⁴ At the end of his first tour in Mwinilunga, Williams walked to the railway line at Broken Hill where he ‘fed chiefly with Home, the probationer, a Magdalen man about 1 year junior to me – a great chorister’.³⁵ Similarly Williams makes mention of Latham A.N.C., ‘a Magdalen man 2 years senior to me’ and Vellacott A.N.C., ‘an Oriel man who went down the same year I went up’.³⁶

The ethos associated with public schooling and Oxbridge, of ‘playing the game’ and being a gentleman, is to be found in the archival legacy of these men and it is clear that it permeated through all aspects of their lives, both as administrators and people. Captain W.D. Downes, who was part of the Anglo-Portuguese Boundary Commission of 1913-1914, described the administrators of Northern Rhodesia in the following terms:

This is the land of the younger sons. How often have I heard it said, ‘my brother is in such and such a regiment’, or, ‘did you know my brother in the Navy’? The Rhodesian has not had much luck in examinations, but for the most part he is a good sportsman and a gentleman.³⁷

The following example taken from a letter by Williams to his mother, describing the execution of a man convicted of murder, neatly illustrates the point being made. In the letter Williams described the arrival of missionary Freshwater from Mbereshi at the Boma in Kawambwa:

... the main reason of his coming be to comfort a poor devil who was hanged on Saturday morning for murder – a native of course. Which thing I witnessed, and it impressed me greatly – he took it like a man. There were just the four of us – [Avery-] Jones, Reardon, Freshwater and myself, before sunrise, in an enclosure behind the gaol, and two messengers. That evening all the *bochras* [white men] except Duncan, who though a good chap is no

³³ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781. Letters Volume 1: 1912-1914 December 5th Friday 1912, Livingstone, My dear mother.

³⁴ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Letter addressed to Mrs. F.R. Williams, Charlton, Constant Spring P.O. Jamaica, via England, Kansanshi, Friday Jan 17 1913, My dear father. This is confirmed by RH, MSS. Afr. R. 192, Melland (Frank Hulme) Diary of life in north Eastern Rhodesia, 1901 – 43.

³⁵ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, 5 March 1915 Livingstone to My Dear Father.

³⁶ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Kawambwa, Monday May 24th 1915: My dear Mother & Mporokoso, June 1st 1915, My dear Father.

³⁷ LMA, Angola – Rhodesia. Anglo-Portugese [sic] Boundary Commission 1913-1914, W.D. Downes, 7th Feb. 1915.

society man, dined at [Avery-] Jones. ... Next day played golf. There are two very good hard courts too, and we have played every afternoon.³⁸

Williams, in line with ideas regarding the ideal behaviour of gentlemen in the face of mortal danger, notes that the executed prisoner ‘took it like a man’. Following the execution the white men dine together as gentleman, with the exception of Duncan, ‘a Glasgow man in charge of the A.L.C. store’, who, ‘though a good chap is no society man’.³⁹ On the day after the execution, the gentlemen relax and emphasise their different standing by playing golf and tennis.

The experience of public schooling, with its associated thrashings and sportsmanship, left a major impact on the administrators who came to be appointed in Northern Rhodesia. Essentially – and in this Northern Rhodesia was no different to other parts of the Empire – the Oxbridge administrators employed by the BSAC sought to govern Northern Rhodesia and deal with administrative issues in the manner that they had learnt as school prefects and sports captains at school.⁴⁰

Not surprisingly some of the seedier aspects of public schooling accompanied the men in their newfound vocation as administrators in Central Africa. Williams private comments in a letter to his father hints at this:

Vellacott is an Oxford man & all that and quite good company – so far as I know him up to date. His fondness for Mporokoso is a trifle unwholesome, and his conceit is unlimited. He was 3 years a schoolmaster at a private school between Oxford and Rhodesia, and the aura of

³⁸ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Kawambwa, Monday May 24th 1915: My dear Mother.

³⁹ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Kawambwa, Monday May 24th 1915: My dear Mother.

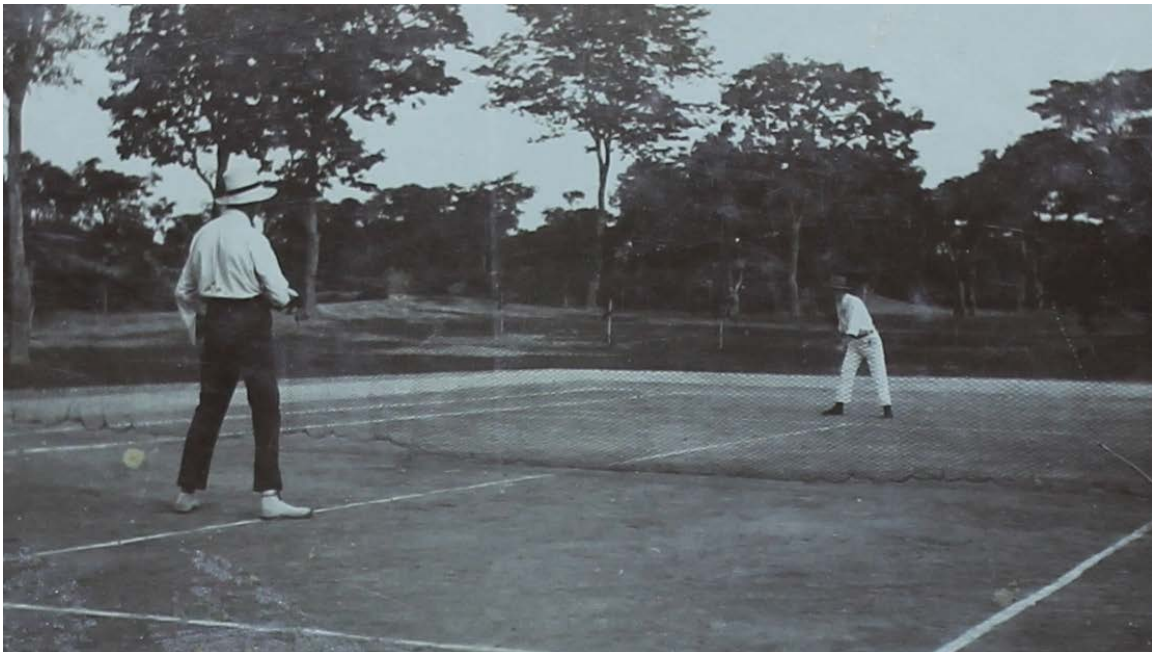
⁴⁰ The apocryphal quote attributed to the Duke of Wellington, ‘The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton’, was applied with equal vigour to the Empire as a whole. On the importance of the ethos of Cricket in the Empire see Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, empire, and the locations of identity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 149:

The playing fields of England
All up and down the land,
Where English boys play English games,
How bright and fair they stand!
‘Tis there in friendly rivalry
School meets with neighbouring school
And English boys all ‘play the game’
And learn to keep the rule.
There each one plays for side, not self,
And strength and skill employs,
On the playing-fields of England,
The Pride of English Boys.

As Baucom correctly remarks this schoolboy verse identifies ‘what cricket promises to accomplish for England: it will train the nation’s and the empire’s governing class to submit themselves to a deindividuating [sic] principal of rule, will define Englishness as a principle of sameness, and will clear a space of common belonging in which England can see itself repeated, unaltered, across time and space’. Baucom, *Out of Place*, p. 149.

a worshipping flock of nice little boys still clings around him and smells sweet in his nostrils.⁴¹

Photo 1.1 & 1.2 Cricket and Tennis at Fort Rosebery circa 1910.⁴²



⁴¹ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Mporokoso, 28 April 1916, My dear father.

⁴² LMA, H.G. Harrington photographic collection.

Similarly Frank Melland, initially appointed Assistant Native Commissioner, Mpika in 1902, showed a proclivity for thrashing his servants. In later years he became somewhat of a celebrity and specialist on the 'Native mind'.⁴³ A fellow administrator described Melland in 1923 as:

a native expert – an Anthropologist and humane idealist – to whom the native in general and the Native mind in particular is the single problem in this country viewed from the standpoint of eternity.⁴⁴

Melland started his career in Africa with some rather extreme views that owed much to his background, education, and being 'an old Merton man'.⁴⁵ Melland's initial comments on Africa and its inhabitants read like a pastiche of *Saunders of the River*, *Boys Own*, and some particularly sinister public school mores rolled into one.⁴⁶ In Africa, Melland soon found himself in conflict with his servants. In his diary Melland noted that he wished to 'thrash' his servant, Jonathan, with a whip, and gave him the choice of either a thrashing or no wages, noting rather disappointedly, 'of course the coward chose the fine ...though I'd like to have given him the thrashing'.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, on the following day Jonathan ran away, along with some other servants. In their place Melland appointed another man, 'He stayed three days and I choka'd [*chikota* whip] him: and about the 15th [September 1901] got in a good boy whom I hope will stay'.⁴⁸ It was not to be, and shortly after Melland dismissed this servant and sent him on his way with the words, 'if I catch you near the Boma after a quarter of an hour you'll get the Chikoti for your impertinence'.⁴⁹

The colonial administrators who sought to establish colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia, though not necessarily averse to physical sanction, were certainly not the trigger-happy, fist-throwing, lynching louts that had established BSAC

⁴³ NAZ, KSD 4/1 Vol. 1, Mpika District Note Book, 1901, & RH, MSS. Afr. R. 192, Melland (Frank Hulme) Diary of life in north Eastern Rhodesia, 1901-4 3 vols. In 1910 he and a 'chum', E.H. Cholmeley, cycled through Africa from Northern Rhodesia to Egypt whilst going on home leave, NAZ, HM 30 E.H. Cholmeley, CH/2/1, Book of photographs by Cholmeley who travelled through Africa in 1910. & Frank H. Melland & Edward H. Cholmeley, *Through The Heart of Africa: Being an Account of a Journey on Bicycles & on Foot from Northern Rhodesia Past the Great Lakes, to Egypt Undertaken When Proceeding Home on Leave in 1911* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1912).

⁴⁴ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, T.R. Williams, letter 7 June 1923, Chilanga, Native Commissioner's Office, My dear Mother.

⁴⁵ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, T.R. Williams, letter 7 June 1923, Chilanga, Native Commissioner's Office, My dear Mother.

⁴⁶ Jeffrey Richards, 'Boys Own Empire: Feature Films and Imperialism in the 1930s'. In: *'Boys' Own Empire' Imperialism and Popular Culture*. Ed. John M. Mackenzie. (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1986).

⁴⁷ RH, MSS. Afr. R. 192, p. 38.

⁴⁸ RH, MSS. Afr. R. 192, p. 38.

⁴⁹ RH, MSS. Afr. R. 192, 11 January 1902.

colonial rule in Southern Rhodesia.⁵⁰ Instead, following the amalgamation of Northern Rhodesia in 1911, they were university graduates who depended more on their ability to converse and convince than on an ability to lash and lynch. On the outer fringes of the Empire, often at many days walking from the nearest railway line and attempting to administer extensive tracts of land, the BSAC administrators in Northern Rhodesia were forced to rely on tact and not brawn.

Those administrators, who did resort to violence or failed to respect their subjects, more often than not found themselves on the receiving end as their actions boomeranged. The Mwinilunga District Notebook provides details of the activities of Native Commissioner, G.A. MacGregor (*Jackisoni*) and his assistant J.M. Pound (*Kusaloka*):

Mr MacGregor was a man of uncertain temper and his administration was not successful. It is generally agreed that he was excessively harsh with the natives, and was so feared that on more than one occasion he had to ask the assistance of the mission at Kalene Hill to recruit carriers to take him on tour. His police, messengers, and personal servants deserted, and a great number of Natives fled either into Angola or the Congo.⁵¹

Accounts of the disorganised state of affairs in Mwinilunga led to Major Hodson, of the Barotse Native Police (B.N.P), being sent up in June 1909 to enquire into Mr MacGregor's administration. To Hodson's surprise he found MacGregor and his assistant, Pound, doing their own cooking and washing their own pots and pans. In short, they had been left to their own devices and simply ignored by the local inhabitants. In the face of uncivilized behaviour, the inhabitants of Mwinilunga had sought to deal with MacGregor and Pound by placing a *Cordon Sanitaire* around the offending men. Subsequently both men were recalled, and Mr MacGregor's resignation asked for.⁵²

The limits to the extent of control that these early administrators could exert is well illustrated by the simple fact that in many instances they were simply unable to enforce their wishes, not only on the African population, but also on representatives of European trading companies operating within the territory. Thus in 1896 Collector Bell complained to his superiors that:

A person named Thomson, employed by the A.L.C. [African Lakes Corporation], declined to execute a verbal order I gave him for a few bolts & nuts for Hotchkiss gun.⁵³

⁵⁰ Although the work of Olive Schreiner was that of a novelist, her words do convey the unease and disquiet that contemporaries felt with what was going on in Southern Rhodesia. Olive Schreiner, *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1897). Unease and disquiet that is shared by academic historians in the present who work on the establishment of colonial rule in Zimbabwe. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia* & D.N. Beach, *War and Politics in Zimbabwe, 1840-1900* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1986).

⁵¹ NAZ, KSE 4/1 Mwinilunga District Note Book, folio 28.

⁵² NAZ, KSE 4/1 Mwinilunga District Note Book, folio 28.

⁵³ NAZ, A1/1/1, John M. Bell, Collector Chambezi District, at Ikawa 25th June 1896, to the Administrator for Northern Rhodesia, Blantyre.

Ten years later, the situation had not improved, and in 1906 the Civil Commissioner for Fife Division was forced to admit that the trade and tax returns, which he had submitted were incomplete, ‘as the A.L.C. agent at Fife objected to give returns’.⁵⁴ Although District officials may have wished to transform Northern Rhodesia and its peoples into something in keeping with their own ideals, the truth of the matter was that prior to 1914 they were largely powerless to do so.

The greatest domestic event, *Chitemene*⁵⁵

-**tema** (*temene*) v.t. to cut down or fell trees:
-*teme miti*, to lop trees for the gardens.⁵⁶

Symbolic of the BSAC administrators’ inability to control and administer the territory formally under their jurisdiction was their inability to enforce the ban on *chitemene*, slash and burn agriculture which allowed people to make a living as agriculturalists on the sparse soils of Northern Rhodesia.⁵⁷ This form of agriculture, by its very nature, dictated that people move from place to place as soils were exhausted and new stands established. Not surprisingly this was anathema to an administration that sought to control and tax its subjects.

Chitemene and *mitanda* (temporary villages at newly cleared fields) are part of a single agricultural complex that was rejected by BSAC colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia as an example of wasteful and primitive agriculture.⁵⁸ The inability of the colonial state to effectively stop *chitemene* and the settlement of *mitanda* prior to World War One shows up the limits of its power.

Beginning in 1901, taxation was introduced in a limited number of districts in Northeastern Rhodesia.⁵⁹ A few years after the formal introduction of taxation,

⁵⁴ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Notebook, vol. 2, p. 152.

⁵⁵ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Williams, Mporokoso, 14th April 1916, My Dear Father. [The] greatest domestic event, treecutting.

⁵⁶ *The White Fathers’ Bemba – English Dictionary* (London: Longmans 1954), p. 760.

⁵⁷ Vaughan & Moore, *Cutting Down Trees*.

⁵⁸ ‘In essence *chitemene* is an agricultural system in which trees are felled or pollarded and the felled wood collected and piled upon a patch of land (usually at a ratio of about one sixth of the area chopped) and then burnt. The fire destroys the seed of weeds and the resulting ash fertilizes the soil, reduces its acidity and raises its calcium levels. Shortly before the rains start small temporary housing (*mitanda*) is built at the newly established fields. Seed is sown at the commencement of rains and people move into the *mitanda* to oversee their gardens’. George Kay, *A Social Geography of Zambia: A survey of population patterns in a developing country* (London: University of London Press, 1967), pp. 53-6.

⁵⁹ The collection of tax varied from district to district. In the Mkushi District, ‘Hut tax was first collected in 1901 wholly in the form of labour used in constructing roads. In 1902 and 1903 coin was beginning to be known, and a certain amount of tax was paid in cash, but the greater part was still labour, large gangs being sent to Hwamboshi for Broken Hill lead and zinc mine development, and numbers being employed in [illegible] transport’. NAZ, KSM 4/1, Mkushi District Notebook, vol. 1, folio 5.

district officials sought to end *chitemene* agriculture, ostensibly to protect the environment and ensure the conservation of natural resources, but more particularly to facilitate the collection of taxes. Moore and Vaughan argue convincingly that:

[T]he primary motives for intervention were almost certainly the need to collect taxes in this sparsely populated area, and the larger problem of maintaining control. It was, in fact the building of seasonal dwellings (*mitanda*) in the *chitemene* fields, rather than the practice of *chitemene* itself, which was the original target.⁶⁰

Yet, as the work of Audrey Richards makes so abundantly clear, any attempted intervention by colonial administrators in banning *chitemene* and *mitanda* would touch at the very heart of society and was bound to be resisted.

Chitemene agriculture is an enormous subject of research in Zambian studies. At the time of the fieldwork by Audrey Richards in the 1930s it was already becoming clear to colonial administrators that *chitemene* agriculture was the most effective and appropriate form of agriculture, given the soils and bush cover of the plateau in Northeastern Zambia.⁶¹ The later work of Allan⁶² & Trapnell⁶³ confirmed this, or as Peters put it:

Under the conditions of climate, terrain and soils for which it was evolved by a people extremely poor in material resources but with a very large land area per head of the population the system is very efficient.⁶⁴

In her richly written account of Bemba society in the early 1930s, Audrey Richards demonstrated the central importance of *chitemene* agriculture to people in Northeastern Zambia at the time. In particular Richards illustrated the manner in which *chitemene* was central to chiefly authority and masculinity.⁶⁵ Richards, who was particularly interested in the economic organisation of Bemba society, saw *chitemene* as the central point around which the agricultural cycle was organised. In her extensive portrayal of 'the tree-cutting rite', Richards was able to convey the excitement and enthusiasm of the events she observed and subsequently described, and it is worth quoting her in extenso:

In old-fashioned villages the headman performs the tree-cutting ceremony with all the inhabitants of the village accompanying him. ... when he has decided to begin the clearing of the bush and fixed the site of his garden, [he] calls the elders of the village and his own

⁶⁰ Vaughan & Moore, *Cutting down Trees*, p. 13.

⁶¹ Audrey I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia: An economic Study of the Bemba Tribe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 289.

⁶² W. Allan, *Studies in African Land Usage in Northern Rhodesia*, The Rhodes-Livingstone papers number fifteen (London: Oxford University Press, 1949).

⁶³ C.G. Trapnell, *The Soils, Vegetation and Agriculture of North-Eastern Rhodesia* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1953).

⁶⁴ D.U. Peters, *Land Usage in Serenje District: A Survey of Land Usage and the Agricultural System of the Lala of the Serenje Plateau*, The Rhodes-Livingstone papers number nineteen (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 72.

⁶⁵ In their elegant restudy of Richards work, Vaughan & Moore, *Cutting down Trees*, pay particular attention to the construction of gender in relation to agriculture.

immediate relatives to his hut in the evening. Here they sit on the floor in silence while he prays ... for blessing on the next day's work. ... The spirits are asked to protect the tree-cutters when they climb, to give food as the result of clearing the bush, to free the people from illness, and to give them children and peace.⁶⁶

Richards quotes the words of headman Mwamba as an example of the prayers said to the spirits:

'You, our Spirits, now we want food. You help us mightily to cut the trees with vigour. That is food! Tomorrow I shall go and cut the tree branches. He who climbs the trees let the soles of his feet stick to the tree-trunk, and let dead wood fall to the ground only; and all the snakes that come out of hollow stems let them run into their holes; and so also the wasps that may swarm out of the tree. And then another thing! Those locusts that are here in the land, it would be good if you kept them far away, because if those locusts eat the food of we human beings so that there is nothing left to eat, then we shall all die of hunger. And then if we die of hunger, there will be no one left to praise you, you Spirits'.⁶⁷

Richards emphasised the skill of those who then subsequently went out into the bush to cut the trees at the chosen sites for new gardens. Describing it as 'the man's task *par excellence* in the whole economic routine', Richards stated:

The Bemba are daring climbers. They swarm up each trunk grasping with both hands and pressing with their naked feet, and once up to the branch level, swing themselves up among the boughs, springing or gliding with amazing agility. No tree is considered too high or too dangerous to climb.⁶⁸

Armed with nothing more than an axe, agility, and bravery, and under the fond and indulgent gaze of their elders:

The young men seize their axes, and rush whooping up the trees, squabbling as to who should take the highest trunk. They dare each other to incredible feats and fling each other taunts as they climb. Each falling branch is greeted with a special triumph cry.⁶⁹

Not surprisingly the cutting of the trees is an event in which Bemba and male identity were emphasised and given form. Richards noted, 'No single bough of a tree, however inaccessible, is ever left uncut. Why? "Because the women would laugh at us when we come back to the village in the evening. Besides, isn't it the custom of the Bemba?"'.⁷⁰

Prohibiting a way of life

Across Northeastern Rhodesia in 1906 the incipient colonial state sought to ban *chitemene* and *mitanda*. In the words of the administration, 'the carefully thought out rules for Vitemene cutting and restrictions were communicated to the chiefs

⁶⁶ Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet*, pp. 366-7.

⁶⁷ Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet*, p. 367. Collected in 'Mwamba's village, 13. vol. 33'. The prayers of paramount chief Citimukulu are similar in content, see pp. 369-70.

⁶⁸ Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet*, p. 290.

⁶⁹ Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet*, p. 291.

⁷⁰ Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet*, p. 292.

and all approved of by them,' in a series of *indabas* (an institution introduced by the BSAC, which derived its name from the Zulu word for business or matter, and used to denote gathering).⁷¹ Secure in the belief that their view of the world was correct, and convinced that this view was superior to that of their subjects, and that it was acknowledged to be so by their subjects, the officials of the incipient administration sought to impose their view of how the world should be onto Zambia and its people.⁷²

The regulations relating to *chitemene* and *mitanda*, were part of a package of measures that sought to regulate and modernise the way in which life was lived in Northern Rhodesia.⁷³ Stationed in Mpika, Native Commissioner, Frank H. Melland, wrote of changes wrought by the BSAC in Northern Rhodesia and noted:

The most important change has yet to come, namely in the change of methods of cultivation among the Awemba. H.H. the Administrator having prohibited the chopping of trees after the current year.⁷⁴

Melland continued that 'simultaneously with the prohibition ... an order was made for the abolishing of *mitandas* and amalgamation of all villages of under 20 huts'. These changes were to take place after the crops of 1906-7 had been gathered. 'Almost all the villages', were to move their sites and move to 'better soil more suitable for *proper* cultivation'.⁷⁵ Secure within the malleable fantasy landscape that existed within the minds of the colonial planners, Melland enthused, 'to give some idea of the change all Kopa's Wabisa are going to amalgamate into 5 villages – Luchembe's 63 will become 19'.⁷⁶

The immensity of what was being proposed was not lost upon the BSAC officials who were tasked with enforcing the new regulations. The Native Commissioner for Chinsali wrote:

The most important change came in April 1906, causing a revolution in the method of cultivation, owing to the prohibition by His Honour the Administrator [R.E. Codrington] of the prevalent system of cutting trees (*fitemene*).⁷⁷

The changes that the BSAC sought to enforce struck at the very heart of life in Northeastern Rhodesia and entailed not only a revolution in agriculture but also in the way in which people could live together. In addition, the changes being

⁷¹ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 401.

⁷² What Nancy Jacobs has referred to as the *Veld-Anschaung* of the colonial state. Nancy Jacobs, 'Grasslands and Thickets: Bush Encroachment and Herding in the Kalahari Thornveld', *Environment and History* 6, no. 3 (August 2000): pp. 289-316.

⁷³ On modernization and regulation see, James Scott, *Seeing like a State*.

⁷⁴ NAZ, KSD 4/1 Vol. 1, Mpika District Note Book, folio 8. Dated 26 April 1906.

⁷⁵ NAZ, KSD 4/1 Vol. 1, Mpika District Note Book, folio 8. Dated 26 April 1906, emphasis added.

⁷⁶ NAZ, KSD 4/1 Vol. 1, Mpika District Note Book, folio 9.

⁷⁷ NAZ, KTQ 2/1 Vol. II, Chinsali District Note Book, folio 27.

introduced by the BSAC administration also entailed a transformation in the food being consumed.

The wishes expressed by R.E. Codrington, as BSAC Administrator for Northeastern Rhodesia, entailed a complete transformation of the social, political, and economic life of his subjects. In May 1906, R.E. Codrington, addressed ‘the principal Chiefs and Headmen’ of Abercorn district. Native Commissioner for Abercorn [Mbala], J. Gibson Hall, recorded the principal points of ‘H.H.’s’ [R.E. Codrington] speech:

- (1) An order to abandon small camps & rebuild large villages.
- (2) ‘Ntimere’ should cease
- (3) Taxes must be promptly paid.
- (4) (In reply to a question from Chief Makaza) – if the Chiefs saw to the carrying out of the first 3 orders, they might seek permission from him on his next visit to kill small game, such as pombo.⁷⁸

Far from being merely a ban on slash and burn agriculture, the regulations proclaimed by Codrington in early 1906 envisaged a complete transformation of life in Northeastern Rhodesia. The extent of the transformation being demanded can be gathered from the report of C.P. Chesnaye, Magistrate for Abercorn [Mbala], who addressed Chiefs and Headmen on behalf of the Administrator at an Indaba shortly before World War One and stated:

That the people must hoe around their villages. That hoes were being ordered and that they could buy, or work for them. The people were urged to hoe and the disadvantages of ntemere were again pointed out to them *viz.*

The amount of food needed for their requirements could not be produced by ntemere.

Every year the trees get less and that means they have to go further to find trees and so lose time for cultivation.

That they cannot guard their gardens properly, spread as they were over a big extent of country.

That ntemere occupied them throughout the year so that they had no time to earn money to buy clothes etc. for their families.

That they had only to pay a small tax. Perhaps if the tax was bigger they would grow more food.⁷⁹

In his speeches and promulgations Codrington, and his officials, presented a vision of the envisaged new order of the colonial state. In its attempt to modernise the territory and its people in keeping with this idealised image, the need to put an end to slash and burn agriculture was presented by the authorities along two fronts: i) the preservation of natural resources and ii) the need for order.

⁷⁸ NAZ, KTN 1/1, Mbala District Note Book, folio 50.

⁷⁹ NAZ, KTN 1/1, Mbala District Note Book, Notes of an Indaba held at Abercorn on the 28th of July 1913 by C.P. Chesnaye Esq, magistrate, folio 51-52.

Preservation of natural resources

In justifying the need for an end to slash and burn agriculture in Northeastern Rhodesia, the BSAC officials emphasised time and again what they saw as the wasteful and inefficient nature of *chitemene*. Countless colonial observers decried the burning of stands of bush and saw it as primitive and in opposition to modern agriculture and sound practice.⁸⁰ In keeping with this perspective, the District Notebook for Isoka noted that the practice of “Ntemere”, leads to the impoverishment of timber’ and provided a detailed breakdown of the calculated rate of deforestation.

Acreage required per year;
 6 – 10 acres of bush, for one acre garden
 2 – 2 ½ acres of woodland per year per head of population (Family = 4 persons)
 One acre 1200 – 1500 lbs male or 3 ½ - 4 lbs allowance of food per day.
 Trees require 20 years to recover
 4 persons of population require 200 acres woodland, 330 acres ordinary country.
 1 sq mile will support 8 – 10 persons.⁸¹

In a series of *indabas* across Northeastern Rhodesia, colonial officials condemned the cutting of trees. In Luwingu Chiefs and Headmen were told by the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, Mr J.C.C. Coxhead, that permission to pollard trees would only be granted if it was done under the supervision of the Native Commissioner. In the interests of conservation, this permission was later withdrawn, and only permission granted to cut shrubs.⁸² In Isoka, Mr Coxhead, impressed on his audience that ‘that the cutting of “temere” was a bad thing and should be done as little as possible’.⁸³

Native Commissioner, Robert S. MacDonald, noted that slash and burn cultivation was practised almost all over the Fife Division with the exception of the villages along the banks of the Luangwa river. It was, however, in his view:

undoubtedly a very wasteful form of cultivation and I fear that unless some steps are taken to restrict the cutting of trees, there will be some danger of the land becoming deforested.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ A perspective that continues into the present. *Chitemene* agriculture, seen by colonial administrations as an example of wasteful and primitive agriculture. In the recent past, it is still seen as a primitive thing that can be used in parliamentary debates to threaten and cajole the government in exchange for agricultural subsidies. Thus. In: Lusaka during a parliamentary debate dealing with agricultural inputs in 2003, Mr Chiti M. Sampa, MP for Mporokoso threatened:

So, hon. Minister, if you do not act, you know that we, in Mporokoso, are good. We shall go back to basic agriculture, which is the *Chitemene* System.

According to the official record of Zambian parliamentary debates the statement by the MP led to ‘laughter’.

⁸¹ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 1, folio 35.

⁸² NAZ, KSZ 5, Luwingu District Note Book, vol. I, folio 122.

⁸³ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 288.

⁸⁴ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 401, notes by Native Commissioner, Robert S. Macdonald, 1907.

Prohibited from cutting trees, Magistrate C. McKinnon told an *indaba* held at Fife on the 28th November 1907 that the ‘Chiefs and people were ... to hoe their old “temere” fields and plant beans, cassava, maize and Kaffir corn’.⁸⁵ Chiefs Kafwimbi and Nyera replied that not only did their people not have hoes ‘but the open land in this country was not suitable for Malese [red millet], their main food’.⁸⁶ In addition Chief Kafwimbi noted that ‘beans and other things were not food’, instead they were only ‘relish’.⁸⁷

Prohibited from cutting trees and establishing temporary shelters next to their fields, the Chiefs saw their livelihood threatened by the new legislation. In an *indaba* with Native Commissioner, Robert S. Macdonald, chiefs stated in conclusion:

They said they had nothing else to speak of. The food question was the only thing they had to talk about. They were afraid the people would starve if temere should be abolished.⁸⁸

The opposition expressed clearly affected MacDonald, for in an earlier report he had written, ‘the custom had been followed by many generations and it is no easy matter to get natives to break off habits sanctioned by long usage’.⁸⁹ Added to which the people who actually conducted slash and burn agriculture did not accept the argument that a prohibition would conserve the woodland. In a supplementary *indaba* held in Fife in late November 1907, a man named Muwango drew attention to the necessity of *temere* when he stated:

the old Malesi fields could only be cultivated for one year and after that fresh temere would require to be made. He said they had temered now for many years and there was no apparent diminution of the rainfall. He reckoned the rain came from heaven irrespective of any natural causes.⁹⁰

Thus, although the BSAC officials believed and argued that a prohibition would conserve natural resources, the inhabitants of Northeastern Rhodesia argued that the legislation would lead to a collapse in their food production.

Need for order

One aspect of the administration’s attempt at remodelling the society of Northeastern Rhodesia was that this was to some extent based on a specific understanding of Northern Rhodesia’s history. That is, to some extent the colonial administrators attempted to recreate Northern Rhodesia as they believed

⁸⁵ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 289.

⁸⁶ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 289.

⁸⁷ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 289.

⁸⁸ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book vol. II, folio 290.

⁸⁹ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 401, notes by Native Commissioner, Robert S. Macdonald, 1907.

⁹⁰ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 290. Supplementary Indaba, Fife, 29 & 30 November 1907.

it had existed prior to their own presence in the territory. Thus Native Commissioner, Robert S. Macdonald, in writing on the implementation of the plethora of legislation associated with the ban on cutting trees, wrote:

In the days prior to the advent of the Government it was the custom to build fairly large villages. These were usually stockaded as a means of defence against the Awemba raiders. However since the 'Pax Britanica [sic!]' has spread over the country the people have broken up the big villages and 'squatted' all over the place. Although, from a health point of view this system of living 'en famille' was no doubt an advantage (e.g. should an epidemic break out, there was less chance of its decimating the population) from an 'Administrative' point of view it was far from satisfactory.

In 1906 when His Honour the Administrator made a tour of inspection he decided that it would be advisable to put a stop to the 'Mitanda' System. Orders were accordingly given that the people were to return to the former custom of settling in large villages.⁹¹

Thus apart from banning the cutting of trees, at the same time the administrator sought to introduce a new system which, to quote the words of Macdonald, 'from an "Administrative" point of view' would be satisfactory. Essential to this 'Administrative' perspective was that *mitanda* would henceforth be prohibited, and smaller villages merged into larger villages.

In July of 1906 Mr Codrington, Administrator Northeastern Rhodesia, spoke to Chiefs and Headmen in the Serenje district. Codrington told these men that they were 'to give up the small villages and to build proper villages, under the chiefs'.⁹² Mr Leyers, Native Commissioner Isoka district, warned his subjects that:

[the only way]their present method of cultivation could go on was by the suppression of 'mitanda' and the gathering of people into fair sized villages of old. This should be done.

The young men were warned that they would be punished if they disobeyed their chiefs words as regards 'temere' and 'mitanda'.⁹³

By 1907, at least on paper, it appeared that in some districts the wishes of the administration for the establishment of larger villages was coming about:

Almost all the villages have amalgamated well, in 1907 the villages have slowly grown in number and are probably approaching a number that is normal in times when there was no interference from wars or administrative orders.⁹⁴

What is striking though is that the administrators were clearly operating from an imagined ideal type that existed within their minds, within which villages had an ideal number of inhabitants 'that is normal', and which conveniently excised their own role from the equation.

⁹¹ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, folio 371, Notes by Native Commissioner Robert S. Macdonald, 1907.

⁹² NAZ, KSK 3/1, Serenje District Note Book, folio 115.

⁹³ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 287, from notes by Mr Leyers Native Commissioner.

⁹⁴ NAZ, KTQ 2/1, Chinsali District Note Book, vol. II, note for 1907, folio 27.

Interestingly the chiefs, who were clearly against the prohibition of cutting trees, did support the wishes of the administration as expressed by its native commissioners that people should remain settled close to their chiefs and not establish *mitanda*. In a context in which ‘wealth in people’ was of crucial importance, it was in the desire of the administration for larger administrative units under a few selected chiefs that the wishes of these chiefs and the administration came together.⁹⁵ The conclusion of an *indaba* with chiefs in Chinsali in November 1907 serves to illustrate the point being made:

All the chiefs agreed to keep a sharp lookout on their people and prevent them breaking away into *mitanda*.⁹⁶

Chaina Harrington, stationed as District Commissioner in the Mweru-Luapula District at Fort Rosebery [Mansa], wrote of the chiefs in his district, and of their desire to retain control over as many people as possible:

Taken as a whole the 43 independent Chiefs are a decent lot... I find a good chief makes good people and a bad chief bad people. The character of a chief much depends on the Boma official, and if that official supports the chief and governs through him he will be surprised to see the power these chiefs have and how they will assist. ... They have but one grievance, that is the ‘Insakwi’ grievance viz. heads of families who have no standing leaving their proper villages against the orders of their chiefs and hiding themselves away in the bush in ‘Insakwi’ viz. wretched grass shelters which they generally make into villages and call themselves headmen and independent of their chiefs. This causes endless troubles especially in collecting the hut tax because their tribal head has no authority over them, ... The men who do this are usually all men with several daughters and with these they are able to get some young fellows to follow them.⁹⁷

In this the falling together of the aims of the incipient administration and chiefs becomes clear, and it heralded a far closer alliance as time went on.

Failure in the face of on-the-ground realities

Reading between the lines, one can glean the discomfort of some of the colonial officials tasked with enforcing the new legislation. Writing in 1907, Native Commissioner for Isoka, Robert S. MacDonald, drew attention to what was essentially the crux of the matter when he wrote:

Still I fear it will be some considerable time before the people realise that the migration from village is condemnable. During the years they were living in ‘mitanda’ they seem to have imbibed the idea that ‘the land was theirs and the fullness thereof’. Further, being scattered

⁹⁵ Jane Guyer, ‘Wealth in People, Wealth in Things – Introduction’, *Journal of African History* 36.1 (1995): pp. 83-90 & ‘Wealth in People as wealth in knowledge: Accumulation and composition in Equatorial Africa’, *Journal of African History* 36.1 (1995): pp. 91-120.

⁹⁶ NAZ, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 290.

⁹⁷ NAZ, KDF 3/1, Fort Rosebery District Note Book, KDF 3/1, vol. 1, folio 9.

as they were over the country the power of the chief was diminished and every man became to a great extent a 'law unto himself'.⁹⁸

As MacDonald's words indicate, the issue revolved around who held ultimate authority over the land: the chiefs who had provided protection in the instable years of the late nineteenth century, the British South Africa Company, or the various and many individual household heads who lived spread around the country.

Initially it seemed as if the desires and directives of the BSAC administration were being attended to. Thus the Chinsali District Notebook for 1907 recorded 'only one case occurred of the break of the Fitemene rules'.⁹⁹ Similarly, the Mpika District Notebook also recorded only 'one case of breach of the Kitememwe prohibition' for 1907.¹⁰⁰ However, it was clear that people were not happy with the legislation. In the following year, Headmen from Chinsali District 'went, with the approval of the Native Commissioner to Fort Jameson to interview His Honour the Administrator [L.A. Wallace] with regard to the abolition of Fitemene'.¹⁰¹ In a subsequent visit to the District by the administrator, 'the Awemba Chiefs asked that fitemene be re-allowed but His Honour refused to reopen the subject and told them that he considered that their real reason was they objected to the work entailed by proper cultivation'.¹⁰² Wallace maintained this position when he spoke to chiefs and headmen further to the North at Fife. In Fife the administrator addressed the assembled chiefs and headmen on the issues of *mitanda* and *temere*:

- (i) *Mitanda*: The Native Commissioner had reported that 'mitanda' had now quite ceased. This was most satisfactory, and Chiefs and District Headmen had done well in giving hearty assistance to the Official in this matter.
- (ii) *Temere*: According to information supplied by the Native Commissioner, the instructions with regard to 'temere' had, generally speaking, and with the exception of a few sections on the Loangwa River, been completely disregarded.¹⁰³

In other words, although people appeared to comply with the new legislation in so far as it applied to where and with whom they established their villages, it was a different matter altogether with regard to how and where people sought to make a living out of slash and burn agriculture. It is clear that after a year (1907) in which many people had planted a crop on their original field, which had been cleared and used in 1906, the low returns were such that people attempted to establish new fields in 1908 so as to ensure an adequate harvest. That is, after

⁹⁸ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book , folio 371, Notes by Native Commissioner Robert S. Macdonald, 1907.

⁹⁹ NAZ, KTQ 2/1, Chinsali District Note Book, vol. II, folio 27.

¹⁰⁰ NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. 1, folio 8.

¹⁰¹ NAZ, KTQ 2/1, Chinsali District Note Book , vol. II, folio 27.

¹⁰² NAZ, KTQ 2/1, Chinsali District Note Book , vol. II, folio 27-28.

¹⁰³ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book vol. II, folio 291.

two growing seasons, the fertility of the soils of the fields cleared in 1906 was exhausted by 1908, and new fields had to be cleared if people were to survive. The administrator complained:

In cases where the ground was not suitable for hoeing, *temere* cutting was allowed only in the immediate neighbourhood of each village – avoiding banks of streams and Govt. Roads – In spite of this, *temere* had been, and were being, made in widely scattered out-of-the-way places. And in many instances near dambos frequented by game, for the purpose of illicit hunting. To all appearances more *temere* than ever before had been made this year. This was a matter of regret, Chiefs and people had shown a reprehensible disobedience.¹⁰⁴

Anxious to save the situation, the administrator was reduced to holding out concessions to those villages that appeared to abide by the legislation. Thus, after complaining of hunting by people, and threatening that offenders could be charged under the Game Regulations, ‘the Administrator was ready to make ...[concessions] in the matter of Natives killing game, and thus empowered the Native Commissioner to grant, at his discretion, to deserving villages where the people should have been found to have obeyed regulations affecting *temere*, *mitanda*, and taxation’.¹⁰⁵

However, the prohibition of slash and burn agriculture was not to be. In the face of almost complete negation of its legislation, particularly in 1908, a locust invasion in 1906 and 1907, and then bad crop returns for 1908, the administration was forced to reconsider its position. Particularly when in the course of 1908 ‘the Attitude of the Awemba ... gave rise to a certain amount of anxiety’.¹⁰⁶ According to an entry in the Mpika District Notebook by Native Commissioner, Frank Melland, ‘[t]hey changed completely from the cheerful attitude they had always borne’.¹⁰⁷ In the face of increasing tension and the near total disregard for the administration’s legislation, the administration was forced to back down. Consequently, in the words of Melland as Native Commissioner Mpika, ‘many concessions were made as to killing of game, and after mature consideration the attempt to abolish “Fitemenwe”, ... was reluctantly abandoned’.¹⁰⁸ The same occurred in Chinsali, where the District Notebook for 1909 noted, ‘it was found necessary to re-allow fitemen and permission to cut trees was granted in March’.¹⁰⁹ In Mbala although ‘every effort ... [had] been made to make them relinquish “ntemere” in favour of hoeing’, the administration was powerless to stop the practice and reduced to ordering that the practice should cease by

¹⁰⁴ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 291.

¹⁰⁵ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 290-1.

¹⁰⁶ NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. 1, folio 25.

¹⁰⁷ NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. 1, folio 25.

¹⁰⁸ NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. 1, folio 25.

¹⁰⁹ NAZ, KTQ 2/1, Chinsali District Note Book, vol. II, folio 28.

1914.¹¹⁰ Even so in July of 1913, at an *indaba* held at Abercorn (Mbala) Magistrate, C.P. Chesnaye, was forced to concede and seek a compromise: ‘ntemere would be allowed around their villages but trees were not to be cut so far from the villages that the people were unable to return to their villages to sleep’.¹¹¹

Conclusion

Whereas in 1906 a colonial official could write that ‘the carefully thought out rules for Vitemene cutting and restrictions, were communicated to the chiefs and all approved of by them’, the truth of the matter was that within three years the administrative plans had come to nought, and the administration was incapable of enforcing its wishes.¹¹² That is, although on paper Northern Rhodesia fell under the administration of officials of the BSAC, in reality these officials were severely limited as to what they could do on the ground. On the issue of chopping trees for gardens, the chiefs and headmen chose to completely ignore the colonial administration, and side with their subjects. However, there was an emergent alliance between the BSAC and certain chiefs and headmen on issues of mutual importance and shared interest. It was in the legislation’s appeal for the concentration of people in villages around chiefs and headmen that the BSAC and the chiefs and headmen found one another. In a context in which “wealth in people” was of crucial importance, African leaders, recognised as chiefs or headmen by the BSAC, strengthened their position by siding with the BSAC and enforcing its legislation with regard to the ending of *mitanda* and newly established independent villages.

¹¹⁰ KTN 1/1, Mbala District Note Book, vol. 1, folio 18 (On the prohibition and the beliefs surrounding this).

¹¹¹ NAZ, KTN 1/1, Mbala District Note Book, folio 51X-52.

¹¹² NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II, folio 401.

New economic order

Introduction

Without the deployment of human labour power nothing could be transported or moved in pre-colonial Zambia, and this situation did not change with the advent of colonial rule in 1891. Prior to colonialism the inhabitants of Zambia were integrated into international trade through participation in long-distance trading networks that spanned the continent from east to west. The defeat of influential trading polities, such as those of Msiri in the Congo Free State and Mkwawa in German East Africa, and the ever-increasing control enforced by European powers on both the Atlantic and Indian coasts, effectively cut off Zambians at all levels of society from the products of this long-distance trade.¹ Yet, shortly thereafter, a new world of wage labour, the wages of which enabled the purchase of trading goods, became available. Men, and occasionally women, came to be employed in new economic ventures such as had never existed before in the territory. Initially there was a consistent lack of wage employment for people in the immediate vicinity of their homes, yet within ten years the demand for wage labour was such that there was a consistent shortage of labour. The establishment of colonial rule, and more specifically new forms of economy, was facilitated by new forms of technology introduced into the continent, which brought about structural changes in the relationship that had hitherto existed between labour and transport in Africa. In particular, and of relevance to this book, are the new forms of transport that were introduced following the establishment of colonial rule in Africa.²

¹ Jan-Bart Gewald, *More than Red Rubber* & *Colonial warfare: Hehe*.

² Stephen J. Rockel, *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth-Century East Africa*, (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2006), p. 5.

Labour and transport in Central African history

Hitherto research into the relationship between labour and transport in Africa has been comparatively understudied, yet labour and transport are integrally connected in Africa. For a wide variety of reasons, related primarily to geography and climate, the bulk of transport in Africa, prior to the introduction of motorised transport in the early 1900s, was conveyed by human labour. It was only in specific sectors of Central Africa that the absence of horse sickness and the tsetse fly allowed for the use of pack animals. On account of the tsetse fly, draught and pack animals, such as oxen, donkeys, and horses, which were employed elsewhere in the world for transporting goods and people, could not be used in Zambia.³ Tsetse flies transmit trypanosomes, parasites in the blood, from one host to another. As a result of these parasites, domestic animals can develop trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness), which is inevitably fatal. The consequence of this was that whereas in the rest of the world draught and pack animals were used to transport goods, in Zambia the transport of goods and people was dependent on the muscle power of people.⁴

Reliant on the muscle power of porters, journeys through central Africa covered at most 25 kilometres per day, with porters carrying loads of on average no more than 20 kilograms. Any more than that unnecessarily tired the porters, and brought down the total distance covered. Prior to embarking upon a journey, the goods to be transported were divided up into loads of approximately 20 kilograms apiece. Large items, such as tusks, people, crates, and even pianos, would be slung under poles that would then be carried by more than one porter.⁵

In contrast to the stereotypical image of Africa as a stagnant or at best slowly moving continent, the movement of people – and with them goods and ideas – was the standard, and extensive trading systems and trade routes existed within and across Central Africa, all of which were totally dependent on African labour. Archaeological evidence indicates the existence of long-distance trading routes throughout Central Africa prior to 1400. The arrival of European ships on both the Atlantic and Indian Ocean coasts in the late 1400s provided new products and a further impulse to already existing trade routes. The coupling of maritime trading networks to the already existing trade routes led to the reorientation and

For Europeans, a way of life for hundreds of thousands, indeed millions, throughout sub-Saharan regions became a feature denoting ‘backwardness’, an anachronistic waste of labor, to be made redundant by modernization and investment in railways and then abolished as soon as possible by colonial governments.

³ The standard work on tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis remains the excellent work by John Ford, *The Role of Trypanosomiasis in African Ecology: A study of the Tsetse fly problem* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971).

⁴ Stephen J. Rockel, “‘A nation of porters’: the Nyamwezi and the labour market in nineteenth-century Tanzania”. In: *The Journal of African History*, 2000, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 173-195.

⁵ Jan-Bart Gewald, ‘People, Cars and Mines’, & Rockel, ‘A nation of porters’.

or expansion of already existing trade routes. Slaves, ivory, beeswax, gold, and other goods passed from the interior to the coast, and goods offered for sale on the coast travelled in the opposite direction. Prior to 1890 the inhabitants of Zambia were integrated into the international trade network through their participation in long-distance trading networks that spanned the continent from east to west.⁶ Porters and goods linked the Lunda kingdom of Kazembe, which lay at the centre of the continent, to both the Atlantic and Indian trade systems.⁷

Chiefs and potentates sought to monopolise and control the routes of trade that traversed the continent. The fortunes of polities and their leaders were closely linked to control over trade routes and were heavily contested. Thus, comparative newcomers, such as Chief Msiri could and often did dislodge venerable Chiefs from access to and control of trade routes, with major implications for all concerned. The establishment of control by Msiri over the trade that used to be under the Lunda Kazembe transformed central Africa, the consequences of which continue to play out in contemporary Zambia and Congo.⁸

It was in the late nineteenth century that transport routes powered by human power reached their furthest extension and sophistication. The extent of these routes is indicated by the discussions that the German explorer, Heinrich Barth had in Yola, Nigeria, in 1851 with Sherif Mohammed ben Ahmedu, ‘a native from Mokha in Yeman, who had travelled all over the eastern shores of the African continent, ... and had penetrated from Mozambique to Lake Nyassi [Malawi]’.⁹ Sherif Mohammed offered to guide Barth across the continent from Kano to the Indian Ocean by way of Lake Malawi, ‘that magnificent lake’, for the sum of 300 dollars, to be paid upon completion of the trip in Zanzibar. In addition the Sherif provided Barth with a 33-day itinerary that led from Mozambique Island to Lake Malawi.

⁶ David Gordon, “The Abolition of the Slave Trade and the Transformation of South-Central African Interior.” *William and Mary Quarterly*. Special Edition on Global Consequences of 1807 Abolition. LXVI.4 (October 2009), pp. 915-938 & ‘Wearing Cloth, Wielding Guns’. Giacomo Macola, ‘Reassessing the Significance of Firearms in Central Africa: The Case of North-Western Zambia to the 1920s’, *Journal of African History*, LI, 3 (2010), pp. 301-321; ‘The History of the Eastern Lunda Royal Capitals to 1900’. In: A. Burton, ed., *The Urban Experience in Eastern Africa, c. 1750 - 2000* (Nairobi: BIEA, 2002), pp. 31-45 (*Azania* special volume XXXVI-XXXVII & ‘The Kingdom of Kazembe’).

⁷ Gordon, *Nachituti’s Gift*, p. 13. A. Von Oppen, *Terms of Trade and Terms of Trust: The history and contexts of pre-colonial market production around the Upper Zambesi and Kasai* (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 1994).

⁸ Pierre Célestine Kalenga Ngoy, ‘Bunkeya et ses Chefs: evolution sociale d’une ville précoloniale (1870-1992)’, PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2014. David Gordon, *Nachituti’s Gift* & Giacomo Macola, *The Kingdom of Kazembe*.

⁹ Heinrich Barth, ‘Routes from Kano to Nyffe, and from Mozambique to Lake Nyassi. Extracted from letters from Dr. Barth, dated Kano, March 4th, and Luka, July 25th, 1851’. In: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, XXIV (1854), pp. 285-8.

Goods passed from hand to hand, and along with the goods came ideas, stories, and tales that were linked to the goods.¹⁰ European muskets travelled over seventeen hundred kilometres from where they had been landed, and it could take ‘five years for a barrel of gunpowder to travel from the coast to the river villages above the equator’.¹¹ Goods travelled across the continent, together with fantastic stories of Europeans, as the returning dead from the depth of the sea.¹² Often these fantastic tales explained the origins of the exotic goods being imported. In west central Africa, inland people told and retold stories about ‘strangers from the spirit world who purchased Africans in order to feed on their life force, ... Their King was Mwene Puto, Lord of the Dead.’¹³

It is incontestable that the slave trade contributed to major population disruptions, instability, and in a number of cases to the decimation of people in parts of Central Africa.¹⁴ Yet at the same time, the new food products introduced to Africa from the new world, specifically maize and cassava, served to enable a greater population density than had been possible before. And, in addition, these new food products, much as South American silver bullion had done for Europe’s mercantile trade, served as fuel to power the long-distance trade within Africa itself. Maize produces nearly twice as many calories per hectare as millet, and 50 per cent more than sorghum; in addition it is less vulnerable to drought and birds.¹⁵ When it reached Central Africa between 1548 and 1583, ‘[maize] was adopted especially in forest-savannah borderlands’ where its hard grains provided an easily divided and packaged long-lasting nutritious portable food for long-distance traders, and thus literally acted as the fuel that served to further the long-distance trade.¹⁶ Similarly, cassava reached Central Africa shortly after 1600 and spread quickly through the southern savannah margins, where it became the staple crop of the Lunda, Luba, and Kazembe kingdoms.¹⁷ Writing on the pre-colonial history of the Lunda Ndembu, James Pritchett has noted: ‘Without Cassava, Central African agriculture could probably not have sustained

¹⁰ Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of African Societies to 1870*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 323.

¹¹ Robert W. Harms, *River of Wealth, River of Sorrow* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 3.

¹² Robert W. Harms, *River of Wealth*, p. 2.

¹³ Robert W. Harms, *River of Wealth*, p. 2. See also Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988). pp. 4-5. ‘Whose black shoe-leather was African Skin, whose red wine was African blood, who died their cloth with the blood of Africans, whose gunpowder was burnt and ground African bones, whose cheese was the brains of dead slaves, and whose meals were flavoured by the oils pressed from the dead’.

¹⁴ Miller, *Way of Death*

¹⁵ James McCann, *Maize and Grace: Africa’s Encounter with a New World Crop, 1500–2000* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

¹⁶ John Iliffe, *Africans: the history of a continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 138.

¹⁷ John Iliffe, *Africans*, p. 138.

the volume of slave and other trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'.¹⁸ Cassava, is, as has been noted often before, truly a poor man's crop of choice, its tubers and its leaves, can all be eaten, and in combination with high protein foods such as dried or smoked fish provides a wholesome diet. In contrast to most foods, the cassava tubers can safely be left in the ground for 18 months. Cassava can be transformed into a long-lasting nutritious powder that can produce instant porridge through the addition of water and became, along with maize, an important foodstuff for long-distance trading caravans. Indeed, Pritchett has argued that the Lunda-Ndembu made a living for themselves through supplying long-distance traders and raiders with cassava.¹⁹ With caravans of up to a thousand porters and merchants regularly traversing the Central African Plateau, food emerged as the key to maintaining the caravan system. The switch from millet and sorghum to cassava greatly increased the local and regional availability of food; in addition its impact on the division of labour was equally profound: 'Cassava played a key role in freeing men from food production'.²⁰

It follows from the above that should one seek to come to an understanding of Central Africa, it is imperative that we do not lose sight of the importance of long-distance trade. Which was integrally tied up to the issues of labour and transport: without labour no transport, without transport no goods, without goods no transport. Or as Stephen Rockel succinctly put it: 'Without porters, nothing would have moved'.²¹ The question as to how these porters were remunerated for their labour remains a major point for discussion and debate. Justin Willis has drawn attention to the issue of alcohol in trade and the importance thereof for caravans.²² Stephen Rockel has argued that the relationship between labour and transport that developed was such that 'in sub-Saharan Africa, caravan porters were the first migrant labourers'.²³ None the less, the labour needed for long-distance trade remained under the control of a few centralised chiefs who monopolised the trade and trade routes, and used the profits to bind people and thus their labour to them.²⁴

¹⁸ Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, p. 29.

¹⁹ Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, pp. 28-9.

²⁰ Pritchett, *Lunda-Ndembu*, p. 51.

²¹ Rockel, *Carriers of Culture*, p. 4.

²² Justin Willis, *Potent Brews: A Social History of Alcohol in East Africa 1850-1999* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), pp. 91-3.

²³ Rockel, *Carriers of Culture*, p. 4.

²⁴ Jane Guyer, 'Wealth in People, Wealth in Things – Introduction', *Journal of African History* 36.1 (1995): pp. 83-90 & 'Wealth in People as wealth in knowledge: Accumulation and composition in Equatorial Africa', *Journal of African History* 36.1 (1995): pp. 91-120.

Labour

Following the murder of Msiri in Garenganze, the execution of Mlozi at Karonga, and the defeat of Mkwawa in Uhehe, the polities of Northeastern Rhodesia, were effectively cut off from the long-distance trading networks that had hitherto existed in the region.²⁵ Writing of the Bemba chiefs at this time, Henry Meebelo noted:

As Arab caravan routes were being throttled by colonial officials in neighbouring territory, fewer and fewer goods were reaching the crocodile kings, and this growing scarcity in the supply of European consumer goods accentuated the economic competition among the Bemba rulers.²⁶

Severely limited in their access to trade goods that they could use to maintain their ‘wealth in people’, African chiefs struggled to retain the allegiance of their subjects.²⁷ Andrew Roberts has described in great detail how between 1891 and 1900, as the Bemba chieftains were cut off from their access to long-distance trade, their authority over people diminished, and they failed to take a unified stand against the incoming BSAC.²⁸ Giacomo Macola describes a similar process for the Kingdom of Kazembe, albeit in an earlier era where the control of long-distance trade had to be ceded to Msiri, prior to Msiri’s death at the hands of the Congo Free State.²⁹ In the aftermath of these events, the stockaded villages and settlements that had characterised much of Northeastern Rhodesia came to be abandoned, as men established their own villages independent of the chiefs from whom they had previously received protection in exchange for tribute.³⁰ In the new conditions that existed in Northeastern Rhodesia, where the power of chiefs had previously depended on their ability to provide protection and trade goods to those willing to acknowledge their power, a new way of living came about. A new condition in which individuals could and did find employment independent of the power structures that had existed previously. In the situation that

²⁵ As regards Msiri see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Msiri> (accessed 14 August 2014) as well as Gewalt, ‘More than Red Rubber’. As regards Mlozi see Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism*, pp. 45-49. As regards Mkwawa see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_Mkwawa (accessed 14 August 2014); Jan-Bart Gewalt, *Learning to Wage and Win Wars in Africa: a Provisional History of German Military Activity in Congo, Tanzania, China and Namibia* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2005) & Jan-Bart Gewalt, *Colonial Warfare: Hehe and World War One, the wars besides Maji Maji in south-western Tanzania* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2005).

²⁶ Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism*, p. 49.

²⁷ Jane Guyer, ‘Wealth in People, Wealth in Things – Introduction’, *Journal of African History* 36.1 (1995): pp. 83-90 & ‘Wealth in People as wealth in knowledge: Accumulation and composition in Equatorial Africa’, *Journal of African History* 36.1 (1995): pp. 91-120.

²⁸ Roberts, *History of the Bemba*.

²⁹ Macola, *Kingdom of Kazembe*, Chapters 5 and 6.

³⁰ Roberts, *History of the Bemba*, p. 285.

developed young men could enter salaried employment and earn a wage in cash, which they could use to acquire and purchase trade goods of their own choice.

Stevenson Road³¹

The Stevenson Road, or Tanganyika-Nyasa road as now known, took its original name (Stevenson Road) from the fact that a philanthropist named Stevenson from Glasgow subscribed a considerable sum of money to have a road made between the lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika. The engineer employed for this purpose was an engineer from India named Stewart, who as report says gave up a good appointment there to take up missionary work in Africa. This man was undoubtedly an able man and a skilful engineer, as can be seen by the road which he engineered between Karonga and Lufira. In the making of this road Mr Monteith Fotheringham of the African Lakes Corporation assisted and evidently superintended the working of the Natives. This portion of the road, which must have been made about 1880 to 1882 was entirely neglected and allowed to grow over for many years and it was not until 1896 that the B.C.A. Administration remade or more correctly speaking hoed and cleared the track.

In 1896 the British South Africa Company started from Nyala and made an entirely new road as far as Mambwe, completing the road right through to Kituta the following year. The road through the British South Africa Company's territory being entirely made by that company is now properly known as the Nyasa-Tanganyika road. The original 'Stevenson' road never reached Lake Tanganyika.

From the year it was first made, improvements have been made each year to the Nyasa Tanganyika road and in 1901 the road was widened to 30 feet throughout its whole length, the original width being only 8 feet.

...

In 1905, as there was no traffic along the road it was decided not to clean more than 8 feet in width. This road has been cleaned each year and the drifts repaired & filled with stones; this work is done by men from villages on the road itself.

The demise of the polities that had determined access to central Africa led to an increase in opportunities for foreign companies such as the African Lakes Corporation (ALC) and the Tanganyika Concessions Limited (TCL) in particular. The Tanganyika Concessions Limited was a company closely allied with Cecil John Rhodes but headed by Robert Williams. In 1900 TCL gained prospecting and mining rights to Katanga in the Congo Free State.³² In the following year the company began developing a prospect that would soon become the mine of Kambove and the site of the contemporary city of Likasi.³³ As the TCL expanded its prospecting operations in Katanga, it also set about developing copper mines at Kambove and Lumbumbashi, developments that required substantial labour, the bulk of which came to be recruited in

³¹ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 121-2.

³² Robert Hutchinson & George Martelli, *Robert's People: The Life of Sir Robert Williams, Bart., 1860-1938* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), p. 118.

³³ Robert Hutchinson & George Martelli, *Robert's People*, p. 135.

Northeastern Rhodesia.³⁴ In addition, the mines required substantial mining equipment, which prior to the development of the railway from Livingstone through to southern Congo (1906-9) had to be portaged through Northeastern Rhodesia to southern Katanga.

Lying literally in the heart of Africa, the logistics involved in transporting industrial goods to Katanga and Northeastern Rhodesia were simply staggering. The bulk of industrial goods were landed at the mouth of the Zambezi River at Chinde in Mozambique. Thereafter, they were transported by small steamers up the Zambezi to the Shire River, from where they were transported by boats and porters through to Lake Malawi.³⁵ Goods were then transported by boat, small steamers, and dhows along Lake Malawi to Karonga, whereafter the goods would be carried by porters in to Northern Rhodesia. To do this, carriers made use of the Stevenson Road, along which the African Lakes Company had established a few stations.³⁶ Karonga was connected to Fife (Isoka), by the Stevenson Road, and the road between Fife and Kasama came to be built in 1899 and extended in 1901.³⁷ Apart from the route that followed Lake Malawi, there was another that left the Zambezi at Tete and simply traversed Northeastern Rhodesia via Fort Jameson (Chipata), Serenje, Sokontwi, Chinama, and on to Kambove. However, until the completion of the railway line to southern Congo in 1909, the bulk of goods transported to Katanga were carried there by porters from Karonga on Lake Malawi via Fife on to Kasama and on to the Luapula River and into southern Congo. Effectively all imported consumer goods for Northeastern Rhodesia not supplied from Fort Jameson, viz. Abercorn, Mweru, Kasama, Fife, Chinsali, and Luena, were imported from Karonga on Lake Malawi, and carried to Fife and onwards by porters.³⁸

The transport of goods for the mines developing in Katanga provided labour opportunities, and thus the ability to pay tax, for many who lived athwart the routes that led to the Congo. Thus in the Fort Rosebery [Mansa] District, Chaina Harrington recorded that initially there were no work opportunities, which would enable people to pay their taxes, 'until the 1903/4 year when the Tanganyika Concession loads commenced to pass through via Tete-Ft Jameson-Serenje-

³⁴ On developments in Katanga in the early 1900s see, R.R. Sharp, *Early Days in Katanga* (Bulawayo: Rhodesian Printers, 1956).

³⁵ For a contemporary view detailing the development of this route, Fred. L.M. Moir, *Afrter Livingstone: An African Trade Romance* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.) & R.C.F. Maugham, *Zambezia: A General Description of the Valley of the Zambezi River, from its Delta to the River Aroangwa, with its History, Agriculture, Flora, Fauna, and Ethnography* (London: J. Murray, 1910).

³⁶ Gann, *Birth of a Plural Society*, p. 60. James B. Wolf, 'Commerce, Christianity, and the Creation of the Stevenson Road', *African Historical Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2 (1971), pp. 363-371. James McCarthy, *The Road to Tanganyika: The Diaries of Donald Munro and William McEwan* (Zomba: Kachere Press, 2006).

³⁷ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 60.

³⁸ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 154.

Sokontwi-Chinama to Kambove'.³⁹ Furthermore this work, along with money earned in the building of a new administrative centre at Fort Rosebery on the Mansa River, enabled 6411 people to earn enough money to be able to pay their hut tax. However, what is particularly striking is the amount of employment opportunity that was created by the TCL alone. Harrington recorded that no less than 5441 people carried TCL loads, whilst approximately 1000 worked in other ways mostly at the new Boma and in transport for the administration.⁴⁰

Associated with the transport of goods for the mines of Katanga, was the transport of materials for the African Transcontinental Telegraph Company (ATT). Founded in 1892 and funded by Cecil John Rhodes, the ATT attempted to construct a landline from Rhodesia to Cairo.⁴¹ Apart from funding the construction of the telegraph line, the ATT also funded the further development of the Stevenson Road that linked Lake Malawi to Lake Tanganyika.⁴² The District Notebook for Isoka noted that:

The original employment most popular was in transport of loads from Karonga. In 1901 there was a phenomenal demand for labour owing to transport of ATT material.⁴³

This demand for labour only became greater when in the course of 1901 the TCL steamship, S.S. *Cecil Rhodes*, had to be manhandled in pieces from Karonga on Lake Malawi to Lake Tanganyika along the Stevenson Road.⁴⁴ Frank Melland, who had only just arrived in Africa to take up a position in Northeastern Rhodesia, provided a graphic description of the transport of the *Cecil Rhodes* and the role of human labour in this endeavour:

The next day [31 July 1901] brought us to Chomba Hill – a long steep incline, leading on to the plateau, where we fell in with Boyd of the TCL. Who was taking up waggons, each drawn by 100 men, the first to get up the hill: They were carrying machinery for the 'Cecil Rhodes' a steamer being built on Tanganyika.⁴⁵

Indeed, so large was the demand for labour that there was a labour shortage and higher wages had to be paid. A contemporary report stated:

The demand for labour was phenomenal, owing to the ATT Telegraph material transport and the T.C.L. Cecil Rhodes SS material. Transport companies had to pay high prices to any agents who supplied them with boys. The CC [Civil Commissioner] reported that from 4/- to

³⁹ NAZ, KDF 3/1, vol. 1, District Notebook, District Commissioner and Magistrate, Mweru-Luapula District at Fort Rosebery, p. 490.

⁴⁰ NAZ, KDF 3/1, vol. 1, District Notebook, District Commissioner and Magistrate, Mweru-Luapula District at Fort Rosebery, p. 490.

⁴¹ Daniel R. Headrick, *The Invisible Weapon: Telecommunications and International Politics, 1851-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 101-2. Howard Hensman, 'The African Transcontinental Telegraph'. In: A. Williams, ed., *Engineering Wonders of the World Volume 1* (1910), pp. 192-204.

⁴² Michael Gelfand, *Northern Rhodesia in the Days of Charter: A Medical and Social Study, 1878-1924* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), p. 110.

⁴³ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 59.

⁴⁴ Robert Hutchinson & George Martelli, *Robert's People*, p. 101.

⁴⁵ RH, MSS. Afr. R. 192, Melland, volume 1.

5/- p.m. had to be paid to boys on Fife station work, and that labour, except for transport purposes was difficult to obtain.⁴⁶

The wages paid to carriers allowed for the establishment of a number of trading stores that flourished between 1898 and 1906.

The building of the Stevenson Road, the transporting of loads for the TCL, as well as the telegraph line and all that was associated with it between Fife and Abercorn, led to a short-lived boom in and around Fife. A large number of companies, some of which actually traded on the London Stock Exchange, such as The African Lakes Corporation, The African International Flotilla and Transport Company, and Tanganyika Concession Limited, as well as individual traders such as, Mr L.W.J. Deuss and Mr Ferreira de Mathos, opened trading stores in and around Fife in the hope of cashing in on the boom.⁴⁷ However, by 1906 the railway linking the harbours of South Africa to Broken Hill – to reach Elisabethville in 1909 – had been built, and the use of porters to transport goods to Katanga from Lake Malawi no longer made economic sense; as a consequence the bulk of trading stores in Fife closed down leaving only ‘Mr D. Ross of Karonga [who] opened a Native store in Fife township’.⁴⁸

The words of the Civil Commissioner Isoka, writing the annual report for 1906 on trade and commerce for the ‘combined North Loangwa & Awemba Districts’, indicate clearly that trade within the districts was negligible. Thus under the heading ‘Trade’, the commissioner noted, ‘there is none, excepting Native trade, that is goods sold to Natives for cash’. However there was ‘a certain amount of what is “carrying trade” or “transport” which brings a considerable amount of money into the country’. The ‘carrying trade’, consisting of loads in transit for the Congo, was substantial, but, in the words of the commissioner, ‘next year there may be none’.⁴⁹ In the event, the ‘carrying trade’ continued to expand substantially until the coming of the train. Thus in 1907 the Civil Commissioner wrote:

There have been some 11,000 loads carried this year, as compared with 3000 last year, giving employment to some 20,000 men. These loads were chiefly for the Congo Free State & were carried via Kasama to Fort Roseberry. No wagons were used. All transport being done by porters.⁵⁰

In the following year the collapse of the ‘carrying trade’ to Katanga became apparent.

⁴⁶ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 300.

⁴⁷ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 131.

⁴⁸ NAZ KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 131. In the event Ross abandoned the store in 1912, p. 132.

⁴⁹ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 153.

⁵⁰ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 155.

At a *baraza* held by the administrator, L.A. Wallace, at Fife in September 1908, it was noted that only one-fourteenth of the taxes due had been paid.⁵¹ Noting that he was ‘aware that opportunities for work had dwindled greatly during the last twelve months’, the administrator suggested that young men should allow themselves to be recruited by the Rhodesian Native Labour Board for work in Southern Rhodesia ‘as there were and would be no chances of wage-earning work within the Fife Division’.⁵² In reply Chief Muwanga stated that he had sent 50 men in the previous year, of which only one had returned. He wished to know what had become of them and ‘feared that they were dead’. Similarly Chief Kafwimbi wished to know what had become of his men who had also failed to return from Southern Rhodesia. Although the administrator attempted to allay the fears of the chiefs, the subsequent work of Charles Van Onselen has shown the validity of their concerns.⁵³ That this recruitment was not without controversy is indicated by what happened to Muwanga’s own son. In the following year, in 1909, the administrator once again addressed the assembled chiefs at Fife. When the chiefs were asked to come forward and speak, Muwanga stepped forward, ‘professed his loyalty to the Administration’, and continued by stating that he ‘deprecated the fact that certain of his men including his own son had been recruited by Boma Messengers’.⁵⁴ In addition Chipokosa, Sectional Headman, ‘complained of the dissatisfaction produced by the ill-treatment of certain headmen during the R.N.L.B. recruiting in 1908’.⁵⁵

Interestingly, and in contrast to the stereotype ascribed to them by colonial administrators, namely that the inhabitants of the Fife Division were ‘very ‘stay-at-home’ people ... [who did] not readily come forward for work outside of the territory’, substantial numbers of men worked far beyond their villages.⁵⁶ Apart from being recruited by the RNLB for work on the mines of Southern Rhodesia, there were also a number from the Fife division who ended up working on the Chiromo-Blantyre railway in southern Malawi.⁵⁷ Having worked as carriers between Fife and Karonga, these men were recruited in Karonga and put to work in southern Malawi.⁵⁸

⁵¹ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 291-2.

⁵² NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 292.

⁵³ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 293. See Charles Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mines Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1933* (London: Pluto Press, 1976) for details of working conditions on the mines in Southern Rhodesia.

⁵⁴ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 294.

⁵⁵ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 295.

⁵⁶ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 301.

⁵⁷ Leroy Vail, ‘Railway Development and Colonial Underdevelopment: The Nyasaland Case’, *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, edited by Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

⁵⁸ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 301.

Tax

Desperate for labour, particularly for its mines and farms in Southern Rhodesia, the BSAC attempted to introduce taxation in its Northern Rhodesia territories in an effort to get people to enter into salaried work. Beginning in 1901 taxation was introduced in a number of districts in Northeastern Rhodesia. It was, at best, a haphazard affair. In later years Melland, erstwhile Native Commissioner, provided a first hand account of the tenuous nature of taxation as applied in Northeastern Rhodesia:

The starting of the hut tax, [...], in a land of which we had no census, and where we had no idea if the natives would submit to a tax. Some did and some did not, for a long time. We started by enrolling 'hut-counters'. Men [who] went out and returned with bundles of smoky straws, one plucked from the roof of each inhabited hut. With unfailing memory the hut-counter handed in bundle after bundle, giving the name of the headman, his chief, and the stream on which the village was situated.⁵⁹ We tabulated each village under the chiefs, with the name of the stream recorded as a guide to situation; and on that data assessed and collected the tax – in kind. In kind! We took tons of grain we did not need, sheep, goats, anything, to get the idea started.⁶⁰

In some areas of Northern Rhodesia where tax came to be imposed, tax could, as Melland indicated, initially be paid in kind or labour. Tax labour, labour employed in lieu of tax, provided the initial colonial administrators with substantial numbers of workmen who were often put to work on extensive road-building projects. As with other districts in the territory, a taxation of 3/- per year was introduced in Isoka in 1901.⁶¹ In the absence of cash, a system developed in which the representatives of the administration paid earnings for labour services to tax-paying men in cheque. The same held true for Kasama, where in the first four years part of the tax was paid in produce and labour.⁶² However, this was soon discontinued in accordance with instructions from Headquarters in 1903, when the Civil Commissioner Fife instructed Native Commissioners 'that cash must be paid to Natives for work done, & that no taxes be received other than in cash'.⁶³ With the demand for tax payments to be made in cash, men began

⁵⁹ Melland's description bears an uncanny resemblance to the words of Alfons Vermeulen, a trader in Congo, who described a woman trader who traded on behalf of a large number of villages and recalled her orders by means of sticks:

Now she unpacks and she needs space for that. For she has up to fifty packets of different owners and out comes her ledger ... that is, a bundle of sticks bearing all sorts of notches. She picks up one of these, rummages in her heap of packets, gets one of them out, thinks a little about it and says, 'White man for this package I must have a bushknife'.

Alfons Vermeulen, *De pioniersdagen van Chicongo*, cited in Jan Vansina, *Being Colonized: The Kuba Experience in Rural Congo, 1880-1960* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), p. 64.

⁶⁰ Frank Melland, 'Northern Rhodesia: Retrospect and Prospect', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, vol. 29, no. 117 (Oct., 1930), pp. 492-3.

⁶¹ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 263.

⁶² NAZ, KDN 1/1, Kasama District Note Book, vol. 3, p. 18.

⁶³ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 261.

entering into wage labour in substantial numbers. The bulk of these men came to be employed as either carriers for the portage of goods or as migrant labourers in the mines and farms of Southern Rhodesia but also sometimes as far away as the goldmines of the South African Rand, the diamond mines of Kimberley, and beyond.⁶⁴ Not surprisingly people sought to avoid taxation, and many did so by simply moving away beyond the reach of the colonial officials, either across the borders of the territory or into inaccessible areas:

Some tribes, especially in the Bangweulu swamps, fled to the waters rather than pay tax. Once they marooned me [Melland] on an island.⁶⁵

In turn, colonial officials torched the huts of those who failed to comply, or employed them in a variety of tasks in exchange for tax payment.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, for the first five years after the introduction of taxation in parts of Northeastern Rhodesia, there were ample opportunities for employment, and the taxes paid and collected exceeded expectations, much to the surprise of the administrators.⁶⁷

European adventurers and African transport labour

In the first decades of the twentieth century there were numerous exploits of white men in Africa that captured the imagination of the world's reading public. Yet obscured and hidden to most was the importance of African labour in facilitating and allowing for these exploits. Hidden behind the scenes are the thousands of labourers that enabled the white man to move through and across the African continent. All too often, whilst they marvel at the achievements of the explorer, observers forget that the technology being used by the explorer, be

⁶⁴ The defeat of the Boer republics in the South African War (1899-1902) heralded an enormous programme of economic and political reconstruction, which emphasised the reconstruction and development of South Africa's mines and agriculture, and led to an enormous demand for labour throughout southern Africa. When the South African War began in 1899, the gold mines employed approximately 90,000 African labourers; by 1910 this had doubled to 183,793 men drawn from all over southern Africa. Indeed, so desperate was the demand for labour that, to overcome the shortfall in labour, the Transvaal Chamber of Mines imported no less than 60,000 indentured Chinese labourers between 1904 and 1906 at salaries lower than those paid to African labourers. By 1904, mining had recovered to pre-war production levels, and expanded thereafter, whilst the value of mined gold rose from 1 million pounds Sterling in 1901 to 32 million pounds Sterling in 1910. Nonetheless the demand for labour remained high and the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association ('Wenela'), founded in 1900 by the Chamber of Mines, actively recruited labour for the mines throughout southern Africa until its demise in 1978. Wenela was only prohibited from recruiting for mine labour in Zambia following independence in 1964. T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, Second Edition (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 148-150.

⁶⁵ Melland, 'Northern Rhodesia', p. 493. Regarding flight across boundaries, Mwelwa Musambachime, 'Escape from Tyranny: Flights across the Rhodesia-Congo Boundary, 1900-1930', *Transafrican Journal of History*, 18 (1989), pp. 147-60. Batwa in Bangweulu.

⁶⁶ MacPherson, *Anatomy of Conquest*, pp. 105-138.

⁶⁷ Roberts, *History of Bemba*, p. 284.

Notes for officials district travelling⁶⁸

In taking census the official arrives at a village and has all tax-papers produced and put on the roofs of the huts of the payers. He then goes round and takes each tax-paper and initials it and enters the owners name in his census book and any other details such as absentees their probable whereabouts exemptions and any other items that he may think desirable to know. No exemption paper are now issued at the Boma [administrative centre] and can only be obtained from the official on the spot when census [is] taken. In this manner it is easy to check any attempt at fraud. Owners of villages are also held responsible for any false information supplied to the official making enquiries.

In travelling round a Native taxation division it is the duty of the Headmen to accompany the official and in case of a chief to send his responsible capitao.

At every village of importance short *indabas* [(an institution introduced by the BSAC which derived its name from the Zulu word for business or matter and used to denote gathering)] are held and natives are encouraged to make any complaints or enquiries before the Native Commissioner.

The Division is divided into 10 taxation Divisions in charge of a chief or headman who are responsible for its tribal Government. Each Division is called out in rotation to furnish workers and the time of the year being fixed by the headmen themselves in 1903. In this manner the Natives know when they are wanted for work and make their arrangements accordingly. The chiefs and Headmen are responsible for the collection of the tax, calling out labour Notification of the removal of existing villages and the settlement of new comers within their respective divisions. They are empowered to hear and determine minor native cases and also act as constables. They arrest criminals and bring them before the Native Commissioner Court for trial.

As work can be found for Natives a notice is sent to the Chiefs or Headmen of the Division in whose turn it is to furnish labour, that there is work for his people to earn money to pay their taxes. The Chief or Headman then send round messengers to say that his people should be ready to go to work. Government messengers are then sent who go round with the headman or Chiefs Capitao to the different villages calling out men. They remain with the Natives until they have prepared food etc for the road and then generally all assemble together at the principal village in the taxation division and come in with the chief or Headman to the Boma.

This is done as work may be forthcoming and until all villages have been visited and all Natives in the particular division have been given a chance to earn money. When the 1st Division has become exhausted the 2nd and succeeding Divisions are called up in the same manner until all have been visited.

As soon as all Natives have been called up in his division the Chief or Headman reported the matter to the Native Commissioner and no more demands are made upon his division until the 31st of December by which time the hut tax has become due and owing. Messengers are then sent with the headman to notify that the hut tax for the year is due to check taxes.

P.C. Cookson
Native Commissioner.

⁶⁸ NAZ, KDN 1/1, Kasama District Note Book, vol. 2, p. 386-7. Bear in mind that this text refers to an ideal type, which only exists in the mind of the Native Commissioner who drew up this series of notes, and it is highly unlikely that taxation ever was carried out in the manner described. Instead, this text should be seen as an ideal type to which young Native Commissioners, such as Cookson who drafted the same, sought to aspire to.

it boat, bicycle, car, or aircraft, could only function on account of the massive deployment of African labour. In central Africa, where draught animals were severely limited on account of tsetse fly infestation, it was the use of African labour that allowed for the movement of white men engaged in intrepid expeditions.

The dependency of white men on African labour for their transport through Africa is well illustrated by the examples of two European men who have entered into the annals of Zambia's colonial history, Paul Graetz, and Frank Melland. In April of 1908, a young colonial official in Mpika, Frank Melland, noted in the station's district notebook that, the 'automobile expedition Graetz' had passed by the settlement.⁶⁹ Paul Graetz, otherwise known as 'Bwana Tucka Tucka', introduced the motorcar to colonial Zambia in 1908, when he became the first person to drive across the African continent between 1907 and 1909.⁷⁰ Graetz's continuing popularity is such that reruns of his trip with replicas of his vehicle are organised by tour-operators, and whole websites are devoted to Graetz and his exploits.⁷¹ Although a reading of his travelogue indicates that Graetz had his fair share of 'traveller experiences', what is omitted from these texts is the simple fact that the expedition would not have been possible without African labour. Graetz's trip from Dar es Salaam in German East Africa through to Swakopmund in German South-West Africa was only possible through the extensive use of African labour for road and bridge building, as well as the portage of petrol by labourers recruited to prepare the way and establish fuel dumps along Graetz's intended line of travel.⁷² Indeed, when fuel ran out, or the fuel in fuel dumps had evaporated or leaked away, Graetz became stranded until such time as new supplies of fuel could be physically portaged to him. At one stage, whilst stranded at the Lukakashi River near Serenje, Graetz had to wait for three weeks for fuel to be brought up by rail from Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia and then portaged from Broken Hill to his involuntary encampment. In keeping with the carrying load of an individual porter, the 50-gallon drum (approximately 220 litres) had to be manhandled by 12 porters. The size and weight of the load made an indelible impact on travellers on the route between Broken Hill and Mpika, and, prior to the arrival of the petrol, rumours of the impending arrival of an enormous drum had reached Graetz at his encampment.⁷³

The man who assisted Graetz in his passage through Northern Rhodesia was Frank Melland, who, after graduating from Oxford, first arrived in Northern

⁶⁹ NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. 1, folio 4.

⁷⁰ Paul Graetz, *Im Auto Quer Durch Afrika* (Berlin: Verlag Gustav Braunbeck & Gutenberg, 1910).

⁷¹ <http://www.paulgraetz.de/> Accessed 15 July 2015. Following his trip across the African continent, Graetz went on to make a name for himself in airships operating in the Dutch East Indies.

⁷² NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. 1, entry for April 1908.

⁷³ Paul Graetz, *Im Auto*, 166-9.

Rhodesia in 1901 and was appointed Assistant Native Commissioner, Mpika in 1902.⁷⁴ Inspired no doubt by the exploits of Graetz, in 1910 Melland and a 'chum', E.H. Cholmeley, cycled through Africa from Northern Rhodesia to Egypt whilst going on home leave.⁷⁵ Melland published an account of this trip. Dedicated to their mothers and published in 1912, the full title of their exploits reads, *Through the heart of Africa Being an Account of a Journey on Bicycles & on Foot from Northern Rhodesia past the Great Lakes, to Egypt undertaken when proceeding home on leave in 1911*. In completing their trip Melland and Cholmeley entered into the annals of settler mythology. Young probationers who served under Melland, such as Theodore Williams, wrote letters full of awe to their mothers, describing Melland as 'an old Merton man of about 34, [and] author of a book ... of a trip he made a few years ago from Rhodesia to Cairo on foot'.⁷⁶

Although young probationers and settler mythology may have had them slogging through Africa by themselves, Melland was a more pragmatic man and noted:

As for our method of travel and transport, the journey from Rhodesia to the Soudan would, we knew, have to be performed in the manner to which we had been accustomed in the course of our duties: complete equipment and a large supply of provisions would have to be carried by native porters, while we ourselves went partly on foot and partly on bicycle.⁷⁷

Freed from walking on account of their bicycles, Melland and Cholmeley were, however, limited by 'the fact that the day's trek has to be entirely regulated according to the capacity of one's carriers'.⁷⁸ Carriers, and the limits to which they could carry materials, limited the extent to which Cholmeley and Melland could travel across Africa. Drawing on his experience of district tours within Northern Rhodesia, Melland rather modestly noted:

Even for a short trip of three to four weeks, it is difficult to travel in any comfort with less than thirty carriers; tents, beds and bedding, cooking utensils, crockery, provisions, lamps, guns and ammunition have to be taken and in loads averaging at most fifty lbs. in weight.⁷⁹

Not surprisingly thus, for a journey which could last up to six months, 'during which we knew but vaguely to what extent we could re-stock such provisions as tea, coffee, flour, sugar, and other necessities, and as we were also obliged – since we were after all proceeding on leave to England – to carry a certain quantity of respectable clothing, a caravan of sixty porters, which included the

⁷⁴ NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. 1.

⁷⁵ RH, MSS. Afr. R. 192, Melland. NAZ, HM 30 E.H. Cholmeley, CH/2/1, Book of photographs by Cholmeley who travelled through Africa in 1910. Melland & Cholmeley, *Through The Heart*.

⁷⁶ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781. Williams. Letters volume 1: 1912-1914. Letter addressed to Mrs F.R. Williams, Charlton, Constant Spring P.O. Jamaica, via England, Kansanshi, Friday, 17 Jan 1913.

⁷⁷ Melland and Cholmeley, *Through the Heart*, p. 3.

⁷⁸ Melland and Cholmeley, *Through the Heart*, p. 4.

⁷⁹ Melland and Cholmeley, *Through the Heart*, p. 4.

carriers of drugs, carbide, cameras, books, five loads of spirit tanks, and other apparatus for the preservation of zoological specimens, was for two travellers, by no means an excessive allowance'.⁸⁰ Furthermore, as Melland noted:

Experience in African travel, moreover, shows that, without indulging in luxuries, it is a mistake, especially when a tent has to be one's home for half a year, to deprive oneself of a few creature comforts for the sake of lessening one's impedimenta by two or three loads. An extra table or two and a few books add considerably to one's comfort, and anything that tends to alleviate the inconveniences of camp life is worth considering in its effect on temper and health.⁸¹

To be sure, Melland and Cholmeley did cycle across a substantial part of Africa, but they did this with an enormous retinue of men to provide them with the minimal comforts considered necessary for an expedition. By this stage the ideal type of minimum comfort considered necessary for white travellers in Africa was well established.⁸² Thus, in addition to sixty porters, Melland and Cholmeley were accompanied by a number of personal attendants, including a cook and two gun-bearers.⁸³ All in all, for the two men cycling home through Africa, no less than 66 other men were necessary to enable them to successfully complete their highly enjoyable trip.

Not surprisingly, the supply of labour for their expedition was the largest obstacle. As Melland noted, 'the problems that remained to be solved were to what extent, and where, we could rely on obtaining carriers *en route*, and how far we should have to carry provisions to last us for the whole journey'.⁸⁴ The unbroken provision of labour was essential to the success of their expedition; it is understandable thus that Melland and Cholmeley set off on their expedition in the company of Mr R.A. Osbourne, Inspector of Labour recruiting in Northern Rhodesia.⁸⁵

The expeditions of Graetz, as well as that of Melland and Cholmeley, highlight the central importance of African labour in 'those parts of Central Africa where the existence of tsetse fly renders the use of all transport animals impossible'.⁸⁶ In addition, bicycles and motor vehicles were insufficient in and of themselves to transport the expeditions. That is, in both instances the extensive mobilisation of African labour was necessary to allow for the passage of these products of industrial technology. Without African labour, neither Melland and Cholmeley's bicycles, nor Graetz's car, which represented the very pinnacle of

⁸⁰ Melland and Cholmeley, *Through the Heart*, p. 4.

⁸¹ Melland and Cholmeley, *Through the Heart*, p. 4.

⁸² For a discussion on perceived ideal types whilst on expedition Africa, see Johannes Fabian, *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009).

⁸³ Melland and Cholmeley, *Through the Heart*, p. 5.

⁸⁴ Melland and Cholmeley, *Through the Heart*, p. 4.

⁸⁵ Melland and Cholmeley, *Through the Heart*, p. 5.

⁸⁶ Melland and Cholmeley, *Through the Heart*, p. 3.

industrial technology at the time, could travel far in the ways envisaged by their manufacturers and drivers. This limitation on movement in the absence of African labour extended to the whole of Northern Rhodesia prior to 1914.

Railroad in Zambia

Photo 2.1 Stephen Kappata, People Used to Walk Long Distance to Look for Employment in the Railline (personal collection J.B. Gewald)



A silver wedge in the bushland spaces
 Cleaving North through a heathen land,
 Stamping the wild with the White Man's traces,
 Trimming the rough for the Master Hand,
 Girdling earth with a magic band,
 Lighting the night with a steady gleam,
 Meeting dawn in the far-off places,
 These are the fruits of Rhodes' Dream!⁸⁷
 Gouldsbury, 'Rhodes' Dream'

Over the heart of a poor and primitive continent civilization has laid a finger of steel; it has stirred a hundred tribes together; it has brought them new wealth, new ambitions, new knowledge, new interests, new faiths and new problems.⁸⁸

Wilson, *Economics of Detribalization*

⁸⁷ From the poem 'Rhodes' Dream' by Cullen Gouldsbury, cited in George Pauling, *The Chronicles of a Contractor* (Bulawayo: Books of Rhodesia, 1969), plate 30.

⁸⁸ Godfrey Wilson, *An essay on the Economics of Detribalization in Northern Rhodesia* (Livingstone: Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1941), p. 9.

In the present, the racist sentiment of colonial doggerel and the well-intentioned paternalism of Godfrey Wilson rankle; yet as the painting of Stephen Kappata points out, the railway line had an enormous impact on societies in Northern Rhodesia. The building of the railway between 1905 and 1909 required labour that was drawn from all over Northern Rhodesia, and from its arrival in the territory the train provided work, transport, and a wholly new experience that extended beyond travel alone.⁸⁹ To be sure, the railway line did indeed facilitate the dragging of African labour into the dragooned and disorientating world of contract labour in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, so decried by Godfrey Wilson and his intellectual heirs.⁹⁰ Yet, at the same time trains and work associated with the railway facilitated and enabled access to the products of industrial capitalism that were so sought after by young African men and women, and which Rhodes and his associates had seen as the instrument that would bind Africa to England for perpetuity.⁹¹ Stephen Kappata and Godfrey Wilson both realised and emphasised the importance of the railroad, and interestingly colonial administrators emphasised the importance of the railroad for related reasons. In fact the perspectives of Wilson, Kappata and colonial administrators all represent different views of one and the same issue: the change wrought to society by the introduction of an aspect of industrial technology and all that is associated with it.

The earliest references to railways in Central Africa are in the context of Britain's drive to end the slave trade, and the belief that 'legitimate trade' would bring about the demise of slavery. Following the reports of David Livingstone in the late 1850s, the existence of slavery in Central Africa had become common knowledge in Britain.⁹² In the 1860s, when Livingstone 'disappeared' into the African continent in the wake of the miserable failure of his Zambezi Expedition, Livingstone's call for British intervention and the introduction of 'legitimate trade' was taken up by many a young man who had been inspired by

⁸⁹ Regarding the wholly new experience, Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1986).

⁹⁰ '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 tunnelled. 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'. G. Pirie cited in K. Vickery, 'Railways, Railway Culture, and "Industrial Work Discipline" in the Rhodesias'. In: Robert Ross, Marja Hinfelaar & Iva Pesa (editors) *The Objects of Life in Central Africa: The History of Consumption and Social Change, 1840 – 1980* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 122.

⁹¹ Gordon Pirie, 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19: 4 (1993), pp. 713-30; Van Onselen, *Chibaro*; Ian Phimister, *Wangi Kolia: Coal, Capital and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1894-1954* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1994).

⁹² On the unexpected consequences of this knowledge see, Landeg White, *Magomero: Portrait of African Village* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Livingstone.⁹³ One such young man was Lieutenant Cameron, who travelled past the headwaters of the Congo and Zambezi Rivers in 1874, and wrote extensive reports on slavery in Central Africa and what he believed ought to be done about it. His words and sentiments echoed those of David Livingstone when he concluded a letter to the Earl of Derby with the following words:

In conclusion, let me add that, in my belief, this internal Slave Trade will continue to increase until proper means of communication are opened up, and the country brought under the influence of civilization and legitimate commerce.⁹⁴

Exactly what Cameron meant with ‘proper means of communication’ is made clear in a follow up letter to the Earl of Derby, in which he suggested that the Congo and Zambezi rivers be connected: ‘The steamers we should require for this should not be ships, but tea-trays with a kettle and a pair of wheels’.⁹⁵ Cameron continued by claiming that, ‘the eastern part of the continent might be easily opened up by a railway from Mombasa to the Tanganyika via Unyanyembe’⁹⁶ and concluded his letter by emphasising that:

Proper means of carriage and communication are what is at present wanted in this continent; and if they were once established, the worst and principal portion of the Slave Trade would die a natural death, leaving the question of domestic slavery, which is not such a flagrant evil, to be settled hereafter.⁹⁷

In other words, the building of railways, and the concomitant trade and commerce that would be associated with such an undertaking would undercut and bring about the end of slave trade in Central Africa.⁹⁸

The imperial dreams of a railroad linking Cape to Cairo exercised the fantasies of imperial power brokers, and inspired imperial administrators and the common man alike.⁹⁹ Trains and railways captured the imagination of Victorians and later generations as symbols of progress and power.¹⁰⁰

⁹³ White, *Magomero*, p. 74.

⁹⁴ National Archives (NA), Kew, FO 881/2552, AFRICA: Letter. Central Africa and Slave Trade. Lieutenant Cameron, R.N., to the Earl of Derby, Ujiji, 14 May 1874.

⁹⁵ NA, FO 881/2875, AFRICA: Letter. Journey in the Interior. Portuguese and other Slave Trade. Suggestions for opening up Country. Act taking Possession of Central Africa in name of the Queen (not approved). Lieutenant Cameron, R.N., to the Earl of Derby, Luanda, 29 November 1875.

⁹⁶ Which is exactly what Imperial Germany did.

⁹⁷ NA, FO 881/2875, Lieutenant Cameron, R.N., to the Earl of Derby, Luanda, 29 November 1875.

⁹⁸ In the published account of his journey across Africa, Cameron also drew attention to the establishment of a network of railways and steamers as an effective means by which ‘legitimate commerce’ could be furthered and the slave trade ended. Verney Lovett Cameron, *Across Africa* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1877) pp. 535-541.

⁹⁹ Robert Williams, who at times had worked with Rhodes and was later instrumental in establishing industrial mining in Katanga, devoted a considerable amount of time and effort to a paper that he presented to the Royal Africa Society, and which explicitly dealt with the Cape to Cairo Railway. Robert Williams, ‘The Cape to Cairo Railway’, *Journal of the Royal African Society*, vol. 20, no. 80. (Jul., 1921), pp. 241-258.

¹⁰⁰ Schivelbusch, *Railway Journey*. Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

This darkest Africa must see the light of civilisation and humanity. ... We hear of railways.¹⁰¹

The train and all that it entailed was as powerful a symbol of progress as the telegraph was and the aeroplane later would be. Yet the train, in contrast to Killingray's telling characterisation of the failure of the aeroplane in Africa as an instrument of imperial control, was more than merely symbolic.¹⁰² It, as with the steamer, transported in a single carriage or wagon more than a caravan of 100 porters could ever hope to carry, and at distances, cost, and a speed that could only have been dreamed of before the arrival of the train.¹⁰³ Even if the train travelled at speeds of just under 25 kph on many stretches of the track in Northern Rhodesia, it still travelled at a pace that was far in excess of anything that carriers could hope to attain.¹⁰⁴ Once the train arrived, it was used as a convenient, efficient, and reliable form of transport by anybody who lived within a 40 km radius of the railway line.¹⁰⁵ Administrators hitched lifts on the train whilst on *ulendo*, and planned the itineraries of their district inspection tours in keeping with the timetable of the train.¹⁰⁶ Africans used the train to travel back and forth in a country that was coming to be newly created in the imagination of its subjects.¹⁰⁷ Once established, the railroad was used to ferry goods and people to markets, mines, and war, and transformed South Central Africa forever.

¹⁰¹ Comments from the audience following the reading of Joseph Thomson's report to Royal Geographical Society, 28th November 1892, p. 119. Joseph Thomson, 'To Lake Bangweolo and the Unexplored Region of British Central Africa', *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 1, no. 2. (Feb., 1893), pp. 97-115.

¹⁰² David Killingray, "'A Swift Agent of Government": Air Power in British Colonial Africa, 1916-1939', *Journal of African History* 25 (1984), pp. 429-444.

¹⁰³ See Jan Vansina's description of the impact of the steamer on the Kuba kingdom in Congo: 'Almost from the day Luebo was founded, caravans could no longer compete with the river route. A single ship carried more merchandise than several of even the largest caravans and brought them to Luebo at a significantly lower cost than any Angolan caravans could afford'. Vansina, *Being Colonized*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁴ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Williams, Elizabethville, 23 January 1917, My dear Mother. Theodore Williams describes traveling from Livingstone to Sakania by train in 26 hours (840 km), and that in 1913 the trip from Sakania to Elizabethville took 13 hours (208 Km).

¹⁰⁵ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 871, Chastell (F.A.) Reminiscences of service in Northern Rhodesia 1913-34. Notes that farms radiated around the railway line to about 25 miles. Any further meant that the farms were no longer profitable. RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Williams, Chilanga, September 1st 1923, 'My dear mother, ...camped at Harvey's farm ...- 13thousand bags of maize for a crop ... 100 acres of spuds in the ground and 50 acres of wheat & 90 dozen eggs going to market every week. But of course 22 miles from the rail cuts down profits'.

¹⁰⁶ NAZ, KDA 2/1, Kabwe District Note Book (Broken Hill), Tour Report Jan 8th to 30th Jan 1920. See Williams, whilst stationed at Chilanga, as well as the tour reports for Mazabuka. RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Williams [Broken Hill] October 14th 1923, My dear Mother, 'On Friday evening I biked down to Maliser to see how my prison gang was getting on with the road-deviation, dined there, & came back the 9 miles uphill at midnight: caught the 2:30 am mailtrain at Chilanga and got out at Chikumbi at day break'.

¹⁰⁷ NAZ, KSP 3/1, Kalomo District Note Book, p. 479, has tables that list the various 'Railway fares for Natives'.

Building the rail line

Ian Phimister and John Lunn have done more than others to emphasise and draw to the fore the political economy of railway construction in the Rhodesias, and one can do no better than to read their work regarding the intricacies of high finance, financial constraints, long-term economic perspectives, and railroad construction in what would become Zimbabwe and Zambia.¹⁰⁸ Similarly the work of Leroy Vail has unpacked and illustrated the cynical legacy of railway construction in Nyasaland.¹⁰⁹ This contribution will not concern itself with ‘any serious and sustained analysis of ... [the] financial structure and control’ of railways, neither will it present an in depth analysis of labour, either white or black on the railways.¹¹⁰ Instead it seeks to investigate the variety of ways in which the coming of the railway changed and influenced the social life of people in Northern Rhodesia.

The discovery of diamonds (1867) and gold (1886) heralded the industrialisation of South Africa and the social and economic transformation of Southern Africa as a whole.¹¹¹ Industrial mining, or to be more specific, the profits generated by industrial mining in South Africa, enabled Cecil John Rhodes to finance an enormous programme of imperial expansion at little initial cost to the British treasury.¹¹² In Southern Rhodesia the expansion of imperial rule was brought about through military occupation by a band of freebooters, which soon led to the outbreak of a full-scale war in 1896 that nearly bankrupted the BSAC.¹¹³ For the people of southern colonial Zambia, imperial rule was announced and given concrete form by the building of a railway line between Livingstone and Broken Hill between 1904 and 1906.

The railway in Northern Rhodesia came to be built by countless hundreds of largely unknown African labourers employed by the contracting company of

¹⁰⁸ I.R. Phimister, ‘Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1974), pp. 74-90; I.R. Phimister, ‘Towards a history of Zimbabwe’s Rhodesia Railways’, *Zimbabwean History*, xii (1981), pp. 71-99 & Jon Lunn, ‘The Political Economy of Primary Railway Construction in the Rhodesias’, *Journal of African History*, 33 (1992), pp. 239-254. Simon Katzenellenbogen has provided a short and succinct overview of the politics and economics involved in the history of railways in Zambia and Zimbabwe, ‘Zambia and Rhodesia: Prisoners of the Past: A Note on the History of Railway Politics in Central Africa’, *African Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 290 (Jan., 1974), pp. 63-66.

¹⁰⁹ Leroy Vail, ‘The making of an Imperial slum: Nyasaland and its railways, 1895-1935’, *The Journal of African History*, vol. 16, no. 1 (1975), pp. 89-112 & Vail, ‘Railway Development and Colonial Underdevelopment’

¹¹⁰ Phimister, ‘*Rhodesia Railways*’, p. 79.

¹¹¹ C.W. De Kiewiet, *The Imperial Factor in South Africa: A Study in Politics and Economics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937), p. 18.

¹¹² Apollon Davidson, *Cecil Rhodes and His Time* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1988).

¹¹³ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*.

George Pauling.¹¹⁴ Starting in Kimberley in the Cape Province, the railway reached Bulawayo in 1897, Wankie Colliery in 1903, Victoria Falls in 1904, Broken Hill in 1906, and finally Ndola and Katanga in 1909.¹¹⁵ Construction on the railway north of the Zambezi River began prior to the completion of the Victoria Falls Bridge. By means of an electric powered cableway, which had been erected over the gorge, thousands of tonnes of railway material, including dismantled locomotives, were transported to the north bank.¹¹⁶ In this way the railway proceeded northwards, with up to ten kilometres of track being laid in a single day.¹¹⁷ The Victoria Falls Bridge had been pre-assembled in England, so that when all the sections were on site it took only nine weeks to assemble the main structure, and a mere fourteen weeks to complete the whole bridge.¹¹⁸ Initially the line of rail was extended from the Victoria Falls to Kalomo, which was the administrative centre at the time; however, the rail was extended almost immediately on to Broken Hill (present-day Kabwe) on account of the lead and zinc mine, which was being developed there, before being extended even further north to Ndola and the Belgian Congo.¹¹⁹

Before it impacted on societies by its ability to rapidly transport and transfer people and goods from place to place, the railroad impacted directly on a number of communities in Northern Rhodesia, as it was being built through its demand for labour. It was a demand for labour that ebbed and flowed depending on the state of the economy and the demands of the mining industry.¹²⁰ In the course of research for this book, virtually no archival material could be found that dealt with the labour that actually built the railway in Northern Rhodesia. The archival holdings of the BSAC administration for the period concerned (BSA2) contain no files that deal with railway workers, let alone their conditions of service or living conditions. This is largely due to the fact that the BSAC left responsibility for the recruitment of labour for the building of the railroad to Pauling and Company Limited, who in turn depended upon a loose collection of, what John Lunn referred to as, ‘settler contractors’, of whom he noted:

Relatively little attention has been paid to date to the role of the settler contractor in the Rhodesias. Contractors were to be found particularly on the mines, in the building industry

¹¹⁴ In the course of research, a fruitless archival search was carried out for socioeconomic material dealing with the lives of Africans engaged in building the railroad from Livingstone to Broken Hill and beyond. Unfortunately, probably on account of the sub-contracting of labour by Pauling and Co., no archival material could be found that dealt with railway labour.

¹¹⁵ Gann, *Birth of a Plural Society*, pp. 128-9.

¹¹⁶ Pauling, *Chronicles*, p. 206.

¹¹⁷ Pauling, *Chronicles*, p. 209.

¹¹⁸ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 1917, Baxter (A.H.B.), ‘The Carriers of Rhodesia, 1890-1920’.

¹¹⁹ Anthony H. Croxton, *Railways of Zimbabwe* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1982), p. 101.

¹²⁰ NA, CO 795/48/1, Annual Report on Northern Rhodesia 1930. ‘The work of making deviations, and generally strengthening the railway line in the territory, has caused still more demands for native labour’.

and on the railways. The contractor was part of that fluid stratum of the white settler population ... Struggling, not always successfully, to establish themselves within the white middle class, these settlers flitted from one activity to another, or combined several at once, depending upon the economic climate and their own inclination.¹²¹

The bulk of the work was of the 'pick-and-shovel' variety that required stamina and physique more than that it required skill, and the turnover of workers in this hard manual labour was understandably high. In contrast, plate-laying was more complex and 'plate-laying subcontractors appear generally to have been on the permanent staff of Pauling and Co. Limited'.¹²² In early 1906, as the railway approached Broken Hill, a display was given of their skill when:

the plate-laying gangs, who had been with Pauling for many years, laid the last half-mile into Broken Hill with materials being offloaded from the train as it slowly passed over the newly laid track just placed on the formation. This last dash was filmed by Pathé, the first news-reel to be made in Northern Rhodesia.¹²³

Not surprisingly, workers employed in plate-laying gangs were regarded as expert workers and paid accordingly, with the majority being in long-term employment with Pauling and Co. Limited.¹²⁴

The initial building of the railway consumed as much labour as could be supplied. Lunn details how in Southern Rhodesia native commissioners 'acted as auxiliary recruiters and clearing houses for labour for the construction works', with chiefs and headmen drawn in through a mix of incentives and compulsion.¹²⁵ The Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) established in 1903 ostensibly sought to bring about a measure of order and even-handedness in the recruitment of labour.¹²⁶ However, the RNLB was unable to supply Pauling and Co. Limited with the amount of labour that it needed, and it was agreed upon that Pauling and Co. could recruit directly in Northwestern Rhodesia, with the BSAC 'enjoining the administration to give them every assistance'.¹²⁷

Records indicate that, for the building of the railway from Livingstone through to Broken Hill and on to Sakania in the Congo Free State, labour was recruited from all over Northern Rhodesia. Thus in the far east of the territory at Fort Jameson [Chipata] it was recorded that in early 1906 inhabitants of the district were working in the 'Transvaal ... [and] this year there is mine work in S. Rhodesia and in North Western Rhodesia and work on the Railway all under

¹²¹ Lunn, *Capital and Labour*, p. 107.

¹²² Lunn, *Capital and Labour*, p. 109.

¹²³ Croxton, *Railways of Zimbabwe*, p. 103.

¹²⁴ Lunn, *Capital and Labour*, p. 109.

¹²⁵ Lunn, *Capital and Labour*, p. 109.

¹²⁶ Regarding the actual practice of labour recruitment in Northern Rhodesia, see Chipasha Luchembe, 'Ethnic stereotypes, violence and labour in early colonial Zambia, 1889-1924', *Guardians in their Time: Experience of Zambians under Colonial Rule, 1890-1964*, edited by Samuel N. Chipungu (London, 1992), pp. 30-49.

¹²⁷ Lunn, *Capital and Labour*, p. 110.

proper agreements'.¹²⁸ In the middle of the territory, Chief Mwansakombe visited the Fort Rosebery [Mansa] Boma in early 1906 to report that, 'many of his people [were] away at Railway & Kambovi [mine]'.¹²⁹ The station's District Notebook recorded:

1905/6 was a more busy year. The Tanganyika Concession Co. Still recruited for loads and work at Kambovi. They engaged all together at Madona 10500 men of whom 4000 were Luapula District Natives the balance coming from the Awemba and Mweru Dists. There were nearly 700 registered here for Railway work and 148 for the Northern Copper Co. at Broken Hill.¹³⁰

The demand for labour was such that there was a fear on the part of missionaries working in Northeastern Rhodesia and the Nyasaland Protectorate that the BSAC would force people to work on a road connecting Isoka to the railroad.

In addition, I hear they are going to commence a road 500 miles long south of Ikawa to connect with the Bulawayo-Tanganyika Railway for which alone they want 20,000 boys. Even this might not disturb the position, provided the question of forced labour was not introduced. It would seem to be the case, however, that they have a regular 'cordon' of officials stationed round the best labour districts who are compelling the natives to go to Karonga to carry loads for the B.S.A.Co. only – refusing to allow them to work for the corporation as they have hitherto been in the habit of doing. BSA Co's Askari, stationed in the villages have been stated to have actually threatened to shoot if the natives refused to work for the B.S.A.Co.¹³¹

As noted earlier, very little information is available on the individual labourers who built the railroad.¹³² However, at times unexpected finds can be made; under the headline, 'Veteran of railways is destitute', the *Times of Zambia* reported in October 1966:

Mr. Jeke Mwanza Mutawishi, who helped on the construction of the Victoria Falls bridge in Livingstone from 1902 to 1905, and also worked on the Livingstone – Congo railway is now poverty stricken. Mr. Mutawishi, about 90, a Mutala from the Congo has been in Zambia since 1902.¹³³

People from the Tonga Plateau had been engaged in migrant labour to the mines and farms south of the Zambezi River prior to the arrival of the railway north of the river. Ken Vickery cited an informant who stated:

¹²⁸ NAZ, KDG 5/1, Chipata District Note Book (Fort Jameson), vol. I., p. 165.

¹²⁹ NAZ, KDF 3/1, Mweru-Luapula District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 23.

¹³⁰ NAZ, KDF 3/1, Mweru-Luapula District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 23.

¹³¹ NA, BS1/33 1899-1910 (A1/4/4/8) Ill-treatment of native workers in NER Nyasaland (BSA) and supply of labour to Rhodesia, etc.

¹³² As noted by Lunn, the railway was constructed with sub-contractors recruiting unskilled labour for Pauling Company; these sub-contractors left no known records that are still in existence. In addition, at the time of the railways construction, BSAC administration of colonial Zambia was patchy at best.

¹³³ *Times of Zambia*, 27 October 1966, p. 11. The report continued, 'In 1954 Mr Arthur Davison, from whom he had been working for a number of years, gave him land on which to settle near Ndola. But he left to work at Ndola Club as a watchman and after a year started selling fish in Ndola. This business did not succeed and he left to live with his son-in-law Mr Lyson Chavula near Bwana Mkubwa where he was until Mr Davison's step-son, Mr Roy Parish offered him a home on his farm, near Bwana Mkubwa'.

My father, went to Bulawayo with some friends before the railway came here. He stayed for six years; some friends, two or three years. He went because he wanted *lubono* [wealth or goods]. Because there were many Europeans there, a railway, many things to buy – clothes especially. He brought back blankets, clothing, and a little money.¹³⁴

The building of the railway expanded employment opportunities, both as railway workers and migrant labourers, for people on the Tonga Plateau. In addition as soon as the railway line had been established, communities living within 20 kilometres of the railroad began growing crops to cater for the demand created.¹³⁵

Following the construction of the railway, the railway line required a standard amount of labourers who worked on the maintenance and repair of the track and everything associated with it.¹³⁶ This amount of labour was never very large and remained stable through the years; but it was in terms of transporting labour that the railway had its greatest impact on the peoples of colonial Zambia.

It was in another sphere of labour that the railway had a major impact, and that was in the harvesting of wood to fuel the trains. Initially the railway, as it progressed through southern Zambia, was fuelled by locally harvested wood. This condition continued until the coalmines at Wankie came into production.¹³⁷ Arriving in Northern Rhodesia in 1905 to take up a posting at Kalomo, E. Knowles Jordan, described travelling in a construction train from Livingstone:

About six o'clock the train got up steam and we bundled our kit into a large truck loaded with iron sleepers and tried to make ourselves comfortable among the mail bags. ... We spent most of our time beating out the sparks that fell on us in showers from the engine, which was stoked with logs of wood.¹³⁸

Theodore Williams, who took up a posting in Mwinilunga in 1913, described the effect of this relentless use of wood as fuel in a letter to his mother: 'The trees are cleared for about 150 yards from the line most of the way as from Broken Hill to Elisabethville ... [as] they burn wood fuel in the engine'.¹³⁹ Agreement was reached between the BSAC, as the formal government of the territory, and its subsidiary companies that had been contracted to build the railroad, that all timber along the railway line was to be the property of the railway company.¹⁴⁰ Consequently, until the supply of Wankie coal came to be guaranteed a, 'ruthless deforestation ... was then being practised in order to keep the boilers going'.¹⁴¹

¹³⁴ Kenneth P. Vickery, 'The Emergence of a Plateau Tonga Peasantry: Economic Change, 1890-1940', *The Tonga-Speaking Peoples of Zambia and Zimbabwe*, edited by Chet Lancaster & Kenneth P. Vickery (Lanham: University Press of America, 2007), p. 90.

¹³⁵ NAZ, KDA 2/1, Kabwe District Note Book, vol. 3, p. 28.

¹³⁶ Croxton, *Railways of Zimbabwe*, pp. 122-5.

¹³⁷ Phimister, *Wangi Kolia*.

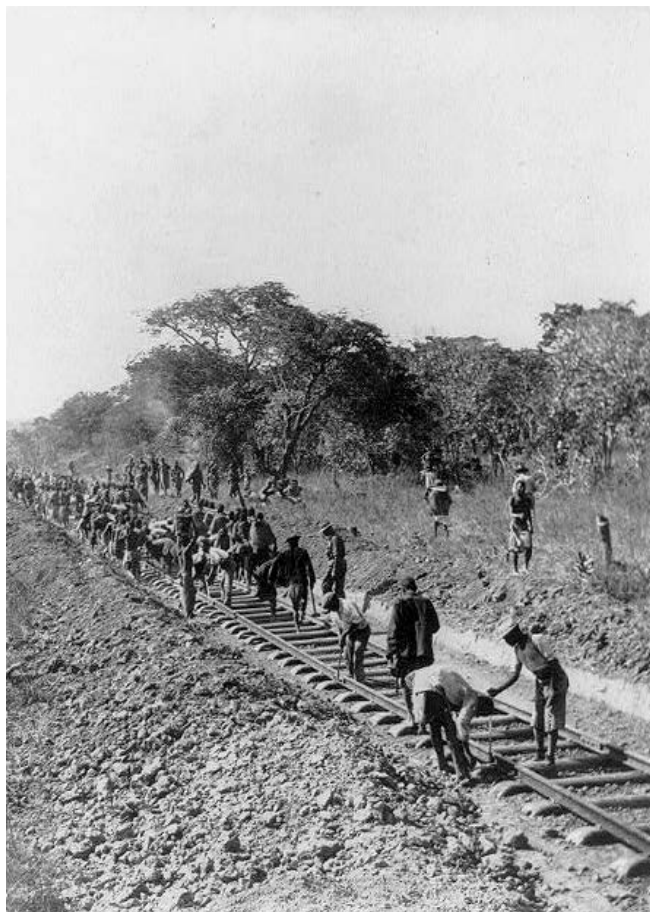
¹³⁸ E. Knowles Jordan, 'Early days in Kalomo and Livingstone', *Northern Rhodesia Journal*, 1954, vol. I, no. iv, p. 16.

¹³⁹ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Williams, Baya, 7th January 1913, My dear mother.

¹⁴⁰ NAZ, BS2/121 1907-1911 (A3/33/2) Building of a railway to Bwana Mkubwa mine the right to use mineral areas and timber on all sides of route from Kansanshi mine to Congo frontier.

¹⁴¹ Gann, *History of Northern Rhodesia*, pp. 125-6.

Photo 2.2 Railway Building near Broken Hill, c. 1906, Carpenter Collection
Frank and Frances Carpenter
Collection (Library of Congress)
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001705561/>



Linked to the deforestation that occurred for fuel, was the extensive deforestation that came to be carried out in the forests of southwestern Zambia for railway sleepers and cordwood from 1911 onwards.¹⁴² In 1915, saw mills situated in Livingstone won the contract for railway sleepers for the Beira and Mashonaland and Rhodesia Railways. This was a contract to provide sleepers for approximately 4,000 km of railway under the administration of the British South Africa Company.¹⁴³ Not surprisingly Zambezi Sawmills Limited sawmills

¹⁴² Geof M. Calvert, *Sitimela, A History of the Zambesi Saw Mills Logging Railway 1911-1972* (Bulawayo: Barotse Development Trust, 2005). See particularly p. 12 on the labour intensive yet very wasteful industry, the wood sought after being *Baikiaea plurijuga*, also known as Zambezi teak or Rhodesian teak.

¹⁴³ Charles Metcalfe, 'Railway Development of Africa, Present and Future', *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 47, no. 1. (Jan. 1916), p. 9. Metcalfe lists 2465 miles of railway.

became ‘the territory’s first and, until after the Second World War, only secondary industry’.¹⁴⁴ By the early 1920s, the sawmills had also acquired a contract for the nearly 16,000 km under the administration of South African Railways. By this stage the sawmills had established their own ever-extending railroad into the teak forests and employed 45 Europeans and 1500 Africans in 1926.¹⁴⁵ Evidence collected in the 1980s indicates that the Zambesi teak forests have failed to recover from this intensive logging and may never do so again.¹⁴⁶

Rhodesian Development¹⁴⁷

The Cape- to Cairo scheme, which owes its genesis to the Imperial forethought of Mr. Rhodes, aided by such whole-hearted and enthusiastic fellow thinkers as the late Mr. Beit and Sir Charles Metcalfe himself, is not merely a project for the drawing of a double line of steel rails from south to north through the African continent. The men who devised that great operation were business men, and, whilst the ultimate end is kept constantly in view, the main line construction remains in abeyance from time to time for the purpose of running branches to open up the mineral and agricultural wealth of the country through which it passes. The railway development of Rhodesia goes on side by side with the great trunk line, whose subsidiaries are pushing their ramifications in the North-Western territory wherever a mine or an industry gives evidence of being able to support them. And at times the main artery ceases to throb whilst its capillaries are being so extended. The administration, in fact, is connecting up the most valuable centres by constructing its system of railways to a number of objective-points, without for a moment losing sight of the central purpose of the undertaking. The main line of the Cape-to-Cairo railway has now been completed as far as Broken Hill, and there for the nonce it will stop. The engineers, working loyally for the development of the splendid country comprised in North-Western Rhodesia, have set up their next objective point at Bwona Macubwa, 110 miles north of Broken Hill, and close to the Congo Free State frontier; and a line is to be constructed to that place at once, opening up a most valuable area, extensively mineralised, well watered, and abundantly timbered. As Sir Charles Metcalfe pointed out to our representative, there is a copper mine at Kansanshi, ... Kansanshi will probably become the next objective-point, and be coupled up by rail with Bwona Macubwa.

The continued importance of carriers

With the completion of the railroad bridge at Livingstone in 1906, substantial regions in southwestern Zambia came to be directly linked to the harbours of South Africa, yet in the absence of motor vehicles all goods had to be transported

¹⁴⁴ I.M. Graham & B.C. Halwindi, *Guide to the Public Archives of Zambia*, vol. I, 1895-1940 (Lusaka, 1970), p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ NA, CO 795/24/4, Annual Report 1926.

¹⁴⁶ Adrian P. Wood, ‘Man’s impact upon the Mukusi forests of Zambia, with special reference to Sesheke District’, *The Zambezi Teak Forests: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Teak Forests of Southern Africa held in Livingstone, Zambia, March 1984*, compiled and edited by G.D. Pearce (Ndola: Zambia Forest Department, 1986), p. 35.

¹⁴⁷ *South Africa: A weekly journal for all interested in South African affairs Saturday*, 18 Aug 1906, p. 481.

by carriers, and any agricultural production at more than a days walk from the railway line was undercut by the cost of agricultural produce brought by the train. Bomas (administrative centres) established by the BSAC administration, in so far as they did not exist along the railway line, continued to be dependent on carriers to bring their produce and correspondence from the nearest point along the rail line.

BSAC administrators developed detailed and complicated tables detailing rates of pay for labourers to and from the line of rail, making distinction between multiple employers, the provision of food, levels of delay, and so forth. In all, the extent of attention and level of detail displayed in developing standardised carrier rates indicates the dependence of the early administrators on carrier borne transport and their anxious desire to ensure that stable and mutually agreed upon working relations came to be established.¹⁴⁸

Wages: Carriers¹⁴⁹

Mumbwa to Broken Hill

Carriers to and from Broken Hill receive the following rate.

1. 3/6 per trip if loaded only one way. With food.
 2. 4/6 per trip if loaded both ways and working for two different employees. With food.
 3. Proceeding to and from Broken Hill with loads & employed with food by the same employer 3d per day or 4/- per trip.
- If delayed at Broken Hill or Mumbwa for over 3 days with food, 2d per day extra.

Other Stations

3d per day with food.

Signed F.C. Macaulay 1/8/1912

A year after having sought to determine standardised carrier wages in Mumbwa for carriers, they were increased in 1913 when BSAC official, Mr. Coxhead, 'altered the rate of wages' with carriers to receive 4d per day with food.¹⁵⁰ Apart from carriers, who were to be paid per day at a rate of 4d per day, labourers were to be paid a minimum of 3d per day.¹⁵¹ In addition the following addendum was added:

The following fixed prices for certain journeys have been used by myself. Their object is that where a carrier is energetic he shall not on this account get less money and on the other hand

¹⁴⁸ NAZ, KSR 2/1 Senanga District Note Book, p. 309; KSP 3/1 Mongu-Lealui District Note Book, p. 76 & KSX 4/1 Mankoya District Note Book, p. 461.

¹⁴⁹ NAZ, KTJ 3/1 Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 151.

¹⁵⁰ NAZ, KTJ 3/1 Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 151.

¹⁵¹ NAZ, KTJ 3/1 Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 75.

where he is lazy he will not thereby get more. Where carriers are kept waiting at the terminus they must of course be paid for such.¹⁵²

With their continued dependence on carriers for all their needs, administrators were anxious to ensure that they were treated fairly and properly. Until the mass introduction of motor vehicles in the 1920s, carriers would remain the main source of transport in Northern Rhodesia, and would continue to be relatively well paid for their services.

Conclusion

The violent and brutal establishment of colonial rule in the territories surrounding Northern Rhodesia in the 1880s and 1890s effectively cut off the inhabitants of the territory from the carrier-borne long-distance trade. Chiefs and headmen, who had overseen the trade and thereby bound followers to themselves through the allocation and redistribution of trade goods, lost their authority and were powerless to prevent their erstwhile followers from moving elsewhere. In the early 1900s, as the copper mines of Katanga in southern Congo came to be developed, and an infrastructure, consisting of telegraph lines, railways, crushers, smelters, and towns, constructed to facilitate these mines, thousands upon thousands of people were able to find employment as workers, carriers, and porters. Interestingly, although a railway line was constructed to facilitate the mines, this did not have any further impact on transport elsewhere in the country beyond the railway line. The absence of any alternative form of transport ensured that carrier transport remained of central importance till the mass introduction of motor vehicles that could operate independently of the railway line in the 1920s. Until then, carriers remained of central importance and could depend on a fair wage.

¹⁵² NAZ, KTJ 3/1 Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 75.

World War One

Introduction

At the start of World War One, the bulk of the population in Northern Rhodesia lived their daily lives well beyond the ambit, let alone control, of the minimal BSAC administration that in terms of international law was formally in charge of the territory. At the end of the war there was not a district in the territory that had not been affected by the war, and the bulk of the population was subject to the wish, whim, and control of the colonial administration. The following chapter looks at the manner in which during the course of the war the colonial administration successfully extended and exerted its authority over the population of Northern Rhodesia. The chapter argues that, in the course of the war, in what was initially a mutually symbiotic relationship, the colonial administration relied upon and worked through African chiefs and headmen in the territory to fulfil the labour and food needs of the British military forces operating in Central and East Africa. Desperate for labour and food, the colonial administration rewarded chiefs and headmen in cash, support, and kind for food and labour supplied. In this manner the colonial administration bound African chiefs and headmen to the authority and support of the Empire and ensured their ever-increasing dependence.

The coming of war

In August 1914, through a mindless succession of misunderstandings, bluffs, counterbluffs, jingoism, and the seeming logic of a series of mutually binding treaties, the world plunged into war.¹ That the war, triggered by the assassination

¹ Those seeking an introduction to the manner in which the war came about are referred to the following classics, renowned for their accessibility and style, Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August*

of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo, had a direct and long-lasting impact in Africa is overlooked by most.² The first and last shots of this war were to be fired in Africa, and ‘the first Allied occupation of enemy territory in the Great War’ was to take place in German South-West Africa, with troops operating out of Northern Rhodesia.³

In the contemporary world, mention of World War One evokes images of the blood-soaked trenches of the Somme and the waving scarlet poppies of Flanders’ fields that will be forever England. Only a few historians and enthusiastic war gamers will recall the name of Paul Lettow-Vorbeck and the Great War that was fought out in East and Central Africa and continued on in Northern Rhodesia until after the guns had fallen silent on the Western Front. To all intents and purposes, World War One is taught as a European event. To be sure, after a few moments of thought, and when pressed, historians will note that in 1917 the Americans pitched in – thereby ensuring that the line manned by mutinying French soldiers held. English historians will recall the emergence of another in the long line of tragic English heroes, Lawrence of Arabia. Historians of China will recall the taking of Tsing Dao by elements of the Japanese Navy. Historians of international relations will recall the war as leading to the establishment of the League of Nations and the mandated territories that resulted from the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the German Empire. It was, after all, a World War. However, very few will consider the war as it was fought out in Africa; yet in that continent – as in the rest of the world – the effects of the war continue to play out in the present.⁴

Although news of the outbreak of the war reached some parts of Northern Rhodesia within hours of the formal declaration in Europe, other regions of the territory were left totally in the dark until carriers brought in post bearing the news. Within hours the German station at Schuckmannsburg (Eastern Caprivi, German South-West Africa), which was reliant on the telegraph office of the BSAC at Livingstone, was occupied by Rhodesian Troops operating out of Livingstone, guided by the cattle trader Harry Susman, thus becoming ‘the first

(New York: Macmillan, 1962) and the recently published, Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2013).

² Bucking the trend, Edward Paice, *Tip & Run: The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa* (London: Phoenix, 2008).

³ Major L.F.W. Trollope, ‘The Eastern Caprivi Zipfel’, *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, no. 2, vol. III, 1956, p. 113.

⁴ The Rwanda Genocide of 1994 can be seen to have its genesis in the territory being transferred to Belgian rule following World War One. Anton Scholz, ‘*Hutu, Tutsi, and the Germans: Racial Cognition in Rwanda under German Colonial Rule*’, MA thesis, Leiden University, 2015. Similarly, the dramatically violent ethnic conflicts that plague the eastern border of Ghana have their roots in the transfer of parts of German Togoland to the Gold Coast as mandated territory after World War One. S.A. Ntewusu, ‘The impact and legacies of German colonialism in Kete Krachi, North-Eastern Ghana’, *ASC working paper* 121 (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2015).

Allied occupation of enemy territory in the Great War'.⁵ At the same time, Assistant Native Commissioner Theodore Williams stationed in Mwinilunga in northwestern Northern Rhodesia, had to wait nearly a full month until the 2nd of September 1914 before he and his district received formal notification of the outbreak of war.⁶ Williams, infused with the jingoism of naivety, immediately applied for leave to be allowed to enlist.⁷ Symptomatic of the schizophrenic nature of colonial rule, initial formal BSAC policy was not to inform the African population of what had taken place, choosing instead to portray the war as a 'white man's affair':

I am directed to inform you that war has broken out between England and Germany. You are not in a position to be much disturbed, but your station should not be left unoccupied. Natives need not be informed as yet.⁸

Williams would shortly come to be directly involved in the war and subsequently relieved of his jingoistic naivety, whilst his subjects in Mwinilunga would also come to be directly involved in the war in ways which could not have been envisaged by themselves, let alone the BSAC administration and Williams.

World War One had devastating consequences for the inhabitants of East and Central Africa.⁹ For no less than four years competing armies were to move through and disrupt the societies and communities of the region. Writing of the war as it was fought out in southeastern German East Africa (GEA), one historian noted:

The many war memoirs from both sides ... sometimes give the impression that the war was fought in an empty country. The fact that there were people in the country from whom 'requisitioned' foodstuffs and porters were taken, and who had to survive in the midst of the fighting, is treated as an embarrassment best ignored. The two armies' demand for food and labour put more stress on local societies than the fighting itself.¹⁰

⁵ Trollope, 'The Eastern Caprivi Zipfel', p. 113. NAZ, BS3/129 (A3/7/5-7) 1914 Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia Police co-operation; occupation of Schuckmansburg...

⁶ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Williams, Letters Volume 1: 1912-1914. Mwinilunga, 2 September 1914.

⁷ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Williams, Letters Volume 1: 1912-1914. Mwinilunga, 15 September 1914, 'I would give anything for some active part in the war'.

⁸ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Williams, Letters Volume 1: 1912-1914. Mwinilunga, 2 September 1914.

⁹ There is a vast literature, much of it of a popular nature, dealing with the war in East Africa. Edwin P. Hoyt, *Guerilla, Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck and Germany's East African Empire*, (London: Collier Macmillan, 1981). General von Lettow-Vorbeck, *Meine Erinnerungen aus Ostafrika* (Leipzig: Verlag von K.F. Koehler 1921). The most detailed archival sources for this war are to be found in the National Archives, formerly Public Records Office, in Kew, England. The War Office 158 Africa series, subseries General Headquarters, NA, WO 158/459-467 deal with NORFORCE, the British forces commanded by General Northey. In addition NA, WO 95/5329-5331 contain the war diaries of General Northey and provide a day-by-day account of developments in northeastern Zambia and southwestern Tanzania during the war.

¹⁰ Felicitas Becker, 'A social history of Southeast Tanzania, ca. 1890-1950' PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2002, p. 150.

The societies of what are now the states of Ruanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, Congo, and Mozambique were ravaged by warfare as the competing armies criss-crossed the region.¹¹ Throughout the war, rival armies dragooned men into military service, and conscripted hundreds of thousands of men and women as porters, *tenga tenga*. In addition, tremendous demands and strains were placed upon the ability of communities to make available food supplies for the armies. Indeed, so harsh were these demands that by 1917 there were districts in northern colonial Zambia that were devoid of people and denuded of all agricultural produce.¹² How many people died as a direct result of the war in East and Central Africa has not been calculated or estimated, but that it should lie in the hundreds of thousands is beyond dispute.¹³

The war in Northeastern Rhodesia

Although British forces may have overrun Schuckmannsburg within hours of war being declared, it was another matter altogether along Northern Rhodesia's far northeastern border with German East Africa; here it was the British forces that were precariously isolated. Within days of war being declared in Europe, German forces operating out of German East Africa attacked British positions at Abercorn and Fife in Northern Rhodesia and Karonga in Nyasaland. Since German forces in German East Africa were in direct communication with one another through an extensive network of telegraph and heliograph stations, they could and did rapidly transport troops and supplies via railways and steamers on Lakes Tanganyika and Malawi.¹⁴ British forces in Northern Rhodesia, on the other hand, were operating without telegraphic communication at a distance of no less than 1500 km from Livingstone, the administrative centre of the colony, and at a distance of 1000 km from Broken Hill (Kabwe), the nearest line of rail that could be used by the British.

In August 1914, German forces operating out of Neu Langenberg (Tukuyu) were repulsed with serious losses at Karonga, Nyasaland (Malawi). Belgian

¹¹ A complete listing of all of the countries in which actual fighting took place in World War One in Africa would include, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Malawi, Botswana, Angola, Zambia, Tanzania, Ruanda, Burundi, Kenya, Congo, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Togo.

¹² The same held true for the areas in the immediate vicinity of the railhead at Broken Hill. NAZ, KDA 2/1, Kabwe District Note Book (Broken Hill), volume 1, notes of 3rd *Indaba* held April 1916, 'Famine in parts of district...'.
¹³ A fine example of the knock-on effects of the War see, Gregory Maddox, 'Mtunya: Famine in Central Tanzania, 1917-20'. In: *Journal of African History*, 31, 2 (1990), pp. 181-98.

¹⁴ RH, 'Wireless Interception in the East African Campaign 1914-16', Draft article by A.T. Matson 1969 & Reinhard Klein-Arendt, '*Kamina ruft Nauen!*': *Die Funkstellen in den deutschen Kolonien 1904-1918* (Köln: Wilhelm Herbst Verlag, 1995). Indeed, until 1914 the fastest way to Europe for travellers from North Eastern Rhodesia was via German steamers and trains in German East Africa to the harbour at Dar es Salaam.

forces drawn from Katanga in southern Congo were deployed with forces under British command along the Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) border.¹⁵ In November 1915, British forces massed on the southwestern frontier of German East Africa came under the command of General Northey.¹⁶

At the same time, on the northern borders of German East Africa, British forces were placed under the overall command of General Jan Smuts. Operating out of Kenya in early 1916, forces under the command of the South African generals Smuts and Van Deventer sought to bring pressure to bear on Lettow-Vorbeck from the North.¹⁷ These South African forces were of European descent, in contrast to the German forces facing them, yet their carriers were all Africans recruited throughout East Africa.¹⁸ The *Feld Abteilung* Field Company formed the basic unit of German forces in East Africa consisted of:

15 to 20 European German officers and N.C.O.s with 200 trained African askari and two or more machine-guns. These companies were self-contained mobile units, each with its train of enlisted African carriers who were partially trained to bear arms. Such a company in the field would be accompanied by a force of irregulars (*Rugaruga*), armed with firearms or spears. The total ration strength might amount to normally about 400.¹⁹

In the four years of war, the mass movements of the two opposing armies were guided by the principle that the most effective form of waging warfare was to engage in offensive activities, whereby the initiative could be seized from the opponent; 'Northey, like von Lettow-Vorbeck, believed that offensive action alone secured defences'.²⁰ However, in so doing, it was, as in all wars of the modern age, the civilian population that suffered the most.

In May 1916, British forces operating out of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland advanced into GEA. German forces withdrew ahead of them in the direction of Iringa. By late June, German forces had abandoned their regional bases in southwestern GEA, in some cases with massive loss of supplies; in Njombe British forces found about ten tons of wheat and three tons of maize.²¹ Both armies sought to rob food from each other, or where that could not be done,

¹⁵ NA, DO 119/898, Military operations involving Belgian cooperation 1914. NA, DO 119/901 War Anglo Belgian Cooperation 1915.

¹⁶ NA, WO 95/5329, East Africa Brig Gen E. Northey's War Diary 4 Dec 1915-8, Apr 1916. NA, CAB 45/20 East Africa Campaign: The Rhodesian Column on the Northern Border 1915-1917. Later to become Sir Edward Northey, governor and Commander-in-chief in Kenya. G.W. Hatchell, O.B.E., 'The British Occupation of the South-Western Area of Tanganyika Territory, 1914 - 1918'. In: *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 1958, Number 51, pp. 138-41.

¹⁷ James Ambrose Brown. *They Fought for King and Kaiser: South African's in German East Africa 1916*. (Johannesburg: Ashanti publishing, 1991).

¹⁸ With regard to Black South Africans in South African military service see, Albert Grundlingh, *Fighting their own War: South African Blacks and the First World War* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987).

¹⁹ Hatchell, 'British Occupation', p. 135.

²⁰ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika 1891-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 140, citing Northey War Diary, 21 Apr. 1916 (NA, WO 95/5329).

²¹ Hatchell, 'British Occupation', p. 143.

to destroy the enemy's stores. In either case, it was the local producers of the food who were most likely to go hungry. By July 1916, Northey's forces were disposed in two groups some 40 miles apart, around Njombe and Buhoro. They had cleared the Nyasaland and Rhodesian frontiers and occupied some 4000 square miles of German territory thereby depriving the German forces of the major part of the Southern Highlands granary.²² It appeared that for the people of the Northern Rhodesia, that the worst of the war had come to an end, yet nothing could have been further from the truth, and the war would continue to impact directly on their lives in Northern Rhodesia.

War and soldiers

The strenuous nature of the war in GEA can be gathered from the fact that in January 1917 some 15,000 European troops were withdrawn and evacuated to South Africa. Commenting on conditions in Tanganyika, W.W. Campbell, a lorry driver with literary ambitions stated:

Distressed and depressed beyond measure, we felt that death and ugliness lurked everywhere. It was in the air we breathed, the water we drank, the sun that warmed our bodies; it crawled on the ground, dropped heavily from rain-sodden trees, hung suspended in the humid, reeking atmosphere. Every living thing went in fear of its life, or turned upon another in self-preservation. Human life itself was an embodiment of ignorance and suspicion. It permeated our very souls, turned bright thoughts into dark, and made one long for the fate that he feared.²³

African soldiers also suffered terrible casualties, not so much on account of military action as on account of disease. Deserters, returnees, and those invalided out of service accelerated the spread of diseases in host communities into which they entered. A medical report drafted in 1917 for Kenya noted, with regard to the impact of servicemen:

There is no doubt that the consequence of the military operations in the native reserves can only be likened to those produced by a disastrous epidemic of not a temporary character ... It is indubitable that these men return to further scatter throughout the country the seeds of dysentery, tropical relapsing fevers and other protozoal diseases, bacillary diseases, helminthic affections, infections granulomata, skin diseases; and the less regarded mumps, chicken-pox, measles and influenza.²⁴

In 1918, when German forces invaded Northern Rhodesia, they inadvertently brought with them mutant strains of influenza that would become known as the Spanish Influenza. After the surrender of German forces, the carriers and soldiers

²² NA, WO 95/5330 Northey War Diary.

²³ Cited in, Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa: 1914-1918* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1986), p. 274.

²⁴ Lewis J. Greenstein, 'Africans in a European War: The First World War in East Africa with special reference to the Nandi of Kenya', PhD thesis, Indiana University, 1975, p. 146, citing 'medical Report for the East Africa Protectorate for the Year Ending December 31, 1917', CO 544/9, NA.

of both armies dispersed and returned to their home areas, thereby ensuring that the disease spread far and wide through the region.²⁵

Carriers

Armies, it is well known, march on their stomachs, and it was primarily the incessant demands for food, and the labour to carry this food that devastated African societies. In 1957, Lettow Vorbeck, the officer commanding German forces, claimed that 2 million Africans had served in his army in some capacity, either as *askari* or as porters or as peasants growing food for the army.²⁶ Recruitment for service in colonial armies, either as soldiers or as carriers, was a very direct affair: ‘They used to chase people as if they were chasing chickens’.²⁷ A former German *askari* stated: ‘if they were short of soldiers they forced anyone they saw to join their forces’.²⁸ Felicitas Becker, writing of carriers in the war in Tanzania, noted that porters ‘are a silent presence in ... war memoirs’ although the ‘need for them is evident at every turn, ... they are rarely mentioned’, instead ‘they were treated with the utmost disregard’.²⁹ The fear that Africans had of German forces and of being forced into portage can be gauged from the comments of Dr Ludwig Deppe, who served with German forces throughout the campaign. Deppe noted that, although water was provided in accordance with German orders, the villages themselves ‘were almost all as if died out... people fear, with good reason, that they might be strung along on the “kamba” (rope) as involuntary porters’.³⁰

Porters, young men and women in the prime of their lives, were pressed into service as *tenga tenga* carriers, and made up the bulk of the armies moving through East Africa. The agricultural potential of eastern and central Africa was depressed as thousands of men and women were dragooned into service as porters or otherwise, and the land was stripped of its agricultural produce.³¹ The

²⁵ James G. Ellison, “‘A fierce hunger’”: tracing impacts of the 1918-19 influenza epidemic in southwest Tanzania’. In: Howard Phillips & David Killingray, eds, *The Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918-19: New Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 221-9.

²⁶ Ann Beck, *Medicine and Society in Tanganyika 1890-1930: A Historical Inquiry*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1977, p. 40.

²⁷ Melvin E. Page, ‘Introduction: Black Men in a White Man’s War’. In: Melvin E. Page (editor), *Africa and the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 1987), p. 7.

²⁸ Page, ‘Introduction’, p. 7.

²⁹ Becker, ‘Southeast Tanzania’, p. 165.

³⁰ Charlotte und Ludwig Deppe, *Um Ostafrika : Erinnerungen* (Dresden: Beutelspacher, 1925), p. 197, (JBG’s translation).

³¹ There is a tendency to confine one’s research within the geographical boundaries of modern states. However, a glance across the border can often be very illuminating, particularly in East Africa, where the war raged across no less than 7 modern borders. The work of Giacomo Macola is particularly illuminating in detailing the impact of the war in Northeastern Zambia. Macola, *The Kingdom of Kazembe*, pp. 206-209.

work of Mel Page and others has brought to the fore the central role played by porters and detailed the enormous sacrifices incurred by these Africans in World War One in Africa.³² In August 1917, British command operating out of Kenya controlled 140,122 porters.³³ The men of the Carrier Corps were believed to have died at the rate of 400 per month during part of the campaign.³⁴ But, as Becker has noted, ‘the army on the march was forever hungry for porters to replace those who escaped, died, or fell ill. For many people ... the choice was between the risk of forced portage and that of starvation in the forest’.³⁵ Porters died due to a multitude of causes that ranged from being killed as a result of direct combat and untreated wounds, through to malnourishment and disease. Dr Horace R.A. Philp who served as government medical officer during the war and was a missionary CSM doctor in peace time, provided a stark picture of human destruction in Tanganyika and Kenya:

Large numbers have died in base hospitals, on the roads and in the reserves after reaching home. Further, the men left for active service well and fit. Those repatriated have returned mostly physically unfit, bringing with them diseases innumerable.³⁶

The young men and women, who served as carriers and porters for the opposing armies, were withdrawn from their communities at a time when these were in desperate need of all the productive capacity that they could muster. The mass-conscription of young people and the incessant requisition of foodstuffs would have major and long-lasting effects on the region.

The recruitment of labour

There was no forced labour, that was not thought of. There were not sufficient white men to spare in the country to supervise it, had such means of obtaining labour been possible.³⁷

Formally, if not in practice, native commissioners did not recruit labour; instead labour touts and later recruiting agencies, often working in conjunction with chiefs and headmen, sought to recruit labour. With the outbreak of war, native commissioners were ordered to become directly involved in the supply of labour

³² Page, *Africa and the First World War*. Melvin E. Page, *The Whiwaya War: Malawians and the First World War* (Boulder Colorado: Westview, 2000). Geoffrey Hodges, ‘Military Labour in East Africa and its Impact on Kenya’, pp. 137-151. In: Page, ed., *Africa World War*; Geoffrey Hodges, *The Carrier Corps: Military Labor in the East African Campaign, 1914-1918*, (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood press 1986); Geoffrey Hodges, *Kariakor: The Carrier Corps: The Story of the Military Labour Forces in the Conquest of German East Africa, 1914 to 1918*, (Nairobi: Nariobi University Press, 1999).

³³ John Iliffe, *A Modern history of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1979) p. 249.

³⁴ Hodges, *Kariakor*.

³⁵ Becker, ‘*Southeast Tanzania*’, p. 165.

³⁶ Beck, *Medicine and Society*, p. 40.

³⁷ NA, CAB 45/14, ‘East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border’, Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace.

and foodstuffs that would make possible the carrier transport necessary for the war effort. As with the labour touts and recruiting agencies before them, native commissioners turned to the chiefs and headmen in an effort to fulfil the quota set for them by the administration and the military authorities. In so doing, and in a process that developed in the course of the war, the native commissioners fundamentally altered the relations of power that existed between chiefs and headmen, on the one hand, and the colonial administration, on the other, and thus the relations between the chiefs and headmen and the people who were subject to them. From being thoroughly dependent on the goodwill and support of local authorities for the enforcement and implementation of their administrative wishes, the colonial authorities ended up with a situation where the war was essential to the successful maintenance and continuation of Zambia's headmen and chiefs. Indeed, but for the war, a number of chiefs and headmen would not have existed, let alone risen to the positions of power which their co-operation with the colonial administration allowed for.

In the years prior to the war, BSAC administrators had consistently sought to transform Zambia into something that was in keeping with their imagined ideal type. Native and district commissioners had, rather ineffectively, sought to enforce their worldview on all aspects of everyday life in Zambia.³⁸ Under their command they had attempted to centralise and amalgamate villages, appoint and dismiss chiefs and headmen, enact and enforce the collection of taxes, prohibit forms of agriculture and hunting, order and regulate the building of roads and paths, and generally convert the economies, societies, landscapes, and ecological environment of Zambia into something that was in keeping with their modernising view of the world. The new found urgency, more particularly the availability of funds and the solid financial backing of the British crown in its desire to win the war, ensured that for the first time since its founding the colonial administrators of Northern Rhodesia were operating in a condition in which money was not an issue. In this newfound condition the native and district commissioners were able to fundamentally change their relationship with the chiefs and headmen of Zambia.

Turn to chiefs

As noted earlier, the BSAC administration was initially loath to tell the African population of the outbreak of war in Europe. Yet, circumstances on the ground, primarily the need for labour on the part of British forces, soon determined that BSAC administrators turned to the African population of Zambia with a plea for allegiance and support in the form of labour and food supplies. Through *indabas*,

³⁸ The failure to affect an effective ban on *chitemene* prior to WWI is a clear case in point.

BSAC administrators spoke to assembled chiefs and headmen throughout the territory and told them of the ‘white man’s war’, whilst at the same time demanding set quotas of labour and foodstuffs in support of the war effort.³⁹

In a process that was repeated all over Zambia, district commissioners, such as Mr H. Groad (D.C. Luwingu), met ‘all the chiefs’ and ‘explained to them the progress of the war in Europe in G.S.W.A. and on the Northern Border, and while congratulating them on the large supplies of food and labour they had provided, he impressed on them the necessity for further large frequent and regular supplies of labour’.⁴⁰ Similarly in Mumbwa, Magistrate E.S.B. Tagart and District Commissioner J.F.A. Speedy ‘pointed out that though the enemy had been conquered in their territory to the South of the Zambesi ... they [the enemy] were still active upon our Northern Border in the neighbourhood of Abercorn and Fife ... His Honour the Administrator therefore required that every able bodied man in the villages should give his personal service as a carrier and sign on’.⁴¹ In Mpika, Native Commissioner P.W.M. Jeff and Assistant Native Commissioner E.B.T. Ford met ‘the Chiefs of the Division’ at an *indaba*, where ‘[i]t was explained that an unusually large number of carriers would be required this dry season; each chief was notified what number he would be expected to recruit each month in proportion to his population’.⁴²

Far from being the potentates and ultimate authorities imagined by many, the chiefs and headmen across Zambia did not have the immediate authority to force people into signing contracts as migrant labourers, Kings African Rifles (KAR) and Northern Rhodesia Police (NRP) recruits, or war carriers. Indeed, in some instances, when first approached to recruit labour for the war effort, chiefs sought to evade the issue. The response of assembled chiefs, in Mumbwa, amongst the Ila-speaking people, when told of the administration’s desire for war carriers, is indicative:

For some time there was no response from the Chiefs eventually one or two began to point out that nearly all the young men were already at work: that they had no longer any control of their young men and could not make them turn out to work: that several had already gone and not yet returned others were afraid that they might be killed in the war and wanted to wait and see their friends come back safely and see what money they received.⁴³

In other areas, chiefs and headmen called for incentives. Thus Chief Serenje suggested that ‘all small headmen should receive subsidies’, whilst Chief

³⁹ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, 1915 *Indaba* for war carriers, p. 366; NAZ, KTQ 2/1, Chinsali District Note Book, vol. 1, *Indaba* for war recruitment 1916, pp. 153 & 153x; NAZ, KSK 3/1, Serenje District Note Book, *Indaba* 1917 war transport, p. 115; NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. ii, pp. 19-20 & 437; NAZ, KDG 5/1 Chipata District Note Book, p. 171.

⁴⁰ NAZ, KSZ 5/1, Luwingu District Note Book, pp. 125-6.

⁴¹ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. i, p. 366.

⁴² NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. ii, p. 437.

⁴³ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. i, p. 366.

Chiwale ‘reminded the Visiting Commissioner of their request for permission to kill game’, and chiefs Nchimisi, Muchinka, and Mpumba asked for firearms with which to hunt.⁴⁴ These requests indicate how the supply of labour for the war effort was a process in which chiefs and headmen sought to bring pressure to bear upon the administration; in exchange for labour, they expected extensive rights and privileges to buttress their own positions.

Chiefs and the high demand for labour

The demand for labour and food supplies remained high throughout the war, with a particularly high demand in the run up to the invasion by British forces of GEA in late 1916. Consequently, throughout the war, BSAC administrators consistently thanked and reminded their subjects of the development of the war and the continued need for labour. The words and sentiments of Administrator Wallace, speaking to assembled chiefs at Serenje in July 1917, are emblematic of what was being said by the administration at the time:

He told them that he was glad to see the good work that had been done by most of the people in connection with War Transport - Hoped that they would not be called on to help much longer – but in the next few months they must continue to do their best, & obey orders.⁴⁵

In the course of 1916 and 1917, across much of Zambia, the recruitment of labourers for the mines of Katanga by recruiting agents working for Robert Williams, or for the mines of and farms of Southern Rhodesia by recruiting agents of the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau, came to be suspended.⁴⁶ In early 1917, as the demand for labour for war purposes remained high, the administrator extended the ban on the recruitment of labour by the RNLB across much of Northern Rhodesia, and, in contrast to his later claims, admitted in writing that labour could no longer be recruited voluntarily in the territory. In his writing, Wallace underscored the central importance of the chiefs and headmen in the administration’s drive for labour, when he claimed:

that very little pressure will be needed to induce the natives to make up their minds to do what the administration requires of them. *The chiefs and headmen will help if we support them* by punishing those men under them who disobey their orders. If the chiefs themselves made any objection we are not in a position to punish them for disobedience but I have little fear of this.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ NAZ, KSK 3/1, Serenje District Note Book, p. 116.

⁴⁵ NAZ, KSK 3/1, Serenje District Note Book, p. 115.

⁴⁶ NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. ii, p. 444.

⁴⁷ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/4), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 12/2/17, to Secretary BSAC, London. Italics added.

Prior to this, BSAC administrators had already explicitly told chiefs and headmen that those who sought to supply the BSAC administration with food and labour could rely on their support and physical sanction:

The Chiefs might all know that they would receive every assistance from the Boma, the messengers, and police if necessary in upholding their legitimate authority. Let them bring forward specific instances of disobedience and offenders would be swiftly punished.⁴⁸

In other words, the administration would continue to act through, and bolster the position of, those headmen and chiefs prepared to work with them. As such Zambian chiefs and headmen, in enforcing the wishes of the administration, in turn became dependent upon the support of the administration for their own position.

The colonial administration needed the cooperation of chiefs and headmen in their drive to fulfil the needs of the war effort for food and carriers. Zambia's chiefs and headmen were well aware of the desire for food and labour on the part of the administration, and, more importantly, they were aware of the dependency of the administration upon the chiefs and headmen to supply these scarce commodities. In the symbiotic relationship that developed, chiefs and headmen were willing to help the BSAC administration on condition that they as chiefs and headmen received direct assistance from the administration. Chief Mpeseni, of the Ngoni, spoke for many when he stated, 'the chiefs would assist the Government ...[and] would provide men for carriers, and for the Native police if needed', with the proviso that, 'we chiefs will help the Government, if you will help us to use our influence'.⁴⁹

Support and physical sanction

Throughout the war, the administration, desperate for labour and food, acted to bolster the position of those chiefs and headmen prepared to assist the administration. In May 1918 Visiting Commissioner, Hugh C. Marshall, addressed a meeting of chiefs and headmen in the presence of magistrate P.E. Hall at Serenje, and explicitly threatened those who failed to fulfil the demands of the administration:

Marshall, 'spoke upon the War and the present position. The Administrator was aware that some headmen had done good work and that many men had engaged for military porter work outside the territory others had shirked this work when messengers had been sent to call them in. All the headmen must understand that War work is the most important of all, those who had deliberately disappeared to avoid carrier work would probably be punished, it is

⁴⁸ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 366, Meeting of chiefs, 2 September 1915.

⁴⁹ NAZ, KDG 5/1, Chipata District Notebook, vol. 1, p. 171.

very necessary that headmen should give the names of their people who disobey their orders in this connection'.⁵⁰

At the beginning of the war, when chiefs and headmen had initially been approached with a demand for labour and food, chiefs and headmen had underscored their own relative weakness and demanded that the BSAC administration actively support them. In the Mumbwa District, a native commissioner recorded in 1915 that in response to the administration's call for labour, chiefs had 'promised to do what they could, but said they would be powerless without messengers to assist them'.⁵¹ In the changed circumstances of war, the native commissioner noted that 'they were told that messengers were going out the same day'.⁵²

The desperate need for labour on the part of the administration led to the further centralisation and strengthening of the position of the chiefs and headmen, as the administration was forced to work through them in its drive for evermore labour. The noted historian of Zambia, Lewis Gann, noted how the BSAC extended its power and influence through appointing messengers 'drawn from aristocratic local families'.⁵³ Now as the demand for war carriers increased, administrators continued to appoint the sons of chiefs and headmen as messengers, thereby extending the power not only of themselves but also of the chiefs and headmen.⁵⁴ In Mumbwa district chiefs and headmen who appeared to 'have some influence' and had assisted the administration in the supply of war carriers, found their sons appointed as messengers.⁵⁵ Conversely chiefs and headmen who did not support the BSAC in its drive for food and carriers could expect that action would be undertaken against them. Thus, in addressing chiefs and headmen at Fort Jameson in late 1915, the magistrate decried the 'great unwillingness' to supply labour, and claimed:

In other districts where war loads were passing natives have had to turn out two or three times. The Awemba sometimes even six. Their women who unlike the Angoni, never do any tenga-tenga, have had to do so this year. You are considerably better off than in any other district in this respect. But remember that if it is necessary to do so the Government can make you do this work.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ NAZ, KSZ 5/1, Serenje District Note Book, Address by Marshall to assembled Chiefs, 16 May 1918, p. 116.

⁵¹ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 367, Meeting of chiefs, 2 September 1915.

⁵² NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 367, Meeting of chiefs, 2 September 1915.

⁵³ L.H. Gann, 'The "Northern Rhodesia Journal" as an historical source book', *Human problems in British Central Africa*, 1958, xxiii, p. 51.

⁵⁴ W.V. Brelsford, 'The boma messenger and his uniform', *Northern Rhodesia Journal*, 1954, vol. II, no. 3, pp. 34-42.

⁵⁵ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, pp. 410-1. 'Mumba Kapandula is a polite old man and may have some influence. His son Ngalandi was appointed messenger of his sphere ... 64 carriers' & 'Chitanda ... His son Kamuntika was appointed messenger ... 120 carriers'.

⁵⁶ NAZ, KDG 5/1, Chipata District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 171 X. *Indaba* with Magistrate, 9th November 1915.

Under the changed circumstances of war, the administration could and did threaten with violence those who failed to support them in their war effort. The magistrate's words, spoken as they were in the district neighbouring Nyasaland, where earlier in the year John Chilembwe and his followers had been brutally massacred for failing to support the British, could not have been expressed more clearly.⁵⁷

Finance

The *indabas* arranged by the administrators in their drive for war labour followed a set pattern in which the assembled chiefs and headmen were cajoled and berated, and then feted.⁵⁸ In much the same way as they would have done when they were school prefects and sports captains, the BSAC officials consistently complained about the lack of support and the need for ever greater efforts, after which the chiefs and headmen would be praised for their efforts. An address by the magistrate in Fort Jameson, who had earlier alluded to the death of John Chilembwe, concluded, 'I shall inform the Administrator of the assistance you have given in securing police recruits. He will be very pleased'.⁵⁹ However, in addition to words of praise and slaughtered cattle, the BSAC administration also provided direct monetary incentives to the chiefs and headmen who cooperated with it. Apart from payments paid directly to the people who brought in food or worked as carriers for the administration, chiefs and headmen asked for and expected extra payment from the BSAC administration in exchange for the provision of food and labour.⁶⁰ For its part the administration provided and held out the promise of future rewards. Thus at an Indaba held in Mpika in April 1915, chiefs were told to 'select capitaos to recruit labour, who would receive presents later on, according to results'.⁶¹ Whilst at Chinsali assembled chiefs and headmen were told that, 'Chiefs would be paid 1/- for every ten men they recruited'.⁶² Needless to say, the monies provided by the administration often did not meet up with the expectations of chiefs and headmen. Thus, whilst visiting Mkushi in 1917, Visiting Commissioner H.C. Marshall was told by chiefs and

⁵⁷ Shepperson & Price, *Independent African*.

⁵⁸ NAZ, KSM 4/1, Mkushi District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 252. Mkushi, 1917, 'A bull was slaughtered and given to the chiefs and Headmen'.

⁵⁹ NAZ, KDG 5/1, Chipata District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 172. Indaba with Magistrate, 9th November 1915.

⁶⁰ NAZ, KTQ 2/1, Chinsali District Note Book, vol. 1: folio 153 and 153X, *Indaba* for war recruitment in 1916. Payment to carriers Chinsali Boma, April 1916, 'for two months work from Kasama to either Abercorn or Fife & that they would receive 7/6 per month for this work'

⁶¹ NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. ii, p. 437.

⁶² NAZ, KTQ 2/1, Chinsali District Note Book, vol. 1: folio 153 and 153X, *Indaba* for war recruitment in 1916.

headmen that, ‘they had nothing important to discuss but complained of the smallness of the subsidies they received’.⁶³

Often the promises of financial reward made in 1915 were not fulfilled. Even when by their own admission, it was clear to the colonial administrators involved that the chiefs and headmen had gone out of their way to assist in the war effort. At an *indaba* held at Fort Jameson on 4th August 1917, L.A. Wallace, the administrator of Northern Rhodesia, greeted the assembled chiefs and ‘first and foremost’ thanked them for having ‘attended to his words and ... done everything that they were told to do in providing military porters’.⁶⁴ In response, Chief Sagiri spoke and expressed his gratitude, but noted that the ‘the chiefs had done much good work for the Government and wanted their subsidies to be increased’.⁶⁵ Wallace replied that ‘he was giving the matter of reward considerable attention’ as the chiefs and headmen had ‘done far more work’, but that he would decide at the end of the war.⁶⁶

Firearms

Historians of Central Africa have repeatedly drawn attention to the central importance of firearms in the sociocultural history of the area.⁶⁷ In his groundbreaking work dealing with firearms in pre-colonial Zambia, Giacomo Macola has indicated how from the 1700s onwards firearms impacted, were appropriated, and used in radically different ways by the various polities of the territory. Chokwe and Yao raiders came to depend on firearms for their very existence, whilst Ngoni raiders, who had very specific ideas regarding masculine prowess and prestige, consciously refrained from using firearms in their raiding

⁶³ NAZ, KSM 4/1, Mkushi District Note Book, 18th May 1917, vol. 1, p. 252.

⁶⁴ NAZ, KDG 5/1, Chipata District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 173. Wallace continued by noting that, ‘He hoped not to have to call upon them again as he expected that the war would be over shortly’.

⁶⁵ NAZ, KDG 5/1, Chipata District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 173. To be fair to Sagiri, at the same meeting he also asked for an increase in the wages paid to carriers: 6th August 1917.

⁶⁶ NAZ, KDG 5/1, Chipata District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 173, 6th August 1917. In the event, at the end of the war a war bonus of 120 pounds and ten rifles was distributed to the chiefs at an *indaba* held at Fort Jameson on 21st October 1919.

⁶⁷ Anthony Atmore, J.M. Chirenje & S.I. Mudenge, ‘Firearms in South Central Africa’, *Journal of African History*, vol. 12, no. 4 (1971), pp. 545-556; Giacomo Macola, ‘Reassessing the significance of firearms in central Africa: The case of North-Western Zambia to the 1920s’, *Journal of African History*, vol. 51, no. 1 (2010), pp. 1-21; A.D. Roberts, ‘Firearms in North-Eastern Zambia before 1900’, *Transafrican Journal of History*, I, 2 (1971), pp. 3-21.

activities.⁶⁸ Far more than merely instruments to be used in warfare and hunting, firearms occupied a central role in religious and political ritual.⁶⁹

In the context of World War One and the BSAC administration's incessant demand for labour and food, chiefs and headmen repeatedly and insistently asked for firearms, ammunition, powder, ignition caps, and shot in exchange for fulfilling the administration's demands. In response, the administration rather lamely sought to fob off the requests by claiming that the guns could not be given as they were all being used in the war. At Serenje, in May 1918, Visiting Commissioner H.C. Marshall replied in response to requests by chiefs Nchimisi, Muchinka, and Mpumba for firearms with which to hunt:

There are no guns available they are all at the War, perhaps the Administrator may loan some guns after war.⁷⁰

A year previously, at a similar meeting in Mkushi, Marshall had used an identical argument when, in response to a request for breach loading rifles, he had told the chiefs and headmen 'that all guns were at the war, but when the war was finished a certain number might be sent to Mkushi for them'.⁷¹

Evasion

Between 1914 and 1918, there was a continual demand for labour on the part of the BSAC administration; not surprisingly, some communities sought to escape being drafted into the war effort. The District Notebook for Mumbwa District provides a clear and detailed overview of the manner in which the administration struggled to recruit labour in the district, and how men of the district dispersed in an attempt to avoid detection and conscription. Thus when Magistrate E.S.B. Taggart toured the district in September 1915 in an effort to recruit labour for the war, he reported that at Lusengo 'only women were seen at the village. All men were entirely said to be (untrue?) at work'.⁷² In other instances, chiefs and headmen engaged in passive resistance and through their behaviour made clear their opposition to the demands of the administration:

⁶⁸ Macola, 'Reassessing firearms', see also Von Oppen, *Terms of Trade*, pp. 166-80 & Allen F. Isaacman & Barbara S. Isaacman, *Slavery and Beyond: The Making of Men and Chikunda Ethnic Identities in the Unstable World of South-Central Africa, 1750-1920* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004).

⁶⁹ David Gordon has recently drawn attention to the fact that dividing activity that relates to power into distinct 'political' and 'religious' realms fails to do justice to African historical experience in which 'politics ... was also religion, and religion was politics'. Gordon, *Invisible Agents*, p. 25.

⁷⁰ NAZ, KSK 3/1, Serenje District Note Book, vol. I., Record of Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen held at Serenje, 16th May 1918, Hugh C. Marshall, Visiting Commissioner, and P.E. Hall, Magistrate, p. 116a.

⁷¹ NAZ, KSM 4/1, Mkushi District Note Book, vol. 1, 18th May 1917, p. 252.

⁷² NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book Mumbwa, vol. 1, p. 410.

Kasonkomona ... suffers from some enlargement of the testicles... gave the impression that he was a hopeless passive resister of the old school. He could give no assistance with men for transport: his cattle were sick: his people paid no attention to him: he knew of no one whom he could nominate as a district messenger.⁷³

Then again, there were chiefs who appear to have feigned senility: 'Mukobeko is in his dotage'.⁷⁴ Although Taggart did eventually manage to recruit 214 men for war transport work, he concludes his report as follows, 'Practically no assistance was given by the Chiefs. Usually when asked they said all their men were away at work'.⁷⁵

The cool reception given to Taggart as magistrate of the district was no different for the young probationer, P.A.T. Simey, who toured the district between 2nd and 28th May 1916 in an effort to recruit war carriers. Simey summed up his tour with the following words:

Recruiting of war carriers was met with no, or but little assistance from chiefs. Most villages being found deserted but for women & invalids & old men – Mono gave a little assistance and also Mwakpolive, but no attempt was made on their part to call in those who were hiding nearby.⁷⁶

Six months later, when Simey had been promoted to the position of Assistant Native Commissioner, and engaged from 14th to 30th September 1916 in another tour of the district in an attempt to recruit labour and collect taxes, he met with the same reaction:

The collection of tax was a total failure ... This was due to the impossibility of attempting to combine tax collection with recruiting of war carriers. From every village the majority of men had fled leaving only the old men and invalids and the women behind. It was only by careful explanation of Gr. 8/1916 to various headmen of their duties under it that any men were recruited as carriers at all. The Chiefs gave no assistance, on the contrary they withheld information & concealed the whereabouts of their people in many cases.⁷⁷

The frustration felt by Simey is palpable in the concluding words of his formal report in which he stated: 'This habit of running away on the approach of an official should be put down most firmly, since it hampers him considerably on his tour by loss in time & lack of information'.⁷⁸ That the conditions that had led to the frustration expressed by Simey did not end is illustrated by the words of Native Commissioner L.J. Tweedy, who toured the district from 3rd to 20th December 1916 and met with the same results:

⁷³ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 411.

⁷⁴ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 410.

⁷⁵ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, 16 October 1915, p. 412.

⁷⁶ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 418.

⁷⁷ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 421.

⁷⁸ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 421.

on arrival to the villages situate [sic] on and near the Chilanga road. ... I had the utmost difficulty in collecting anything at all the people having all run away and only invalids and old women remaining.⁷⁹

This process of running away or hiding at the approach of BSAC officials engaged in recruiting for the war was mirrored in other districts of the country, and reflected the reluctance of many to become involved in a war that was patently seen as not being their own.

Appeals to the abstract

One of the issues that requires more research is the more metaphysical issue of appeals to the abstract notions of patriotism, duty, and so forth, which were deployed by the British administrators as they sought to convince people to support the war effort and enlist as soldiers or carriers in support of the British. The correspondence and personal papers of British administrators are awash with patriotic sentiment in support of the war effort.⁸⁰ But the extent to which the sentiments contained within these appeals were grasped and shared by African audiences is a matter for debate. What exactly did African audiences think of statements by administrators, which we now know to be only partly true? In Luwingu, to the north of the Bangweulu swamps in 1915, District Commissioner H. Groad, in addressing chiefs, claimed that:

It was the custom of the English that in war every person did some work to further the common end, whether in the fighting line or in other spheres. It must be the same here and there must be no slacking.⁸¹

Groad's words, which appealed to sentiments instilled in the boarding schools of England and Natal, made sense within that paradigm, but what they meant in central Africa is another matter altogether.

Similarly, when Magistrate E.S.B. Taggart and Native Commissioner J.F.A. Speedy addressed chiefs at Mumbwa and spoke of military operations on 'our Northern Border in the neighbourhood of Abercorn and Fife', which required the mass recruitment of war carriers, what exactly did the assembled chiefs understand? Did these men, at more than 1200 kilometres distance from, 'Abercorn and Fife', know of these settlements, let alone that they utilised or comprehended the concept of 'our Northern Border'? Indeed, what did they think of the appeal that they 'help to drive off the enemy and save their country'?⁸² Similarly, how did the African men react to being likened to women

⁷⁹ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 423.

⁸⁰ Indeed a reading of these papers makes it clear that the sentiments expressed by the actor Hugh Laurie as Lieutenant The Honourable George Colthurst St. Barleigh MC in the television series *Black Adder Goes Forth* are not particularly exaggerated.

⁸¹ NAZ, KSZ 5/1, Luwingu District Note Book, p. 125-6, Meeting with chiefs, 11 September 1915.

⁸² NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 366, Meeting of chiefs, 2 September 1915.

and children? In what can only be referred to as a patronising speech, Speedy and Taggart addressed their audience with a fantasy rendition of pre-colonial African practises and gave vent to their racist and sexist sentiments:

When they themselves used to go out to war they often started with their women and children carrying food for them but never took them into the fight, why should the whiteman do otherwise with the carriers of their supplies? In any case it was no time to wait. A man with an enemy on his boundary did not wait until that enemy had reached the threshold of his house – if he was wise. It was essential that carriers turn out at once.⁸³

In addressing the chiefs, Taggart and Speedy further claimed that ‘there was not a chance of any of the men now asked for of hearing a shot fired – they would be paid and fed for their work as they always were, *but this was no ordinary work, money was a secondary consideration*, that they had to remember was that they were going to help the whitemen to keep the enemy out of the country and to save the property and lives of their own people’.⁸⁴ Given the attrition rates that existed amongst frontline carriers, it is to be wondered if Taggart and Speedy ever came to rue their needlessly optimistic words.⁸⁵

Conclusion

In exchange for labour and food, the colonial administration supported and rewarded African chiefs and headmen, and thereby extended its control over Northern Rhodesia.

Anxious for carriers and food supplies, yet thinly spread across the territory, BSAC administrators needed to work through the chiefs and headmen, and were dependent on their support. In turn, in exchange for carriers and food supplies the BSAC administrators promised and undertook steps to support and increase the authority and influence of the chiefs and headmen of Zambia.⁸⁶ A decade and a half prior to the formal introduction of indirect rule, BSAC administrators, operating under the pressures of wartime conditions, sought to administer the

⁸³ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 367, Meeting of chiefs, 2 September 1915.

⁸⁴ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 367, Meeting of chiefs, 2 September 1915. Italics added.

⁸⁵ Gelfand, *Northern Rhodesia*, pp. 274-5 contains a detailed breakdown of war carrier deaths.

⁸⁶ These events in Zambia mirror exactly what Frederick Cooper has described with regard to Indirect Rule for other parts of Africa. Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 184: In discussing colonial rule, Cooper summed up the background to indirect rule; ‘colonial states, ..., were thin: they needed the legitimacy and coercive capacity of local authority to collect taxes and round up labour, and they needed local knowledge’. To this end chiefs or ‘people whom colonial rulers [sometimes] mistakenly thought influential’ were appointed to carry out the day-to-day administration of ‘their’ people. Cooper aptly provided the following rider, ‘such people had to enforce colonial power – under threat of dismissal or worse – but they could not be pushed too far or they would become too discredited to serve the regime’.

territory and its African population through Zambia's chiefs and headmen.⁸⁷ In this 'marriage of convenience' African chiefs and headmen were able to extend and expand their influence and authority through the acquisition of all manner of material and immaterial provisions from the BSAC administration in exchange for labour and food supplies. Yet there was a flipside to this in that the colonial administration did not lose sight of its goal to extend and expand its authority across the territory. Consistently the administration ensured that its labour recruitment, and the subsequent enhancement of the status of chiefs and headmen, was in keeping with its ultimate aims and objectives: to establish and consolidate its control over the territory.

For four years during World War One, labour was recruited all across Northern Rhodesia, from Mwinilunga to Chipata, from Mumbwe to Serenje, and in all of these places across Zambia the BSAC was able to extend its influence. In a process that covered four years, Zambia's chiefs and headmen supported and assisted the British war effort through the supply of labour and food stuffs; in exchange the chiefs were rewarded in a number of ways, as outlined above, ranging from financial incentive through to the supply of messengers and policemen that were used in enforcing the will of the chiefs on their subjects. Through their alliance with the colonial authorities, chiefs and headmen were once again able to centralise their power for the first time since the ending of the long-distance trade in the 1890s. However, although the chiefs were able to extend their control over their subjects, at the same time, the colonial state, by supporting and working through the chiefs, extended its control over the chiefs and their people across all of Zambia.

⁸⁷ Exactly when Indirect Rule was introduced to Zambia is a matter for debate: Fields, *Revival and Rebellion*, p. 32, fn. 7; Roberts, *History of Zambia*, p. 202.

War, the limits of technology, the application of human labour, and the extension of colonial rule

Introduction

The African continent has often been the site chosen for deployment of the very cutting edge of western technology, and nowhere has this been more so than in the context of war. From French Nuclear testing in the 1960s, Italian airborne gas attacks in the 1930s, German concentration camps in the 1900s, and British massed musketry the 1890s, Africa has borne the brunt of European hubris. However, as equally important as the effective and efficient killing of enemies in war, are the issues of transport and communication in war, and this, as we have seen, was particularly true in the context of World War One in Northern Rhodesia. This chapter details how, in an effort to overcome the limitations of human-borne transport, the very cutting edge of imperial industrial technology was introduced into central Africa. Unfortunately for the British, the technology introduced failed to reduce the demand for labour, and in one specific instance can be seen to have increased the demand for labour for transport purposes.

The frontline on the border between Northern Rhodesia and German East Africa provided enormous logistical difficulties for British forces. No less than 1000 kilometres from the nearest railhead at Broken Hill, the frontline could only be reached on foot through tsetse-fly infested country where draft animals could not be used as they would be killed through infection with trypanosomiasis. In addition, no roads suitable for wheeled transport had been built. This meant that, in the first instance, British forces were totally reliant on carriers for their transport needs. From late 1915 onwards, British forces were commanded by Major-General Sir Edward Northey, whose first and most pressing problems of

command related to transport.¹ Taking up his command, Northey travelled by rail to Livingstone and:

... spent three days interviewing many old Colonials who knew the Frontier well, and discussing and arranging the very difficult question of supply and transport over the six hundred miles from the Rhodesian Railway to the North-Eastern Border.²

Northey was informed that 'in this country, except on a few bits of road south of the Frontier, all transport had to be done by Carriers, who consume as much as they carry in one month'.³ Administrator Wallace, who had sought to ensure the effective supply of goods and materials to the front by carriers, worked out the capacity per distance of carriers:

The average rate of travel for carriers, ... is about 15 miles per day. The net load carried is 60lbs to which has to be added cooking pots blanket etc. Their rations are 2½ lbs of meal per day. A carrier would therefore eat the full weight of his load in 24 days, that is on a 12 days journey outward (180 miles) and 12 days return.⁴

Clearly, the transporting of goods to the front 600 miles away could not be effectively done by carriers. Indeed, Wallace calculated that, should he wish to ensure the supply of 1 ton per day at the front 600 miles from the railhead, he would need no less than 71,000 carriers.⁵ At the time there was a taxable population of approximately 120,000 in Northern Rhodesia of which approximately 80,000 could be recruited. However, 'it was found that[,] if more than one third of these away at a time[,] cultivation suffered, with a consequent loss of the food we so much wanted'.⁶

Anxious to find a solution to these pressing problems, the colonial administrators put their faith in technological innovations. However, in the short term, the technology that appeared to hold so much promise could only function with the application of substantial amounts of African labour, and was, economically speaking, far more expensive and inefficient than the labour power that it had sought to replace. In the end, petrol-driven motorcars and steam-driven traction engines, although they may have stood at the very forefront of imperial industrial technology, failed in the context of war in Northern Rhodesia between 1914 and 1918. Yet, although imperial industrial technology failed, at the same

¹ For further information on Northey, see G.W. Hatchell, O.B.E., 'The British Occupation of the South-Western Area of Tanganyika Territory, 1914-1918'. In: *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 1958, Number 51, pp. 131-155.

² NA, WO 95/5329, East Africa Brig Gen E. Northey's War Diary, 4 Dec. 1915 – 8 Apr. 1916, 7 January 1916.

³ NA, WO 95/5329, East Africa Brig Gen E. Northey's War Diary, 4 Dec. 1915 – 8 Apr. 1916, 7 January 1916.

⁴ NA, CAB 45/14, East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border, folio 2.

⁵ NA, CAB 45/14, East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border, folio 3.

⁶ NA, CAB 45/14, East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border, folio 4.

time bold plans that used and controlled African labour in ways and scales never seen before proved to be successful and in the long-term contributed substantially to the increased control of the incipient colonial state in Northern Rhodesia.

Nsumbu Island

‘The Sub-district was formed as the outcome of the Luapula-Chambeshi water transport, which was started for war purposes in 1916’.⁷

The effective supply of British forces on the frontline through the use of carriers soon reached the limit of what was possible. Faced with a logistical collapse and seeking to overcome the limits of carrier portage, British military officers actively sought alternatives and resorted to other and at times new forms of technology. One such form was the audacious attempt to transport goods from the railhead to the frontline by canoe in a landlocked country. After a few attempts a route was established that led from the railhead at Ndola, via the Luapula and Chambeshi Rivers through the Bangweulu swamps to a frontline depot near to Kasama. Eventually an estimated 12,000 people and 2000 canoes were registered and employed in the transport of goods along this route. However, before this could be done an effective route had to be found through 8000 square kilometres of swamp.

Attempting to illustrate the interconnected intricacies of the Chambeshi River, the Bangweulu Swamps, and the Luapula River, Frank Debenham, professor of geography at Cambridge University, resorted to a mischievous and slightly shocking yet effective image. To a reading public that had never visited Northern Rhodesia, let alone the Bangweulu swamps, Debenham asked his audience to imagine an enormous thick pile carpet that was stretched out on an inclined table of which three of the four legs were raised from the ground. The carpet’s thick pile had been shorn to different lengths and in different directions, leaving parts of the carpet almost bare, and others luxuriously thick. At the highest point of the table, a tap was fitted that allowed water to flow onto the carpet. As the water travelled to the lowest point it sought out the easiest way across the table top, flowing swiftly where the pile had been shorn in the direction of the flow, stagnating and piling up where its way was impeded by the pile, to eventually flow off the table at its lowest point. In this manner Debenham illustrated the way in which the Chambeshi River that rises in the northeast of Zambia flows

⁷ NAZ, KTA 4/1, Nsumbu Island District Note Book, folio 8.

southwestwards through a myriad of channels and swamps to eventually join the Luapula River on the Congo border.⁸

Hopelessly lost, wracked by fever, and stubbornly keeping to his own course, David Livingstone died in an ill-fated attempt to cross the Bangweulu Swamps and reach the Luapula River, the headwaters of the Congo River in 1873.⁹ It was not until the advent of aerial photography and the Cambridge University expedition led by Professor Debenham between 1946 and 1949 that the Chambeshi, Bangweulu, Luapula river system would be ‘cartographically disciplined’, surveyed, and mapped. Although enthusiastic colonial officials placed signposts at strategic places in the swamps in the 1950s, these soon disappeared, and travel through the flat, wet, green, and seemingly endless wetlands was once again only possible with the assistance and goodwill of the swamp’s local inhabitants.¹⁰ At the outbreak of war in 1914, the situation was no different: ‘it was impossible to go far into the swamps at all for one would quickly be lost without expert guides, and there were none willing to act as such’.¹¹ Nonetheless, in 1911 *oberleutnant* Paul Graetz had bludgeoned, carried, and threatened his way through the Chambeshi River to Lake Bangweulu and on to the Luapula River where his boat ‘Sarotti’ had sunk at Kabunda.¹² Thus, although colonial officials knew that the Chambeshi and the Luapula rivers must be connected, exactly how and where was not known to them.¹³

Having served as a Native Commissioner and worked as a professional hunter and trader in the Bangweulu area, it was J.E. Hughes who suggested a route through the swamps in late 1915. However, when C.J. Josselin de Jong, who as Secretary for Agriculture in Northern Rhodesia had conducted surveys in the Bangweulu area and supported the establishment of a rubber factory on the Chambeshi River, had attempted to pass through the swamps, he was stranded on account of low water levels. Nevertheless, Hughes remained convinced that ‘there must be a channel, [and] decided to make a trial to get through and see if it were possible to send transport in boats that way’.¹⁴ To this end, he ‘persuaded some of the swamp men to take him by canoe from the Chambezi to the

⁸ Frank Debenham, *Study of an African Swamp*, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1952), p. 85.

⁹ Frank Debenham, ‘New light on Livingstone’s last journey’, *The Geographical Journal*, vol. CXX, part I, March 1954, pp. 1-12 & C.H.J. Rawstorne, ‘Livingstone in the Luwingu District’, *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, vol. II, no. 6, 1955, pp. 58-66.

¹⁰ In September 2006 the author travelled into the swamps in the company of Father Mpundu.

¹¹ NA, CAB 45/14, ‘East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border’, Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 6.

¹² Paul Graetz, *Im Motorboot quer durch Afrika – Teil I Vom Indischen Ozean zum Kongo*, (Berlin: Verlag Gustav Braunbeck & Gutenberg, 1912).

¹³ NA, CAB 45/14, ‘East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border’, Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 6.

¹⁴ NA, CAB 45/14, ‘East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border’, Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 6.

Luapula’, and ‘after fourteen days in the canoes, with seldom even a nearly dry place to sleep on he emerged in the Luapula’.¹⁵ Hughes was persuaded that a ‘direct useful canoe passage could be found ... and forwarded a map illustrating certain proposals’.¹⁶ In addition Hughes offered to transport goods for the government in his own canoes and those chartered from inhabitants of the region.

In the years prior to the war the colonial state had struggled to establish its authority across the wetlands, yet, given the nature of swamps the world round, it had been comparatively easy for the area’s inhabitants to withdraw and escape from the unwanted attentions of authorities.¹⁷ Sir Laurence Aubrey Wallace, who was Administrator of Northern Rhodesia at the time, noted that the swamps were inhabited by a ‘tribe who practically lived in canoes’. Established villages did not exist, although there were ‘groups of temporary shelters erected where solid land rose a few feet, or even a few inches, above the swamp’.¹⁸ These people, who were referred to as *Watwa*,¹⁹ kept almost entirely to the swamps, where they were primarily engaged in fishing and the trapping of game, which they exchanged for flour and other commodities with people living beyond the swamps. Although they spoke a dialect that was mutually intelligible to *Chibemba* speakers, Swedish traveller Rosen wrote that neighbouring groups of people ‘look down upon the Batwa as inferior beings, like to imitate their bass tones, just as they make fun of them in other ways. For example, they say that they have webbed feet’.²⁰ Sir Laurence described the difficulties the administration had in attempting to gain some measure of control over the *Watwa*, noting that they kept strictly aloof, ‘they paid no tax or tribute to anyone’, and prior to 1919 no tax was paid by inhabitants of the area. Furthermore, ‘it was seldom that they were seen by Europeans, and when seen near the edge of the swamps they quickly disappeared in their canoes, and amidst all the intricacies of the innumerable small channels it was impossible to follow them’.²¹ Travelling through the swamps in 1914, Swedish traveller Eric von Rosen provided a description of a *Watwa* settlement on an island of at most 20

¹⁵ NA, CAB 45/14, ‘East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border’, Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 6.

¹⁶ H.C. Marshall and Gordon Lobb, ‘Water transport in the Bangweulu swamps’, *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1957, p. 191.

¹⁷ See for instance, Wilfred Thesiger, *The Marsh Arabs* (London: Penguin, 1964).

¹⁸ NA, CAB 45/14, ‘East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border’, Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 6.

¹⁹ This term is derived from the Proto-Bantu term, CS 1804-5 * -*tuá*, for ‘bushpeople’ or hunters and gatherers. M. Guthrie, *Comparative Bantu*, 4 volumes, (Farnham: Gregg International Publishers, 1969-70). Mwelwa C. Musambachime provides an alternative interpretation with regard to references to the term in ‘The Unutwa society in eastern Shaba and northeast Zambia to 1920’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 27, no. 1 (1994), pp. 77-99.

²⁰ Eric von Rosen, ‘The swamps of Bangweolo and its inhabitants’, *Man*, vol. 14 (1914), pp. 109.

²¹ NA, CAB 45/14, ‘East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border’, Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 6.

metres in diameter. Von Rosen noted that both Hughes ‘the otter hunter’ and Captain Harrington (D.C. Fort Rosbery) had ‘laid especial stress on the fact that if a Batwaman should see that I or any of my people bore arms, we should never be able to get near them’.²²

The Hughes proposal, apart from enabling a constant and steady re-supply of the frontline, thus had the added advantage of bringing the inhabitants of the Bangweulu into the ambit of the colonial state. The proposal consequently came to be supported by the military and administrative authorities. Visiting Commissioner H.C. Marshall, writing in 1917, commented:

It was realised that if the route proved satisfactory as a means of getting forward a large tonnage of stores, the lake inhabitants (who for many years had shown considerable independence and very little desire to move away from their homes on the water and engage in any kind of work) could be offered employment on a large scale agreeable to themselves and of great service to us.²³

Although hunting and gathering was not necessarily considered by colonial administrators to be ‘work’, the fact remained that they would come to depend upon the *Watwa* for the successful transport of the colonial state’s war materials.

In January 1916, contracts were signed with Hughes, and a trial shipment of about ten tons consisting primarily of biscuits was dispatched from the railhead at Ndola to the frontline stores at Kasama.²⁴ Within 15 ten-hour working days all the canoes of the small flotilla owned by Hughes ‘arrived safely through the marsh and passed up the Chambezi and took one of its tributaries to within 30 miles of Kasama, the main food depot’ south of the front.²⁵ Hughes had successfully made the journey and showed the feasibility of the water route through the swamps.²⁶

Following on the news of Hughes’ success, Administrator Wallace commented, ‘we thus had a new route and a new and less wasteful method of transport’.²⁷ A mode of transport that, as with the carrier portage that continued to operate in parallel to this waterborne route, provided employment for tens of thousands of young men from all over Northern Rhodesia. Specifically, from the railhead at Ndola, the waterborne route consisted of the following three stages: i) 70 miles of carrier transport across the Congo Pedicle to Kabunda/Kapalala on the Luapula River, ii) 400 miles of canoe transport via the Luapula to the

²² Von Rosen, ‘The swamps of Bangweolo’, pp. 105.

²³ Marshall & Lobb, ‘Water transport in the Bangweulu’, p. 191.

²⁴ NA, CAB 45/14, ‘East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border’, Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 7. & Marshall and Lobb, ‘Water transport in the Bangweulu’, p. 192.

²⁵ NA, CAB 45/14, ‘East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border’, Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 7.

²⁶ Marshall & Lobb, ‘Water transport in the Bangweulu’, p. 193.

²⁷ NA, CAB 45/14, ‘East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border’, Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 7.

Bangweulu swamps and on to the Lukulu River a tributary of the Chameshi River, and iii) 30 miles of carrier transport to Kasama.²⁸

The colonial administration used the railway line to drain and transport thousands of labourers from Western Zambia to Broken Hill (Kabwe) and Ndola from where they were then deployed to work as carriers. Colonial officials who had worked in the western districts were employed to recruit labour for the war effort as carriers. The first loads to be transported from Ndola to Kabunda/Kapalala were carried by a 'large numbers of Barotse natives [who] were brought by Mr. Venning [founder of the Boma in Balovale]²⁹ 'from Kalomo and there entrained for Ndola'.³⁰ These labourers were issued with 'food, salt and meat (when procurable) ... and they received pay at the average rate of 4s. per trip [Ndola to Kabunda about 100 Kilometres]'.³¹

Situated on the Luapula and with thousands of carriers and innumerable loads passing to and fro, Kabunda soon developed into a settlement of great importance.³² On the route from Ndola to Kabunda a staggering 6000 carriers from the northwest of the territory were used as porters. Writing after the war, Administrator Wallace noted that 'over this route, during the latter part of 1916 and in 1917, 2500 tons were transported'.³³ Sergeant 'Kabunda' Clarke oversaw the despatch of loads from Kabunda and stayed on after the war to trade, becoming 'Kapalala' Clarke.³⁴ The road from Ndola to Kabunda/Kapalala remained the colonial administration's 'main line of communication with the Mweru-Luapula district' in the aftermath of the war.³⁵

Following on the success of Hughes' venture, Native Commissioner Luwingu E.H.B. Goodall was instructed to make a tour of the whole water system by canoe and to organise the supply of canoes and paddlers.³⁶ In early 1916

²⁸ NA, CAB 45/14, 'East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border', Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 7.

²⁹ J.H. Venning, 'Early Days in Balovale', *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, vol. II, no. 6, 1955, pp. 53-7.

³⁰ Marshall and Lobb, 'Water transport in the Bangweulu', p. 192. Part of the labour brought by Venning was put to 'labour upon the motor car road then just commenced from Kashitu [just south of the pedicle and routed north to Kasama]'.
³¹ Marshall & Lobb, 'Water transport in the Bangweulu', p. 192.

³² In the post-war boundary negotiations between Britain and Belgium the British, aware that the route Ndola Kalonga was probably a bridge too far, actively lobbied to have Belgian territory, including the route Ndola Kabunda, 'the lesser claim', included in Northern Rhodesia. NA, WO 181/186, Rhodesia Congo Free State Boundary (Tanganyika Mweru Section) 1919-1923. August 1919, Note on the Anglo-Belgian (Rhodesian Congo) Boundaries.

³³ NA, CAB 45/14, 'East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border', Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 8.

³⁴ Marshall & Lobb, 'Water transport in the Bangweulu', p. 197.

³⁵ NA, CO 795/21/10, Annual Report: Year ended 31 March 1926, Draft of the Annual report 1925-1926 for Northern Rhodesia: Drawn up by R.S.W. Dickinson, Assistant Chief Secretary, Livingstone, 27th August 1927.

³⁶ NAZ, KTA 4/1, Nsumbu Island District Note Book, folio 8.

Wallace, as administrator for Northern Rhodesia, reported on the success of the venture to his superiors in London, with the following words:

For the forwarding of supplies to the North we have opened a new route from Ndola to the Luapula by carriers, thence by canoes up the Luapula, Bangweolo and the Chambeshi River to within a day of Kasama. The first canoes have arrived at the rubber factory in fourteen days from their start on the Luapula ... Mr. Goodall has come down that way and has brought 500 canoes with him capable of taking up between 3000 & 4000 loads which are being sent to the Luapula now, 1500 men from the Barotse District having arrived at Ndola for that purpose. Mr. Josselin de Jong went up by this route to see whether it was of any use. Mr. J.E. Hughes took him through and has now taken up the first loads. This will considerably ease the other routes and will be cheaper than transport by motor though it may not be a possible route in the driest season.³⁷

Goodall systematised the organisation and payment of the canoes and paddlers, and oversaw the development of the water routes to ensure ease of passage. This included the digging of a new channel cut between the Luapula River and Lake Chali.³⁸ In August of 1916, Goodall selected the southeastern point of Nsumbu Island (a small island of about eight square kilometres) as his headquarters from which to organise the supply of canoes and paddlers, 'being the most centrally and conveniently situated, at the or close to all the main canoe routes between the largest centres of population on the Lake and in the Swamps'.³⁹ Two routes were developed through the swamps, depending on water levels.⁴⁰ Once the system was up and running, goods were transported in 12 to 14 days from the railhead at Ndola via 'Kapalala, on the Luapula, through the Bangweulu Swamps, up the Chambeshi to Chiwutuwutu [Kasama depot] on the Great North Road, for the troops then operating on the Tanganyika border'.⁴¹

Goodall, based at Nsumbu Island, systematised and supervised the transport route through the numbering: 'a numbered metal label nailed to each craft', and registering of all craft.⁴² Canoes and paddlers were collected from all the river systems, and Goodall 'soon had registered over 12,000 paddlers and 2,000 canoes'.⁴³ The canoes were hired for whatever period they were needed and the owners received hire payment at the rate of 6*d.* per load per trip. Paddlers were engaged for two complete journeys and received 6*s.* pay and 2*s.* food allowance per journey. An extra shilling was paid to those who completed the journey in

³⁷ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 14/2/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

³⁸ Gilbert Howe, 'Memories of abandoned bomas No. 14: Nsumbu & Kawena'. In: *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, vol. III, no. 6, 1958, p. 520.

³⁹ NAZ, KTA 4/1, Nsumbu Island District Note Book, folio 8.

⁴⁰ Gilbert Howe, 'Memories of abandoned bomas', p. 520.

⁴¹ Gilbert Howe, 'Memories of abandoned bomas', p. 520.

⁴² Marshall & Lobb, 'Water transport in the Bangweulu', p. 193.

⁴³ NA, CAB 45/14, 'East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border', Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 7.

under one month.⁴⁴ Canoes in need of repairs were dealt with at Kabunda, free of charge to owners.⁴⁵ In this manner boats, 'ranging from small ones of not more than 12 inches wide which with only one paddler carried 120 lbs, to large ones which with 5 or 6 paddlers would carry half a ton'⁴⁶, transported nearly 70,000 loads of an average 25 kilogram a piece between January 1916 and February 1917.⁴⁷

Apart from a cast-iron stove that was sunk and not recovered following a hippo attack, most goods made it safely along the water route from Kabunda to Chiwutuwutu. The goods transported were described as consisting primarily of 'native food (grain purchased on the railway)' with the balance made up of 'European rations, machine gun parts, safes, petrol, bicycles, police equipment, bales of blankets and calico, rice, salt, "comforts" for troops, etc.'⁴⁸ Or as Gordon Lobb, the receiving agent at Lukulu depot put it when he betrayed his interests, 'Whisky, blankets, food of all sorts for white and native troops'.⁴⁹ Not surprisingly there was a certain amount of theft, particularly 'because the paddlers stole the mealie meal', which they sought to hide by filling up the deficit with sand. But, as all goods were weighed before departure and re-weighed upon delivery, with records of the weights being kept, a stop was soon put to this practice.⁵⁰

The astounding numbers of people directly employed in the water transport through the Bangweulu came to an end at the end of the war, and with that so too did the co-operation between the colonial administration and swamp dwellers. Writing in 1919 the District Commissioner for Nsumbu reported that, 'trade at the various stores is very slack now that the "War water transport" has stopped', in addition 'most of the boys returning from the Congo get paid off at Fort Rosebery and the greater part of their deferred pay is spent there'.⁵¹ Whereas, in exchange for cash and food thousands of men had assisted the colonial administration in its war effort, people now withdrew from association with the administration and returned to making a living through bartering otter skins and dried fish, either for cash, or more often for grain and hoes. With misplaced optimism the D.C. believed that although 'they have never been censused' and did not pay tax, it would be possible with effort 'this year (1920) to write them

⁴⁴ In one reported instance a canoe completed the return journey, a distance of approximately 1120 kilometres, in eighteen and a half days. Marshall and Lobb, 'Water transport in the Bangweulu', p. 193.

⁴⁵ Marshall and Lobb, 'Water transport in the Bangweulu', p. 193.

⁴⁶ NA, CAB 45/14, 'East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border', Manuscript of lecture given by Sir Laurence Wallace, folio 7.

⁴⁷ Marshall and Lobb, 'Water transport in the Bangweulu', p. 197.

⁴⁸ Marshall and Lobb, 'Water transport in the Bangweulu', p. 191.

⁴⁹ Marshall and Lobb, 'Water transport in the Bangweulu', p. 197.

⁵⁰ Marshall and Lobb, 'Water transport in the Bangweulu', p. 197.

⁵¹ NAZ, KTA 4/1 Nsumbu Island District Note Book, folio 410.

on the census'.⁵² In the following year, Nsumbu Island was abandoned, with the administrative offices being withdrawn northwards to Chilubi Island and the district as whole subsequently ceased to exist in 1923.⁵³

The effective withdrawal from the state by the inhabitants of the Bangweulu continued, and indeed it was only in the 1950s that the administration gained a modicum of control in the swamps. Stationed in the Bangweulu swamps in World War II, where he oversaw the export of fish stocks for the Copperbelt mines in motor-barges from the swamps along the Luapula River, colonial official Vernon Brelsford showed that the inhabitants of the swamps still retained their independence, when he wrote in 1945:

He is suspicious, he still flies into the reeds at the sight of a Boma barge and in spite of the ease of money-getting [through fishing and otter trapping] he will not part with tax until it is dragged out of him.⁵⁴

However, during the course of its operation, the combined carrier and canoe route from the railhead at Ndola and the frontline beyond Kasama brought and bound together inhabitants from all over Northern Rhodesia. The thousands of Lozi men transported by train from Livingstone to Ndola, to carry goods to the Luapula, met and mingled with Lunda carriers from Mwinilunga, as well as the Batwa canoemen and other Bemba speakers who carried the goods on to the frontline. In effect, the many and varied transport routes of the war brought together the many and varied people of Northern Rhodesia for the first time in a common purpose, as determined and designed by the centralised authority of the colonial administration; in effect, it was in this process that the colonial entity of Northern Rhodesia was established and given actual form in the lived reality of its inhabitants.

Motor transport

Against the greatest of odds, thousands of people transported war supplies and food to the frontline, thereby enabling British forces to successfully engage with German forces in GEA. However, as the thousands of carriers swarmed across the countryside, the food resources for carriers became ever more depleted and the foraging evermore difficult. Administrator Wallace wrote in early 1916, that 'the distance from the railway here to the border is ... [600 miles] so that if the carriers have to be fed from the point of starting, only one twenty-seventh part of

52 NAZ, KTA 4/1 Nsumbu Island District Note Book, folio 462.

53 Howe, 'Memories of abandoned bomas', p. 521.

54 W.V. Brelsford, *Fishermen of the Bangweulu Swamps: A study of the fishing activities of the Unga tribe* (Livingstone: Rhodes Livingstone Institute, 1946), p. 33.

the original loads arrive at the border'.⁵⁵ Much like swarms of locusts, the thousands of carriers swarmed across the landscape in a desperate search for food, and thereby devastated and reduced to famine much of Northeastern Rhodesia. In later years, Wallace, the erstwhile administrator of Northern Rhodesia, wrote that in 1915, in the first year of the war,

the country had not been quite denuded of its share of food and we were able by carrier transport to keep the troops in supplies, but we had to prepare for heavier demands and motor transport seemed the only way out.⁵⁶

Anxious to be able to continue to wage the war, British authorities sought out other forms of transport that in the first instance did not appear to depend on extensive amounts of human labour. Thus, when General Northey assumed command of British forces operating out of Northern Rhodesia in late 1915, he sought to engineer a shift in supply from carriers to motor transport where possible:

I am now arranging for carriers to enable mobile forces to get forward and for the making of roads for motor traffic for forward and lateral communication.⁵⁷

Motor vehicles appeared to offer the solution to Northey's wishes. Instead of a string of porters each carrying a maximum of 60 lbs on their shoulders for an absolute maximum of 15 miles a day, the Model T easily transported tenfold the amount of a porter and for far more than 15 miles a day.⁵⁸

In early 1916, when it was becoming apparent that 'the stores of native foods may run short towards the end of the wet season', a decision was taken 'to make an attempt to use mechanical transport between Kashitu and Abercorn'.⁵⁹ To this end, 'a motor expert, Captain Duly ... and Mr. C.W. Briggs, road engineer' had been despatched to report upon the route and to 'commence work upon the difficult sections'.⁶⁰ Laurence Wallace, as administrator of Northern Rhodesia, remarked that 'it is certain that our present means of transport are not sufficient for us to ensure supplies on the border', and noted that it had been agreed 'to push stores through from the railway by motor transport and authorised Major

⁵⁵ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 3/2/16, to Governor of Nyasaland, Zomba. Underscore in the original.

⁵⁶ NA, CAB 45/14, 'East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border'.

⁵⁷ NA, WO 95/5329, East Africa Brig Gen E. Northey's War Diary 4 Dec 1915 – 8 Apr 1916

⁵⁸ Stephen Rockel wrote to me in 1998 with the following: 'I like the story told with astonishment by a colonial official in Tanganyika about porters and a lorry in the Kilimanjaro region. Some time in the late 1920s he recruited unwilling Chagga porters to go on tour with him, only to find that they all chipped in to hire a lorry to transport his loads. This made more economic sense to them – they could make more money if they stayed behind rather than wandering around the countryside for a pittance'.

⁵⁹ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), Marshall, Visiting Commissioner, 22/1/16, to Secretary BSAC London.

⁶⁰ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), Marshall, Visiting Commissioner, 22/1/16, to Secretary BSAC London.

Masterman to spend up to £10,000 on the purchase of motors'.⁶¹ The administration was under no illusion as to the costs of the endeavour, but realised that with the collapse of agricultural production in the northeast of the territory, motor transport could prove to be a partial solution:

A good road and motor transport will considerably ease the transport troubles and will prevent disaster if the crops in the north are much below the average but the cost will be much higher than the cost by native carriers when these can be fed on the country through which they pass.⁶²

In the course of 1916 a road was cut and bridges built from the railhead at Broken Hill to two points on the border. Up to 17 motorcars were obtained via South Africa and converted into lorries able to carry 700 lbs plus a driver and his kit. The road was an earthen track, with exception of approximately 80 miles of sand where, 'wheel tracks in the sand were filled with soft stone and the cars ran on two slightly sunken ribbons of Macadam thus formed'.⁶³

However, even as they were planning for the establishment of the road and the motor-transport set-up, the authorities were aware of the fact that the demands for food on the border were in excess of what could be transported by the 17 motor vehicles. Wallace estimated that 'the amount of native food needed on the border is probably not less than three tons per day', but that the 'seventeen motors cannot be relied on between them to deliver more than one ton per day'.⁶⁴ Not surprisingly Wallace concluded, 'many more motors will be needed if there should be a call for large quantities of supplies for troops, or more active operations'.⁶⁵ In addition the cumulative financial costs of the operation could only be guessed at, and were clearly daunting for the Administrator:

I do not think that the working costs can be estimated at less than 70£ per ton ... to this the whole cost of the road and the motors will have to be added ... I wish to emphasise (1) that the £10,000 authorised for the purchase of motors is only a portion of the first cost of the scheme, (2) that if some offensive be taken in the North or the strength of the forces be increased ... we may be asked ...to considerably increase the expenditure.⁶⁶

Anxious to defray costs, yet ensure that sufficient supplies reached the frontline, Wallace turned for help to his counterpart, the governor in Nyasaland. Wallace explained that the difficulty in maintaining a sufficient supply of food for the front was primarily due to the sparse population, which did not grow enough 'to supply food for the stream of carriers passing through with other supplies for the

⁶¹ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 8/2/16, to Secretary BSAC London.

⁶² NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 8/2/16, to Secretary BSAC London.

⁶³ NA, CAB 45/14, 'East Africa Campaign Great War: Accounts of activities on and around the Northern Rhodesia Border', folio 1.

⁶⁴ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 8/2/16, to Secretary BSAC London.

⁶⁵ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 8/2/16, to Secretary BSAC London.

⁶⁶ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 8/2/16, to Secretary BSAC London.

whole of the forces'.⁶⁷ In addition, mechanical transport, from the railhead to the frontline, 'was not possible at this time of year [rainy season]'. Consequently, Wallace admitted to his counterpart, 'I had hoped that the much shorter route between Lake Nyasa and Fife ... could be utilised as another line of supply to the troops at Fife'.⁶⁸ Unfortunately for Wallace, his request was turned down when the governor of Nyasaland sent him the following rather dramatic telegram:

You must abandon all hope of assistance from this side, local supplies insufficient for our own requirements, we are importing from outside and our means of transport most severely strained.⁶⁹

With support from Nyasaland being denied, and ever-greater shortages in food as the rainy season started coming to an end, further motorcars were ordered in a desperate attempt to get sufficient supplies to the frontline. However, even with extra motorcars, it was evident to the administration that it would not be possible to transport sufficient supplies to the frontline. Writing to the secretary of the BSAC, Administrator Wallace wrote:

I hear from Colonel Masterman that he has asked Mr. Chaplin for authority to buy 10 more motor lorries and cars for the road Kashutu to Kasama, this will make a total of 26 cars with which he hopes to be able to deliver 2,000 lbs per day at Kasama. I estimated that three tons per day were needed and I am now informed that the amount required is nearer five tons per day. It is evident that if the motor transport had to be depended upon we should need a very large number of cars. The road will be a safeguard against failure but I hope that except for urgent stores we shall not have to use it much as the running costs alone cannot be less than £70 to £80 per ton.⁷⁰

Although it is evident that individual motor vehicles were able to transport more than carriers, the issues of cost and climate determined that the British had to continue to rely on carriers until the end of the war. That is, when all was said and done, using carriers was a cheaper and more effective way of ensuring that supplies reached the frontline than depending on motor vehicles.

The motor vehicles used to transport goods to the frontline, transported no more than an estimated 5% of the total, and at costs that were far in excess of other forms of transport. Consequently, in a report written in August 1916, Administrator Wallace suggested that it would be the first form of transport to be discontinued.⁷¹ However, the speed with which motorcars could travel was not lost upon the administration. Touring the northern border by motorcar in August 1916, Wallace reflected on the fate of his colleague, Mr Marshall, who had preceded him on the same journey on foot:

⁶⁷ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 3/2/16, to Governor of Nyasaland, Zomba.

⁶⁸ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 3/2/16, to Governor of Nyasaland, Zomba.

⁶⁹ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), Telegram, Zomba, 24/2/16 Governor to Administrator, Livingstone.

⁷⁰ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 27/3/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

⁷¹ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/4), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 21/8/16, to General Edwards.

Travelling by motor I was back before him though he had started thirteen weeks before me. Altogether I was away three and a half weeks on a journey which under the old conditions would have occupied as many months.⁷²

None the less the costs involved, not only in the maintenance of the motor-vehicles, but more particularly in maintaining a motorable road were such that Wallace suggested that:

When it is known that there is to be no further urgent need for much transport this motor transport is the first that should be abandoned as its cost is extremely high and the percentage carried on it of the total transport is very small.⁷³

Once British forces had begun their full-scale invasion of German East Africa, and they had begun utilising food supplies available in GEA, the motor transport route in Northern Rhodesia was suspended. Administrator Wallace reported:

The motor traffic on the road has been suspended, the most useful cars having been sent to General Northey in GEA; the rest (principally wrecks) are stored and being repaired at Kashitu.

...

As there is not much probability of the motor road being used again I have not felt justified in keeping a great number of men on its maintenance, ...⁷⁴

Essentially, in terms of cost efficiency the introduction of the motor vehicle in Northern Rhodesia was far from a success, and there was initially nothing to indicate the later dominance of the motorcar and lorry in the territory's transport sector. As long as thousands of carriers could be dragooned into carrying goods at monetary costs that lay substantially below those of motorised transport, the administration would continue to rely on human transport. The motorcar might well have been at the very forefront of cutting edge technology, but in terms of financial considerations cars were simply too expensive to justify their continued use. The continued reliance of the colonial administration on human labour, coupled with the specific conditions of war, meant that the administration was able to further extend its control over the people that lived in Northern Rhodesia.

⁷² NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 21/8/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

⁷³ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 21/8/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

⁷⁴ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/4), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 12/2/17, to Secretary BSAC, London.

Hot and bothered

‘Secret it is intended to send two armed motor boats with personnel to Lake Tanganyika by rail from Cape Town to Elizabethville thence overland by lake Mweru to Mpweto’.⁷⁵

In 1915 the British Royal Navy transported two motorboats overland from Cape Town to the headwaters of the Congo River and on to Lake Tanganyika 4000 km to the North. These boats, part of the ‘Tanganyika Naval Expedition’ led by Commander Spicer Simson, destroyed German naval presence on Lake Tanganyika and provided the British with a welcome victory in the face of stalemated carnage on the Western Front, and humiliating defeat in Gallipoli. The Tanganyika Naval Expedition had all the makings of a *Boys’ Own Adventure*,⁷⁶ and the expedition formed the basis for countless romanticised novels and films, the most famous of which being C.S. Forester’s *The African Queen*, which was later transformed into an award winning film starring Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn.⁷⁷

By and large contemporary portrayals of the Tanganyika Naval Expedition are based on *The Phantom Flotilla* by Peter Shankland, which served as the prime source for the subsequent portrayal of Spicer-Simson and the expedition, of which Giles Foden’s rendition in *Mimi and Totou Go Forth* is the most extreme and exotic. These stand in surprising contrast to more contemporary documents such as the *National Geographic* and *Northern Rhodesia Journal*, which contain reminiscences of contemporary participants in the expedition, and all the more so in contrast to the extremely efficient lieutenant commander presented in the pages of C.S. Forester’s *The African Queen*.⁷⁸

In all of these portrayals, romanticised or otherwise, the role of Africans other than as exotic extras has been ignored. Yet, but for these Africans, or more specifically African labour, the expedition would never have reached the headwaters of the Congo River let alone Lake Tanganyika. In what follows, the role is examined of African Labour in the context of the Tanganyika Naval

⁷⁵ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, From: Admiralty to Senior Naval Officer, Simonstown, 27 April 1915.

⁷⁶ Richards, ‘Boys’ Own Empire’.

⁷⁷ The making of the film *The African Queen* (1951), starring Katharine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart in the late colonial Belgian Congo, in turn formed the basis for another film starring Clint Eastwood, *White Hunter Black Heart* (1990).

⁷⁸ C.S. Forester, *The African Queen* (London, Heinemann, 1935). H.M.S Matilda and H.M.S Amelia, ‘...those motor-boats had cost in blood and sweat and treasure more than destroyers might have done, for they had been sent out from England, and had been brought with incredible effort overland through jungle, by rail and by river, to the harbour in which they lay [Port Albert, Belgian Congo]’, p. 177, 1986 Penguin edition.

Expedition as it passed overland from the railhead in Fungurume to the headwaters of the Congo River on the Lualaba at Bukama. In contrast to much that has been written with regard to the expedition, this contribution will not deal with the actual naval engagements on Lake Tanganyika. Instead, it will focus on the role of African Labour in the context of World War One in Africa.

World War One did not play out in a sociocultural void in Africa, in which people did not exist. Any historical understanding of the war requires that the central importance of African portage labour be recognised.⁷⁹ This chapter, interested as it is in the role of Africans and their societies in central Africa at the time of the war, is interested in the socially embedded nature of the Tanganyika Naval Expedition, its traction engines, boats, and so forth. All of these magnificent products of industrial England were only able to move and operate in Africa because African societies enabled them to do so. Without African labour the boats would never have moved beyond Cape Town. However, the question that needs to be borne in mind is: how was African labour mobilised?

To illustrate and argue the point made above, this sub-chapter provides a short description of the Tanganyika Naval Expedition, before moving on to an overview of the manner in which labour was recruited for the expedition. The sub-chapter emphasises that the expedition did not pass through a terra incognita, but that in historical terms the expedition moved through what had been the heartlands of the Garenganze polity established by Msiri. Furthermore, the expedition, far from operating at the ends of the earth, as it has often been portrayed, took place in the context of the Katangese Copperbelt: at that time the second most industrialised region of sub-Saharan Africa after the Witwatersrand in South Africa.

Short description of the Tanganyika Naval Expedition

Following the colonisation of German East Africa, the German authorities had established an extensive infrastructure that included direct rail links between the Indian Ocean and Lake Tanganyika, as well as steamboats and steamships on Lake Tanganyika. With the outbreak of war these vessels were readied for military action and put to immediate and deadly use. Within two weeks of the opening of hostilities in Europe, a German gunboat, the Hedwig von Wissmann, steamed across Lake Tanganyika and, through cannon fire, destroyed the Belgian steamer, Alexandre del Commune, the only ship that could have posed a threat to the German presence on the lake. The existence of a strong German naval

⁷⁹ One of the few novels dealing with World-War-One Africa, which at times manages to extend beyond the exotic and portray the war for what it was, carnage, is William Boyd, *An Ice-Cream War* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1982).

presence on Lake Tanganyika, and the consequent capacity of the Germans to rapidly transport and land troops anywhere along the lake's shores, exposed the Belgian Congo and Northern Rhodesia to attacks.

In April 1915, the admiralty received a letter from a hunter and labour recruiter in Northern Rhodesia, named Lee, who suggested a hare-brained plan to place British motorboats on Lake Tanganyika to tackle the German navy there. As was so often the case, Lee sought to emphasise the importance of his plan by drawing to the fore that most terrible of all colonial bogeys, an armed rebellion on the part of the ever-restless natives:

I wish to point out that the trust to be placed in the loyalty of the Awembas in NR is still more of a risky and doubtful proposition, and the opinion is generally held by the old hands of N. Rhodesia that a general rising of the natives north of the Zambesi may take place at any moment unless these natives be duly impressed at the power of the Empire.⁸⁰

Although a civil servant scribbled a note on the file cover suggesting that the administrator of Northern Rhodesia would be 'in the best position to advise as to the effect of such operations on the native mind', it is probable that it was not so much the impact on the 'native mind' that played a role as it was seen as an opportunity to 'tackle Jerry'.⁸¹ In the event, as the man on the spot, Lee was promoted from being a hunter on the outer reaches of the frontier of the British Empire to lieutenant commander in the Royal Navy.

Plans were drawn up to transport two petrol-driven gunboats overland from Cape Town to Lake Tanganyika. In early July 1915, the expedition under the command of commander Spicer Simson arrived in Cape Town. Less than two weeks later the expedition arrived in Elizabethville in the Belgian Congo and detrained at Fungurume, the end of the railway line from Cape Town to the Katangese Copperbelt. Prior to the arrival of the expedition in Congo, Commander Lee, the man who had suggested the scheme, and Lieutenant Hope had been sent on ahead to reconnoitre a route for the expedition from Fungurume to Bukama. Apart from falling out with one another, Lee and Hope brought back conflicting reports as to the feasibility of the undertaking. Hope, who had contracted Italian labour contractors to build a road capable of carrying the expedition's steam traction engines, trailers, and boats, returned reports to Spicer Simson, the commander of the expedition, that did not bode well for the expedition:

Monsieur Frashoti ... affirms that he would never try to bring a Traction engine over this route. He has been thirty years in this Katanga and cut the original carriers road we are

⁸⁰ NA, DO 119/908, War: Tanganyika Motorboat Expedition.

⁸¹ NA, DO 119/908, War: Tanganyika Motorboat Expedition.

following. His advice is to depend on boys and oxen over the worst part, using tractions when possible.⁸²

Spicer Simson dismissed the claims of the Italians, writing in his report to the admiralty that Mr Barducci 'is believed to be a German agent'.⁸³

Once the two steam traction engines detrained at Fungurume, they proved to be incapable of drawing both stores and boats at the same time. In addition, the cradles originally designed for the boats began breaking up. Thus the decision was taken to transfer the boats onto the goods trailers and to allow for the goods to be transported by porters.⁸⁴ As Frank Magee, who accompanied Lee and Spicer Simson noted in his later report on the expedition:

In the meantime stores were being sent ahead by native carriers, each boy [sic] carrying on his head a load weighing about 60 pounds. Provisions, ammunition, and petrol for the motor-boats were all transported in this fashion, our string of native carriers extending in a single file for miles.⁸⁵

Through relying on literally hundreds of African porters and labourers, in the end the expedition succeeded. As Commander Spicer Simson noted in one of his monthly reports to the admiralty in London:

As to the road itself, Mr. Lee, who suggested this road to their lordships in May last, informed them that the road was already in existence, and that it would only require to be widened, have some of the sharp curves eased, and that some of the bridges would have to be strengthened.

The statement is misleading for the road, as it existed before my arrival, was nothing more than a cleared track not more than 6 feet wide. This track had been built some few years before, and as in all tropical countries is bound to occur it was rapidly becoming thick bush except for the narrow footpath used by the natives. I am informed that it is at least two years since any wheeled traffic passed over it.

Further, the road was built with a view to economy, and therefore when a large tree was met with, or an ant heap, it was left standing and the road taken around it. The bridges which existed were only foot bridges, the ox-wagons being able to go up or down a gradient of 1 in 1 and being able to ford a stream. Not one of the bridges could be utilised and nearly two hundred had to be built, some of course being only a few feet long, but others reaching as much as 100 feet. There were also many short sharp dips in the road of such formation that the boats, with their great length, would have rested across the two rises, thus bridging the dip. These dips had therefore to be filled up or a way found round them. In spite of the greatest care the sterns of the cradles have on one or two occasions touched the ground, and it has been necessary to dig a hollow to allow them to pass.⁸⁶

⁸² NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Hope, Sankisia, 19th August 1915, to Commander Simson.

⁸³ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Spicer Simson, M'wenda Makoshi, 30th August 1915, report of proceedings no.3.

⁸⁴ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Spicer Simson, M'wenda Makoshi, 30th August 1915, report of proceedings no.3.

⁸⁵ Frank J. Magee, 'Transporting a Navy through the Jungles of Africa in War Time', in *The National Geographic Magazine*, October 1922, p. 335.

⁸⁶ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Spicer Simson, Sankisia, 30th September 1915, report of proceedings no. 4, August 31st to September 28th.

In the event no less than 1000 labourers were recruited by the expedition for the overland route from the railway head at Fungurume to the railway head at Sankisia, which serviced the riverboat harbour on the Lualaba at Bukama.⁸⁷

Labour recruitment and transport of Spicer Simson

Commander Lee, the erstwhile hunter who had dreamt up the scheme, made an initial contract with Mr Lock, 'a Transport Contractor, to improve the road, supply labour and transport between Nguba and Sankisha'.⁸⁸ Sub-Lieutenant Dudley had meanwhile arranged with Mr Davison, another transport contractor, to supply labour and to improve the road from the southern end. In the event, Lock eventually took over Davison's contract, with Lock undertaking the road building and Davison 'the bridging of streams and hollows'.⁸⁹ The road was improved at the rate of about 4 miles (10km) per day.⁹⁰

Mr Lock, has apparently, had difficulty in obtaining labour. I gave him orders to put 300 men on to the southern end of the road on or about 1st August. Up till now not a single man has appeared and Mr Davison has supplied me with 115 men with which labour the bad road has been built.

Mr Lock's contract, which was made by Lieutenant Commander Lees before my arrival, appears to me, now that I have got a little local knowledge, to be costing some €50 per diem more than is necessary, I shall therefore cancel his contract as soon as I can get into touch with him and will endeavour to come to a better arrangement with Mr. Davison, who is prepared to put 600 men on to the road at a week's notice.⁹¹

The contracts that had originally been made with Lock and Davison were rescinded, but given the fact that new contracts became necessary for the portage of goods, neither Lock nor Davison lost out, as new contracts for portage were drawn up with the two labour recruiters.⁹² It has been noted above that the earlier advice, based on the reports of two Italian labour contractors and submitted by Hope in August 1915, regarding the inappropriate nature of the traction engines in favour of porters and oxen, had been dismissed.⁹³ Their comments turned out to be correct, and the struggle for the lucrative labour contracts began in earnest.

⁸⁷ Given that the route covered between Fungurume and Sankisia was about 200 km, this works out at one labourer every 200 metres along the whole route.

⁸⁸ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Spicer Simson, Elizabethville, 29 July 1915, to Commandant General Rhodesia.

⁸⁹ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Spicer Simson, Fungurume, 14th August 1915, report of proceedings no. 2, July 20th to August 14th.

⁹⁰ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Spicer Simson, Elizabethville, 29 July 1915, to Commandant General Rhodesia.

⁹¹ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Spicer Simson, Fungurume, 14th August 1915, report of proceedings no. 2, July 20th to August 14th.

⁹² NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Spicer Simson, M'wenda Makoshi, 30th August 1915, report of proceedings no.3.

⁹³ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Hope, Sankisia 19th August 1915, to Commander Simson.

Barducci and Lock both claimed to have been approached and bound by contract to supply labour to the expedition. The Italian labour contractors Barducci and Frashoti had dealt with Lee prior to his departure from the Congo, and for his part Hope had continued these dealings. As Hope noted in his report the dealings between Lee and Barducci 'were somewhat complicated, but took place prior to the signing of Lock's contract in Bukama'.⁹⁴ Lee received quotes of between 1.80 and 2.00 francs per labourer per day from Barducci and, from Barducci's sub-contractor Frashoti, 2.50 francs per labourer per day. Lee came to an agreement with Frashotti, with labourers starting to work on July 21st. In the ensuing conflict Barducci demanded that payment be made for no less than 460 labourers. In addition Frashotti had recruited 340 labourers.⁹⁵

The detailed mile-by-mile day-by-day reports of Spicer Simson illustrate very clearly how difficult the passage from Fungurume to Sankisia actually was. More than once men and machines were put to the test, and although Simson littered his reports with reports on roads that had been re-cut or re-surfaced, in the end it was always African labourers who saved the day. Simson's entry for 23 September 1915 being one that was not out of the ordinary:

Road still soft, but improving, and better progress made. Descended the last of the foot hills of the Plateau 150 natives carrying water between Kikoma and engines. Heavy thunderstorm on Plateau and foot hills in afternoon, but only light rain experienced by the Expedition. Camped at kikoma at about 5.30 p.m. at 4.9 miles. Captain Mouritzen of the Congo Hydrographic Service arrived from Bukama to consult with me as to the voyage down the Lualaba.⁹⁶

In the domain of shattered Msiri

The labour recruited to the expedition laboured in what had been the heartland of the Garenganze kingdom of the Nyamwezi warlord Msiri prior to its destruction in 1891.⁹⁷ Centred on the settlement of Bunkeya, which had housed around 40,000 people in the 1880s, Msiri 'ruled over a centralized state, roughly the size of Great Britain, which extended throughout much of the present Katanga province and the northern areas of Northern Rhodesia'.⁹⁸ Msiri was killed in the infamous Stairs expedition of 1891, which had firmly brought Katanga and its

⁹⁴ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Hope, Sankisia 19th August 1915, to Commander Simson.

⁹⁵ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Hope, Sankisia 19th August 1915, to Commander Simson.

⁹⁶ NA, ADM 123/142, African Lakes Operations, Africa Station War Records, Spicer Simson, Sankisia, 30th September 1915, report of proceedings no. 4, August 31st to September 28th.

⁹⁷ Thomas Q. Reefer, *The Rainbow and the Kings: A History of the Luba Empire to 1891* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 172-180, & Auguste Verbeke, *Msiri, Roi du Garenganze* (Bruxelles: Louis Cuypers, 1956).

⁹⁸ Robert I. Rotberg, 'Plymouth Brethren and the Occupation of Katanga, 1886-1907', *Journal of African History*, V, 2 (1964), p. 285.

copper riches firmly within the ambit of King Leopold's Congo Free State.⁹⁹ The early exploration of the Congo and the establishment of the Congo Free State, at the behest of King Leopold II, by men such as Stanley and culminating in the Stairs expedition, predates the Red Rubber boom popularised by Adam Hochschild, and led to the disruption and destruction of African societies and the conscious re-orientation of the Congo Basin's trade routes from the Indian to the Atlantic Ocean. As S.L. Hinde, a medical doctor who served as a mercenary in the Congo Free State, noted in his address to the Royal Geographical society:

...the trade routes have been completely altered, and the traffic which used to follow the well-beaten track from Nyangwe and the Lualaba, across Tanganyika to Ujiji, or round the lake to Zanzibar, now goes down the Congo to Stanley Pool and the Atlantic.¹⁰⁰

This is the period of disruption and destruction that many saw, and which Joseph Conrad wrote about in his seminal work, *Heart of Darkness*, and that officers who served in Leopold's mercenary army described in their reports to the Royal Geographical Society.¹⁰¹ The destruction of Msiri's kingdom destabilised the region as a whole, disrupting the caravan routes that had not only supplied the interior of Africa with consumer products, but which had also provided substantial employment for populations in the area either in supplying food and service to the caravans, or in actually supplying portage labour. In the aftermath of the Stairs expedition, many people gathered at the mission established by the Plymouth Brethren Missionaries.¹⁰² By 1906, the copper mines of Katanga, which had initially attracted Msiri to the area, were being developed by mining magnates working within the aegis of the Congo Free State. Industrial mining began in earnest in 1908 when the first industrial copper smelter was opened at Kambove and began drawing in labour from the region and eventually from far beyond.

Labour recruited in the context of mines and labour recruiters

Labour was recruited in the context of mines and labour recruiters, a rough-and-ready world in which hunter Lee, promoted to Commander Lee, took to

⁹⁹ Stairs, a Canadian adventurer, cut his teeth in equatorial Africa through accompanying Henry Morton Stanley on his deadly expeditions on behalf of King Leopold in the Congo Basin. Janina M. Konczacki, ed., *Victorian Explorer: The African Diaries of Captain William G. Stairs 1887-1892* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1998).

¹⁰⁰ S.L. Hinde, 'Three years Travel in the Congo Free State', *The Geographical Journal*, Volume 5, 1895, no. 5, p. 442.

¹⁰¹ E.G. Ravenstein, 'Recent explorations in the South-Eastern Congo Basin', *The Geographical Journal*, Volume 1, 1893, pp. 223-228; Joseph A. Moloney, 'The Stairs Expedition to Katangaland', *The Geographical Journal*, Volume 2, 1893, No. 3, pp. 238-248.

¹⁰² Gordon, *Nachituti's Gift*, p. 63.

carousing in the mining town of Kambove.¹⁰³ Much to Spicer Simson's irritation, by the time the expedition reached the Congolese Copperbelt everybody appeared to have detailed knowledge of what was supposed to be a top-secret expedition. In the event, Lee's apparent liking for alcohol and bravura got the better of him. In the mining town of Kambove, Lieutenant Commander Lee of the Royal Navy got decidedly drunk and 'dressed a coloured man in his uniform and caroused around with him in the streets'.¹⁰⁴ In his defence, Lee admitted that he had entered 'one or two of the lowest grog shops in town', as he was 'looking for a man who has considerable local knowledge'.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, having previously been found in a drunken state in the gardens of the vice governor general in Elizabethville, and in the light of further reports from Kambove, Spicer Simson let it be known that:

Lieut. Commr. Lee is not a fit person to hold His Majesty's Commission, though he has undoubtedly used his local knowledge for the advancement of His Majesty's Service and has worked with energy and zeal for the Expedition under my command.¹⁰⁶

Following the dismissal of Lee, the following expedition member to be sacked was Lieutenant Hope, who had previously submitted the first damning reports on Lee to Spicer Simson.¹⁰⁷ By the time Spicer Simson reached the Congo, Hope was found to be in a condition 'bordering on breakdown'.¹⁰⁸ Initially Hope had been instructed to 'take charge of the road-building on the North side of the Manika Plateau'.¹⁰⁹ The demands of an Italian sub-contractor for bottles of whiskey to replace the ones drunk by Hope appears to have been the final straw for Spicer Simson, who ordered Hope's immediate return under arrest to Simonstown.¹¹⁰

In the domain of intense industrialisation

No less than 1000 men were directly employed as labourers by Davison, Lock, Barducci, and Frashotti in porting goods and constructing the road between

¹⁰³ NA, DO 119/915, War: Tanganyika Motor Boat Expedition, Correspondence with regard to conduct of Lt. Commander Lee and Writer Magee.

¹⁰⁴ NA, DO 119/915, War: Tanganyika Motor Boat Expedition, Correspondence with regard to conduct of Lt. Commander Lee and Writer Magee.

¹⁰⁵ NA, DO 119/915, War: Tanganyika Motor Boat Expedition, Correspondence with regard to conduct of Lt. Commander Lee and Writer Magee; Spicer Simson, 20 July 1915, to Commandant General, Salisbury, S. Rhodesia.

¹⁰⁶ NA, DO 119/915, War: Tanganyika Motor Boat Expedition, Correspondence with regard to conduct of Lt. Commander Lee and Writer Magee; Spicer-Simson, 30 July 1915, Elizabethville, Report on Lieutenant Commander J.R. Lee, R.N.V.R, submitted to the Commandant General Rhodesia.

¹⁰⁷ NA, DO 119/915, War: Tanganyika Motor Boat Expedition, Correspondence with regard to conduct of Lt. Commander Lee and Writer Magee; Hope, Elizabethville, 10 July 1915, to Commandant General, Rhodesian Forces, Salisbury.

¹⁰⁸ NA, DO 119/919, War Tanganyika Motor Boat Expedition, Conduct of Lt. Hope RNVR, Resident Commissioner's Office, Salisbury, 26 October 1915 to Viscount Buxton High Commissioner for South Africa.

¹⁰⁹ NA, DO 119/919, War Tanganyika Motor Boat Expedition, Conduct of Lt. Hope RNVR, Spicer Simson, 1 October 1915 to the Commandant General Rhodesia.

¹¹⁰ NA, DO 119/919, War Tanganyika Motor Boat Expedition, Conduct of Lt. Hope RNVR, Spicer Simson, 1 October 1915 to the Commandant General Rhodesia.

Fungurume and Sankisia across the Mitumba mountains. This is a considerable amount of labour, particularly when one considers the intense demand for labour emanating from the Katangese Copperbelt and the demands of war portage in the Belgian Congo, German East Africa, and Northern Rhodesia as a whole. This labour was recruited in an area that was bereft of labour yet hungered for it.

Writing in the early 1960s, the historian Gann claimed that the introduction of the steam traction engine had led to a reduction in the reliance on African labour in Northern Rhodesia: ‘the steam engine in time did away with the need for slave porters’.¹¹¹ However, although this may have been true in so far as transport was carried along the railway line, this, as this chapter has demonstrated with the case of the Tanganyika Naval Expedition, was a different matter altogether when dealing with steam traction engines, which were designed to run beyond the railway line. Writing of the rubber factory established on the Chambeshi River in 1912, Eleanor Coffin noted: ‘It had become a white elephant, due to the war, as it took the traction engine, which provided the power, and three trucks, one year to get from Broken Hill to the site’.¹¹² Another commentator, dealing with the same steam traction engines used in World War One noted: ‘The engine ... is now a National Memorial and is here at Shiwa Ngandu’.¹¹³ Most damning of all was the War Office Buxton dispatch which noted, of the traction engines of the Tanganyika Naval Expedition, that ‘[w]ashing, and even drinking water, was voluntarily given up for use in the boilers of the traction engines in order that the progress of the Expedition should not be delayed’ and concluded that it had been ‘sheer madness to attempt to take traction engines alone over it’.¹¹⁴

In conclusion, the Tanganyika Naval Expedition was an event that took place within the rapidly industrializing context of the Katangese Copperbelt and not, as it is so often portrayed, in the context of primitive and exotic darkest Africa. The hundreds of porters and labourers who made the expedition possible were the forerunners of the industrial proletariat that would later be described by the anthropologists of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute. These were men – and women – who were directly involved in an industry that was truly global – all within a context, in which it is clear that labour and transport were inextricably linked and in which the global war initiated by European powers was only

¹¹¹ Gann, *History of Northern Rhodesia*, p. 101.

¹¹² Eleanor Coffin, ‘A Dental Officer, W.F. Mackeown, in the 1914-18 War’, *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, 1964, vol. V, no. 6, p. 599.

¹¹³ Colonel E.M. Wilson, ‘The Kelsey Expedition and the Rubber factory’, *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, 1964, vol. V, no. 1, p. 549.

¹¹⁴ From the High Commissioner for South Africa to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, High Commissioner's Office, Cape Town, March 10th, 1917. <http://www.naval-history.net/WW1NavyBritishLGDIspatchesArmy1916-17.htm> (Accessed 18 August 2014).

possible in Africa through the direct employment, willing or otherwise, of Africans.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed and described how, in an effort to overcome the limitations in terms of distance and capacity associated with carrier-borne transport whilst attempting to conduct war in central and East Africa, the British military deployed waterborne transport, in the form of canoe flotillas, and forms of transport that stood at the very forefront of imperial industrial technology, in the form of steam-traction engines and petrol-driven motor vehicles. In the event, as the chapter has shown, the deployment of these forms of technology depended upon large amounts of African labour, and it is debatable whether the technology was as efficient, reliable, and useful as popular perception at the time would have had one believe.

In popular perception and in much of the academic discourse emanating from the Global North throughout the past two hundred years, the African continent and its people have all too often been presented as the epitome of backwardness and underdevelopment. Interestingly, in this same period of time Africa was consistently the location where the cutting edge of technological developments, particularly in the field of armaments and communication, was deployed. The Maxim gun, rockets, telegraph, radio, and aeroplane, were all first deployed for the purposes of war in Africa. All too often this faith in the capabilities and capacities of these products of industrial technology did not live up to expectations. In effect, one can argue that this was a fetishisation of industrial technology on the part of British military planners. This fetishisation of industrial technology, in the face of its patent failure to deliver the envisaged savings in terms of labour, is clearly illustrated in this chapter by the British war planners who continued to rely on steam-traction engines and petrol-driven motor vehicles even when these examples of cutting edge imperial industrial technology could only function through the liberal application and extensive use of African labour. The continued, indeed, ever-increasing reliance upon African labour through the course of the war, although it showed up the myth of technological advantage, did have as its corollary that the British colonial administration gained an ever-increasing level of control over labour and thus the population of Northern Rhodesia as the war progressed.

World War One and the establishment of colonial rule

Introduction

The main consequence of World War One in Northern Rhodesia was the establishment of effective colonial control and administration in the territory. Elsewhere it has been argued that the colonial state had been established prior to World War One, and that its existence was threatened by the consequences of that war.¹ However, the establishment of structures on paper, as was the case in Northern Rhodesia prior to 1914, is not the same as establishing an effective administration, let alone actual control on the ground. An over reliance and ascription of reality to structures created and solely existing on paper between 1890 and 1914, has led many to believe and argue that effective colonial rule had been established in Northern Rhodesia before 1914. Instead of focussing on ephemeral paper structures this book focusses on what happened on the ground and argues that the colonial state was truly established in Northern Rhodesia in the course of World War One, as a direct consequence of the insatiable demand for labour on the part of British armed forces during the war. For the first time in the history of the administration of Northern Rhodesia, limitless funding was made available to it by the War Office; funding which provided the administration with the means to purchase and retain the allegiance of Zambia's chiefs and headmen, and through them the labour power of their subjects. It was through the outlay of capital and the promises of further rewards in kind and in cash in exchange for labour recruited through chiefs and headmen during World War One, that the BSAC administration purchased the support and dubious

¹ Yorke, *Britain, Northern Rhodesia and the First World War* & 'A Crisis of Colonial Control'.

allegiance of Zambia's chiefs and headmen, and established effective colonial control in the territory.

However, the mass recruitment of thousands upon thousands of carriers for the war effort depleted the countryside of able-bodied people and led to a collapse in food production. In addition to the demand for people for labour, the demand for food to feed this labour was high from the very beginning of the war. The incessant demands for food depleted already over-stretched food reserves, and the movement of thousands of ever-hungry carriers across the countryside finally completely destroyed all food reserves and devastated the landscape. To survive, Africans became dependent upon foodstuffs transported from the railway line, acquired in exchange for their labour power as carriers. In effect this set in motion a vicious circle in which people had to sell their labour and work in exchange for food, as a result of which they were of necessity away from their homes and thus unable to prepare the gardens and fields that could have ensured their continued self-sufficiency in food production. By 1918, the bulk of people living in Northern Rhodesia had become dependent on the colonial administration for their very existence. In exchange for labour they were paid in food, in kind, and in cash. This exchange of labour for food and reward was facilitated through the chiefs and headmen of colonial Zambia, who in this manner came to be evermore subject to the authority of an increasingly confident administration.

In a process that developed between 1914 and 1918, the BSAC administration gained effective control over the territory that would eventually become known as Zambia. During the war, and in exchange for limitless funding made available by the War Office, the chiefs and headmen of Northern Rhodesia provided the colonial administration with the people and food, which permitted British forces to operate and conduct a sustained military campaign in central and east Africa. This chapter discusses and describes the manner in which, through the exchange of labour and food for rewards in cash and kind, the chiefs and headman of Zambia unwittingly allowed, enabled, and facilitated the establishment of effective colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia.

Limitless funds

With the outbreak of World War One and the prosecution of portions of the war in Northern Rhodesia, the BSAC administration for the very first time in its existence found itself in a position in which it had access to an almost unlimited budget, which it could draw upon to fund its plans. In April 1916, the BSAC board in London wrote to inform Administrator Wallace of the various lines of

command and authority in the war, but above all that he had a free hand in determining spending:

... military operations are in hands of High Commissioner to whom Brigadier General A.H.M. Edwards and Northey [are] responsible and under whose authority they act. Consequently expenditure which they state necessary must be met. We must find the money in first instance and have no option but to meet the requirements promptly. Thus no necessity for you to refer their requirements to the board before complying though you should keep us punctually informed. Our cash position will not suffer since His Majesty's Government making advances from time to time to re-imburse us without prejudice to question of ultimate liability.²

Cash-strapped at the best of times, the administrator did not need to be told twice. Less than two months later Administrator Wallace, from Livingstone, wrote to the secretary of the BSAC, London, and promptly requested more funding:

The cost of this [re-erecting a telegraph line] and the extra cost of accumulating food for the next rainy season will make my cash requirements somewhat greater than I originally anticipated.³

As the war proceeded in east and central Africa, ever-greater demands would be placed upon the incipient administration, and ever greater would be the reimbursement of the administration for its efforts. Nonetheless, the greatest costs would be those borne by the people who, in the course of the war, would become ever more subject to the authority of the administration.

The demand for labour

From the beginning of the war, there was a large and seemingly insatiable demand for people and food on the part of British war planners in Northern Rhodesia: people for labour in the war effort and food to feed these people. A major consequence of the war was that people were away from their homes and villages, and thus from their gardens and fields. In the last year of the war, the magistrate of Serenje, P.E. Hall, stated that there were about '1,000 men from the District still at the front', this in a district which, in the last year in which a tax census had been compiled in 1913, had listed a total male population of 4,674.⁴ In other words, approximately 1 in 4 men from the Serenje District served as carriers in the war effort, yet this was not out of the ordinary. Recruitment for labour as carriers and soldiers was carried out throughout Northern Rhodesia, but

² NA, CO 417/584, High Commission for South Africa, original Correspondence, British South Africa Company, folio 129, BSAC, London, Millar, 29 April 1916, to Wallace, Livingstone.

³ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 23 June 1916, to The Secretary BSAC, London.

⁴ NAZ, KSK 3/1, Serenje District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 116a & Census figures for 1902-1913, vol. 1, p. 95.

was particularly heavy in the northeastern district of the territory. It was reported from Lusengo village in the Mumbwa District that '[o]nly women were seen at the village. All men were (entirely?) said to be at work'.⁵ A full year after the war, BSAC probationer G.W.H. Bloomfield reported from the same district that nearly all the able bodied population were still absent from the villages he visited:

Very few indeed of the able bodied population were met with at any one of the villages. Quite a number had gone to work at Lusaka & Salisbury & owing to the heavy calls for carriers about that time the remnant left behind was exceedingly small.⁶

In addition to labour recruited within Northern Rhodesia for transport purposes within the territory, there were also those recruited as 'first line transport for Mobile Column' and soldiers. In other words, these are men who left Northern Rhodesia and served as soldiers and carriers on the frontline in German East Africa. In April of 1916, General Northey signalled his intention to engage '1000 carriers for duration of [the] war' to be employed as military porters, machine gun carriers, and ambulance carriers.⁷ The military authorities stationed in Salisbury stipulated that:

It is imperative that first line transport carriers should be of good physique and not belong to timid races and on no account should their homes be near the Frontier.⁸

Apart from being paid the same as police, these men, as first-line carriers, were each to receive a blanket as equipment.⁹ In addition to first-line carriers, requests for the recruitment of African soldiers for service in the King's African Rifles (KAR) also had to be considered.¹⁰ In June of 1916, Administrator L.A. Wallace wrote to the BSAC company offices in London and noted that he had been approached by the Governor of Kenya Colony with a request 'to allow recruiting in the Awemba District for the KAR'. Even though there was an already exceedingly high demand for carriers, Wallace noted that he had agreed against the wishes of the 'Magistrate there who is heavily pressed to find men for transport'. If further recruiting were to take place, Wallace foresaw 'a great difficulty in getting supplies forwarded from Kasama northwards if many men are taken away for other purposes'.¹¹ Nonetheless, four months later a further request for KAR recruits was submitted by General Northey on behalf of General Smuts, who was in overall command of Imperial forces in East Africa.¹²

⁵ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 410.

⁶ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 441, November 18-28, 1919.

⁷ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), O.C. Border, Abercorn, 1/4/16, to Defence, Salisbury.

⁸ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), Defence, Salisbury, 5/4/16, to O.C. Border, Abercorn.

⁹ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), O.C. Border, Abercorn, 6/4/16, to Defence, Salisbury.

¹⁰ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), Governor, Nairobi, 6/6/16, to Administrator, Livingstone.

¹¹ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 23/6/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

¹² NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), Richard Goode, Secretary, 19/10/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

Touring through northeastern Zambia following the advance of the Imperial forces into German East Africa from Northern Rhodesia in May 1916, Administrator Wallace expressed his wonderment, given the demand for labour and food, at the continued 'loyalty to the Government' and suggested that this was 'possibly to some extent [due] to the show of strength in European troops which they have for the first time seen'.¹³ In an almost bemused comment Wallace wrote: 'they have been and are still being hard pressed to give their labour as carriers, but they are well paid and are generally willing, more almost than could have been expected'.¹⁴

The incessant demand for people as labourers was not limited to northeastern Zambia, but also spread to western Zambia. As Richard Goode, secretary to the Administrator, wrote in August 1916:

There is still a very heavy demand for carriers for the transport of supplies for troops on the border and in German territory. A thousand men are now urgently required to relieve the pressure in the Awemba District and effort is being made to recruit these in the Barotse and Kafue districts.¹⁵

The ever present need for labour for war on the part of the administration led to the restriction of recruitment for mines in Congo, and mines and farms in Southern Rhodesia. The Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) and Robert Williams's mining company were curtailed and eventually prohibited from recruiting labour for farmers in Southern Rhodesia and miners in southern Congo in mid-1916. Recruiting by R. Williams and RNLB for mines and farmers was stopped till 1919.¹⁶

The demand for labour continued unabated following the British invasion of German East Africa. In early 1917, Administrator Wallace wrote to the BSAC board of directors in London and noted that he had been approached by the Governor of Nyasaland with a request for 500-1000 carriers per month for the coming six months. Wallace stated that it would only be possible to supply this labour from the East Luangwa District, which, although 'the least sparsely populated', was already supplying food and carriers for war transport to the North. Given that the total male population for this district was listed as being 7200 in the tax census of 1907-08 (the last year listed before the war), the supply of up to 6000 men would have been well nigh impossible.¹⁷ To be able to fulfil the demands for labour for the war effort, Wallace decided that, 'in order ... to

¹³ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 21/8/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

¹⁴ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 21/8/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

¹⁵ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), Richard Goode, Secretary, 8 August 1916, to Secretary BSAC, London.

¹⁶ NAZ, KSK 3/1, Serenje District Note Book; KSZ 5/1, Luwingu District Note Book, p. 224 & KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, vol. ii, p. 444.

¹⁷ NAZ, KST 3/1, Lundazi District Note Book, vol. 1, pp. 215-216.

obtain these carriers I have had to forbid any recruiting for Southern Rhodesia by the RNLB [Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau]'.¹⁸ In addition, and this in contrast to what had gone on before, the administrator admitted for the first time in writing that the continued recruitment would of necessity be of an involuntary nature. As he wrote:

I shall do all that I possibly can to meet the Governor's request and I think that the 500 to 1000 carriers he needs per month will be obtained. **That such a number could not be obtained voluntarily I am quite certain.**¹⁹

Strictly speaking the men recruited as first-line carriers in Northern Rhodesia in April 1916 were recruited on the understanding that they 'were on a six month agreement or for the duration of the war, whichever might be less'.²⁰ The civilian administration had indeed sent men to relieve those in service, but, as the administrator admitted in correspondence with the Board of the BSAC, 'there seems however to have been some unfortunate misunderstanding as to the terms of the carrier's agreements, the military officers considering that the carriers were engaged till the end of the campaign and reliefs [sic] therefore were not necessary'.²¹ Visiting Commissioner Marshall, in a report dealing with the 40,732 first-line military porters enrolled in Northern Rhodesia for service with troops in German East Africa and Portuguese East Africa, wrote:

Note this class of porter was engaged for a period of six months, but as many were drawn from villages far distant from the spot of attestation they were were in most cases absent from their homes for 9 or 10 months.²²

Not surprisingly carriers deserted, with terrible consequences for themselves if they were recaptured by the military. Wallace noted that 'after being kept beyond the term of their agreements with no prospect of being relieved a number of men deserted, ... the rest appear to have been paid off, though there are still 677 unaccounted for'.²³ That the war had taken its toll in terms of the manner in which labour came to be recruited and attitudes towards those recruited also came to be reflected in the language used by the colonial officials. Without the slightest malice, Administrator Wallace laconically noted in correspondence with his superiors in London in early 1917, following the invasion of German East

¹⁸ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/4), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 12/2/17, to Secretary BSAC, London.

¹⁹ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/4), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 12/2/17, to Secretary BSAC, London. Emphasis added.

²⁰ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/4), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 12/2/17, to Secretary BSAC, London.

²¹ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/4), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 12/2/17, to Secretary BSAC, London.

²² LMA, G 69/7/11, Summary of first line military porters enrolled in N.R. for service with the troops in conquered G.E.A. & P.E.A 1916/1918.

²³ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/4), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 12/2/17, to Secretary BSAC, London.

Africa, that, 'to replace the carriers paid off, General Northey asked for 2,000 men in November [1916], these were supplied with 300 more to replace sick, and **50 per month are being sent to make up for wastage**'.²⁴ An unintended consequence of the incessant demand for labour meant that people were away from their homes and villages, away from their fields and gardens, and thus that there was a collapse in food production.

The collapse in food production

Writing to his superiors in London in the second half of 1916, Administrator Wallace perceptively noted that 'our demand for labour has had the effect of diminishing the area under cultivation'.²⁵ In effect the incessant demand for labour had the effect of decreasing the amount of food available that was necessary to ensure the efficient functioning of the carrier-borne transport system. This was an issue that the administrator was well aware of. Earlier in the year the administrator had drawn attention to the impending collapse of food supplies and hence carrier-borne transport services in northeastern Zambia, when he wrote:

In the part the supplies of food for native troops and native labourers in the camps and for carriers have been obtained by local purchase, by sending grain from all parts of N.E.R. and latterly by sending it from N.W.R. It is evident now that if the coming crops on the plateau are not above average it will be impossible to continue to deliver from the railway the large amount of native food and all the necessary stores, by means of transport which have been employed hitherto.²⁶

In correspondence with the Governor in Nyasaland, in February of 1916, Wallace had noted that, 'at present native food stuffs are obtained from every village on the plateau'.²⁷ Yet, this food was becoming more and more scarce, and in the absence of thousands of men away on carrier service, the harvest would be insufficient. In March of 1916, the administrator wrote to his superiors in London:

General Northey is now on the border and finds that food for the troops is very scarce as there has been some delay in the delivery of food from Fort Jameson and the Luangwa Valley to the supply station south of Fife. This delay has arisen because of the scarcity of food on that route and there has been great difficulty in feeding carriers on the way.²⁸

²⁴ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/4), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 12/2/17, to Secretary BSAC, London. Emphasis added.

²⁵ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 21/8/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

²⁶ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 8/2/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

²⁷ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 3/2/16, to Governor of Nyasaland, Zomba.

²⁸ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 21/3/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

By March of 1916, it was becoming ever more apparent that there was a collapse in food production in Northeastern Rhodesia, which in turn meant that carriers could not be sufficiently fed and thus that transport to the frontline became very difficult. As Wallace reported:

The difficulty in maintaining a sufficient supply of food for the native troops on our border is very great owing to the fact that the country is sparsely populated and the surplus amount of food grown is therefore not great; not enough always to supply food for the stream of carriers passing through with other supplies for the whole of the forces.²⁹

Coupled to the collapse in food production brought about by the enormous recruitment of carriers, it was evident that much of Northeastern Rhodesia was devastated.

Colonial administrators in Northern Rhodesia were well aware of the disruptive impact of the enormous recruitment of labour for war purposes. Assistant Native Commissioner, Theodore Williams, described that already within the first year of the war in 1915 food resources were becoming scarce, as well as noting the disruptive influence of columns of war porters on food security:

As regards Commissariat I had been able to get a few eggs and 3 fowls so far but have had to live largely out of tins. This road has been so worn since the war that things are hard to get now – though the carriers seem to be able to get a meal all right.³⁰

On paper, with honest intentions, administrators sought to alleviate the disruption in ways that they believed were correct and acceptable. But, as so often, the road to disruption, ruin, and revolt was paved with the good intentions of administrators. Thus at a meeting with chiefs at Luwingu in September 1915, where ‘large frequent and regular supplies of labour’ were demanded, the district commissioner ordered that ‘chiefs should so arrange the available labour supply in their villages that half the men were away, half remaining behind and devoting all their energies to making gardens’.³¹ In reality, the suggested planning and good intentions of the administrators came unstuck in the reality of life in war. Theodore Williams, among the more perceptive of the administrators, drew attention to the disparity that existed between planning and reality in his weekly letters to his parents. In early 1916, Williams, stationed at Mporokoso directly north of Luwingu, was ordered to ‘raise instanter 250 picked natives to accompany the troops’. Williams did not expect this to be a problem, ‘[b]ut it is hard on the natives to be called on so suddenly for so long an absence from their homes. Those who go will not be back in time for their greatest domestic event treecutting: nor will they have time to make arrangements, as they always have

²⁹ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 3/2/16, to Governor of Nyasaland, Zomba.

³⁰ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, May 12, 1915, My dear Father.

³¹ NAZ, KSZ5/1, Luwingu District Note Book, vol. 1, pp. 125-6.

when they engage themselves for six months or a year for work at Elizabethville or in S. Rhodesia'.³²

In districts where men and women had been withdrawn for war labour purposes, there was no longer sufficient food. In many of the districts through which the war carriers passed, there was a shortage of food as the carriers swarmed across the countryside like locust swarms desperate for food. Visiting Commissioner Marshall, writing to the BSAC in London in January 1916, drew attention to the shortage of food in northeastern Zambia, 'our latest information points to the fact that the stores of native foods may run short towards the end of the wet season [two months on]'.³³ Two months later, as the rainy season came to an end, Administrator L.A. Wallace wrote:

Food has been rendered scarce at Abercorn because so much was sold by the natives [for war supply] that many had not sufficient left to carry them on till the new harvest, and consequently are now in a starving condition and have to be rationed from our stocks.³⁴

Writing to the secretary for the BSAC in London in March 1916 Wallace noted, 'Mealies [maize cobs] are not purchasable in Northern Rhodesia now'.³⁵ A month later, at the end of the rainy season, Administrator L.A. Wallace wrote:

There is not enough grown here to supply the Congo market which must to a large extent be supplied from the Union, with the result that in order to avoid the heavy railage the congo merchants can offer a very high price on the Kafue, and we have to pay the same. There will be a close approach to famine in some of the native districts so that I shall have to keep on the prohibition against export of native grain.³⁶

The fears of District officials and the administrator came to fruition; in July 1916, the administrator wrote a confidential report, entitled *Famine*, to the BSAC offices in London, in which he outlined the outbreak of famine across much of Northern Rhodesia and what he planned to do about it:

In my confidential letter of 18th April I mentioned scarcity of grain because of the failure of the crops in many places. In order to relieve this I have prohibited the export of native grown grain and I have obtained the High Commissioner's consent to a short Proclamation (No. 9 of 1916) empowering me to prohibit the purchase by Europeans of grain from natives in districts where food is scarce. Famine or something near it exists every year amongst some of the natives in the Zambezi Valley but has never been very acute or wide spread. I have seldom had to provide relief except in a very small way and I have never wished the natives to get into any habit of belief that the administration would keep them alive if they did not take proper precautions or if they sold too much of their grain soon after it was harvested.

³² RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, Mporokoso, 14th April 1916, My dear father, p. 161.

³³ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), Marshall, visiting commissioner, 22/1/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

³⁴ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 21/3/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

³⁵ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 21/3/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

³⁶ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 18/4/16, to Secretary BSAC, London

This year the failure of native crops in many areas between Kalomo and Kafue has been much more serious than was at first believed, and natives are in many cases already without food so that some measures of relief must be taken.

As far as possible the natives in the famine areas have been used for war transport and I hope to continue to use them but whilst they are away grain will have to be provided for their families and will in this case be paid for out of their wages as far as they go. I propose to make two or three depots on the Railway where natives can buy grain at cost price but there will be many cases where the cash will not be forthcoming for the payment of food taken and this will be paid, if it can be arranged, in labour or war transport to some extent or will have to remain as a debt payable to the Administration later on.

The labour Bureau is commencing to recruit in these areas and will undertake to feed the families of recruits during their term of service using the reserved pay for the purpose. In this way I hope there will be some relief.³⁷

The report written by Wallace indicates that famine was widespread across Northeastern Rhodesia as well as in parts of what is today Southern Province. In an earlier report Wallace noted that food had been 'rendered scarce at Abercorn because so much was sold by the natives that many had not sufficient left to carry them on till the new harvest'.³⁸ As a consequence these people, who had sold their grain to the British as part of the war effort, were 'now in a starving condition and have to be rationed from our stocks'.³⁹ Wallace noted that he hoped 'that the amount of relief needed will not be great'.⁴⁰ In any case, as the administrator's later report makes abundantly clear, any relief provided would have to be paid for, either in cash or through labour and deferred payment. Referring to what is today Southern Province, the administrator noted that 'in the Choma and Kalomo areas the relief must be given almost at once', and that although he would 'endeavour to keep it down to the lowest limit ... during the month of August I estimate at least 3000 bags of grain will be needed'.⁴¹ In addition, as later reports would indicate, there were extreme food shortages in Central Province as well: supplying grain in support of the war effort was the prime reason for an acute shortage in food. In August 1916, whilst inspecting the northeastern frontier of the territory under his administration, Wallace drew attention to the causes of the food shortage, when he wrote, 'because they had surrendered so much food to us last year they suffered, before their last crops were reaped, much hunger and in some places a very close approach to famine'.⁴²

³⁷ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, 7 July 1916, to Secretary BSAC, London.

³⁸ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 21/3/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

³⁹ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 21/3/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

⁴⁰ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 21/3/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

⁴¹ NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 21/3/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

⁴² NAZ, BS3, (A2/3/3), L.A. Wallace, Administrator, Livingstone, 21/8/16, to Secretary BSAC, London.

A month later reports from Mumbwa district in today's Central Province indicated that 'food was scarce throughout the division'.⁴³ In addition in the absence of food, 'people [were] living on roots'.⁴⁴

Although an attempt at providing relief would be undertaken by the administration, this famine relief had to be paid for, as the administrator's report clearly stated. In exchange for food, people were expected to work for the administration or to use deferred pay through employment with labour recruiters operating in the area. In both instances people became more dependent upon, and thus subject to, the colonial administration. This is not to suggest that the colonial administrators consciously used the conditions of famine to extend the abstract notion of colonial power; they did, however, consciously use the conditions of famine to draw people into wage labour, and subsequently into a position of dependency within the wage economy.

Influenza

Weakened by four years of war, incessant work, and insufficient food, the people of Northern Rhodesia were an easy prey for the influenza pandemic when it struck the territory in late 1918 early 1919.⁴⁵ Deserting and discharged carriers and porters carried the disease far and wide across the territory, bringing life to a standstill and appearing to herald the end of time. Spanish influenza struck people irrespective of race or class, and this would have a profound effect on African perceptions vis-à-vis their colonisers. The Mwinilunga District Notebook provides a succinct account of the pandemic that holds true for all the other districts of Northern Rhodesia at the time:

Influenza. This disease was brought to the district by returning war transport carriers, and from December 1918 to May 1919 almost every native went down. The death rate was heavy: in five months nearly 500 natives were reported to have died – in addition to this many died whose names were not registered, owing to their youth, so their deaths were not reported. ... The mortality in this corner seems to have been much heavier than in the adjacent districts – due doubtless to the fact that the disease arrived here when the natives were hungrier than usual.⁴⁶

Native Commissioner Theodore Williams, who had started his career as a probationer in Mwinilunga before the war, came to be stationed at Solwezi at the end of the war and provided a detailed account of the spread of the disease in

⁴³ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 421.

⁴⁴ NAZ, KTJ 3/1, Mumbwa District Note Book, vol. 1, p. 396.

⁴⁵ Jan-Bart Gewald, 'Spanish influenza in Africa: Some comments regarding source material and future research', *ASC Working Paper 77* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2007). Standard work on the Influenza epidemic in Zambia see, Mwelwa Musambachime, 'The influenza Epidemic of 1918-1919 in Northern Rhodesia'. In: *Zambia Journal of History*, 1993/94, nos. 6/7, 59.

⁴⁶ NAZ, KSE 4/1, Mwinilunga District Note Book, p. 166.

letters to his mother. Williams described how, whilst being on tour through the district, ‘an increasing number of my carriers [came to be] complaining of “head & chest” and the possibility that we might have got Spanish flu infection was just beginning to dawn on me’.⁴⁷ Messages sent to Williams from the Boma confirmed that the disease had arrived at Solwezi. The party of men that accompanied Williams, his cooks, messenger, and carriers became ‘*hors de Combat*. So I made up my mind to it that we had got S.F. [Spanish flu] and that the best thing to do was to [go] into quarantine’.⁴⁸ However, Williams was well aware that inadvertently his party had contributed to the spread of the disease, and he agonised about the fact that it was he who had spread the disease with his party of carriers:

It is a terrible thought that I myself may be the vehicle of spreading S.F. through all Nwkinanzofus villages - ... all of which I visited after the first few carriers were complaining of what all 25 are complaining of now. For there is no lack of proof of the high mortality that S.F. causes among natives – Mutenge’s village gives an instance close at hand! The people will simply die like flies and be unsettled for years by it...⁴⁹

Williams believed that his carriers had contracted the disease at Mutenge’s village, ‘owing to careless observance of orders against allowing W.T. [War Transport] repatriates to enter their villages – and a whole lot of them are dead already’.⁵⁰ In a subsequent letter to his mother, Williams described the relatively light impact of the disease in Solwezi District:

From reports received to date I reckon that the flu will have cost this division (population about 10.000) 200 lives, which is a pretty light total considering its ravages elsewhere. Of course the scanty population and the ease with which people could escape from spheres of infection by simply retiring into the bush, has been their saving, though those who did get it at all badly had small chance of recovery. Mwinilunga is having its turn now, we hear. This is a rotten letter, but so is Solwezi.⁵¹

There, where people could escape into the bush and avoid contact with others, the disease petered out, but in those parts of the country where people were clustered together the disease spread like wildfire. Not surprisingly the mining town of Broken Hill, as well as the mines in Katanga, were such sites. As Williams wrote to his mother:

This plague is the devil though ... We here have been lucky beyond the dreams of gipsies (sic) ... At Mwinilunga they have had it pretty badly. The serum injection seems to be an entire washout – statistics collected at the Congo mines show a higher death rate among those who were treated with it than among those who were not – it seems to kill the strongest

⁴⁷ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, vol. 2. Lunga River, December 1st 1918

⁴⁸ RH, Oxford, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, vol. 2. Lunga River, December 1st 1918

⁴⁹ RH, Oxford, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, vol. 2. Lunga River, December 1st 1918

⁵⁰ RH, Oxford, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, vol. 2. Lunga River, December 1st 1918

⁵¹ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, vol. 3, Mining Commissioner’s Office, Solwezi, Jan 6th 1919

quite as readily as the weeds and judging by the Doctors and dukes and princes that have died of it one would gather that expert attention is of very little value.⁵²

Broken Hill, lying as it did at the centre of the transport network that had developed during the course of the War, was particularly hard hit by the epidemic. In addition, the concentration of mineworkers, railway workers, and transport carriers added to the increase and spread of the disease. The influence of the transport network on the spread of the disease can clearly be seen in the distribution of the epidemic; as such the District Notebook for Broken Hill noted that the 'heavy mortality grew lighter as [the] disease spread back from Railway line'.⁵³ About 200 people died in the mining and railway complex of Broken Hill. In addition a further 447 deaths were reported in the Mwamboshi sub-district exclusive of 'Broken Hill town and Mine'.⁵⁴ Reports from the Mkushi sub-district explicitly mention the significance of Broken Hill as a centre from which influenza spread:

Influenza appeared at Mkushi early in November. ... Natives fleeing from the scourge when it first came to Broken Hill died by the roadside ... eight strangers who died on the road were buried. The disease was brought straight from the railway by the mailman...⁵⁵

Interestingly Broken Hill remained a hotbed for Influenza, presumably on account of the railway, mining town, and its compounds. Subsequently the territories annual report stated that the 'continued persistence of this disease [influenza] amongst natives at Broken Hill since 1918 and its peculiar manifestations there are noteworthy.'⁵⁶

The only check on the inexorable growth of the African population of South Africa, and presumably thus also for the whole of Southern Africa, in the course of the twentieth century was the population crash caused by the influenza pandemic.⁵⁷ Given the enormity of the event, it is hardly surprising that its effects were to be felt in more than population statistics alone. In South Africa, the epidemic led to 'renewed 'sanitation syndrome' fears by white residents that infection was spread by black inhabitants', and gave further weight to calls for legally enforced racial segregation.⁵⁸ In outlining the development of segregationist legislation in South Africa, and the Natives Urban Areas Act in particular, the great historian of South Africa, De Kiewiet, noted: 'the influenza

⁵² RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781, vol. 3, Mining Commissioner's Office, Solwezi, Jan 13th 1919, My dear Mother.

⁵³ NAZ, KDA2/1, Kabwe District Note Book, p. 110.

⁵⁴ NAZ, KDA2/1, Kabwe District Note Book, p. 110.

⁵⁵ LMA, F6/1, Annual Report, Mkushi Sub-District, 1918-1919.

⁵⁶ NA, CO 795/21/10, Annual Report: Year ended 31 March 1926.

⁵⁷ Robert Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 144.

⁵⁸ Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 43.

epidemic horribly revealed the disease and misery which was bred and sheltered in windowless shacks and congested unsanitary backyards'.⁵⁹ Similarly, Howard Phillips, who wrote extensively on the impact of influenza in South Africa, described how the threat of the disease came to be used as an instrument for the enforcement of racist legislation.⁶⁰

The pandemic directly affected those who survived: 'orphans sad and suffering, with no one to help them out'.⁶¹ Describing events in Bechuanaland, John Spears noted that epidemics pose 'the most serious challenges to human society' in that they 'divide and alienate as well as kill':

Against the fear of an unknown, invisible assailant, there is no heroic combat. When fear drives friends and even relatives to abandon each other, to flee the infectious breath of loved ones then society can simply disintegrate.⁶²

In a world in which survivors sought to give meaning to their continued existence, many came to the same conclusions that the Zulu composer, Reuben Caluza, had reached; 'They forgot their maker, only those who worshipped him constantly pulled through'.⁶³

The experiences of Nontetha Nkwenkwe, a young woman from the Eastern Cape of South Africa who was overcome by Spanish flu and received divine messages, were mirrored in varying forms across the continent. Upon recovery, Nontetha Nkwenkwe began preaching and prophesying: 'the influenza was just a taste of what God was bringing. A judgement day in which everyone would be flying in the sky was imminent'.⁶⁴ Once Nontetha came to the attention of the colonial authorities, she and her followers were incarcerated. In jail, Nontetha's prophecies continued and came to be conflated with the message of liberation proclaimed by the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union,⁶⁵ organisations that were seen as heralding the arrival of African-American liberators. As a jailed follower of Nontetha stated,

⁵⁹ C.W. De Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa: Social and Economic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 231.

⁶⁰ Howard Phillips, 'The Local State and Public Health Reform in South Africa: Bloemfontein and the Consequences of the Spanish 'Flu Epidemic of 1918'. In: *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 13, January 1987, pp. 210-233 & Howard Phillips, *'Black October': the impact of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic of 1918 on South Africa* (Pretoria: Government printer, 1990).

⁶¹ Caluza, *Influenza*, cited in David Coplan. In: *Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theater* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985), p. 252.

⁶² John V. Spears, 'An Epidemic among the Bakgatla: the Influenza of 1918'. In: *Botswana Notes & Records*, volume 11, pp. 69-76.

⁶³ Caluza, *Influenza*, cited in Coplan. In: *Township Tonight*, p. 252.

⁶⁴ Robert R. Edgar & Hilary Sapire, *African Apocalypse: The Story of Nontetha Nkwenkwe, a Twentieth-Century South African Prophet* (Athens, Ohio and Johannesburg: Ohio University Press, 1999), p. 10.

⁶⁵ Helen Bradford, *A Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924 – 1930* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988).

‘we used to dream in the hope that the Americans were coming to release us... As oppressed people, we always had hope that we would be released’.⁶⁶

Throughout the African continent, the destruction wrought by the epidemic forced people to reconsider much that had hitherto seemed hard and fast and immutable. In the context of colonial Ghana, gender roles changed as a consequence of the epidemic. David Patterson, in describing the epidemic in the northern districts of what is today Ghana, cited a colonial official who wrote:

Lorha is like a deserted village, one sees no one, [...] I hear that some Lobis are wondering if this is the end of the world.⁶⁷

So many women were sick that, contrary to custom, men had to grind grain and prepare meals. Foods prepared and chosen by people also changed in the aftermath of the epidemic. Ohadike describes how cassava, which had hitherto been rejected as a staple food crop, spread and became an accepted staple in southern Nigeria following the epidemic.⁶⁸ The attractiveness of cassava to so many people is the fact that it requires comparatively less agricultural labour to produce. In periods of stress, where labour may be short, it becomes the crop of choice.⁶⁹

As noted earlier, the pandemic brought economic life to a standstill, but it did more than that alone; it literally ended the productive life of many economic activities.⁷⁰ One such activity was industrial mining, an activity, which by its very nature has bequeathed us with substantial archival material. One case that has been described in detail is the mining industry in Southern Rhodesia.⁷¹ Previously successful mining operations, such as the Globe and Phoenix gold mine in Umvuma, closed down on account of the disease, and were unable to reopen in the aftermath of the disease.⁷² In and of itself, the Globe and Phoenix is particularly interesting in the context of colonial racism, economic practice, and the transformative effects of the epidemic. Anxious to ensure a healthy work

⁶⁶ Edgar & Sapire, *African Apocalypse*, p. 31.

⁶⁷ K. David Patterson, ‘The Influenza Epidemic in the Gold Coast’. In: *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Vol. XVI (ii), 1995, p. 209, citing: Lorha Diary, 2 December 1918.

⁶⁸ D.C. Ohadike, ‘The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-19 and the Spread of Cassava Cultivation on the Lower Niger: A Study in Historical Linkages’, *The Journal of African History*, 22 1981, pp. 379-391.

⁶⁹ Cassava can be planted at virtually any stage in the rainy season, and can be left in the ground for up to 18 months after it has matured. For a standard work on cassava, see W.O. Jones, *Manioc in Africa* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959).

⁷⁰ Although they concentrate on the United States of America, Elizabeth Brainerd and Mark Siegler, provide a fine overview of the far-reaching economic effects brought about by the Epidemic. Elizabeth Brainerd and Mark Siegler, ‘*The Economic Effects of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic*’, Discussion Paper No. 3791, February 2003, Centre for Economic Policy Research, London.

⁷¹ I. R. Phimister, ‘The “Spanish” Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and its Impact on the Southern Rhodesian Mining Industry’. In: *The Central African Journal of Medicine*, vol. 19, no. 7, July 1973, pp. 143-148.

⁷² Pers. Comm. October 2006, Dr. H. Gewalt, former AngloGold exploration geologist who had been stationed in Umvuma in the early 1960s.

force, the management of Globe and Phoenix went to the extent of ‘employ[ing] white nurses to take care of black patients’.⁷³ Not surprisingly, Terence Ranger has noted that in Southern Rhodesia the influenza epidemic led to a crisis of comprehension.⁷⁴

Throughout the continent people literally scattered as they sought to evade the disease. In doing so, they inadvertently spread the disease ever further. Yoshikuni, in dealing with migrant workers in colonial Zimbabwe, cited an annual report for 1918, which described ‘the pell-mell flight from many labour centres and the natural reluctance to return to what were regarded as centres of infection’.⁷⁵ The rapid, unstoppable, and seemingly haphazard progress of the disease led to the most fantastic theories and stories that sought to explain the pandemic.⁷⁶ All over the continent people sought to explain what had happened and, in so doing, named the pandemic according to its perceived character.⁷⁷

In the northeastern districts of what is today Zambia, the pandemic arrived in the context of war and famine.⁷⁸ German forces under Von Lettow-Vorbeck had routed British colonial forces, sacked Kasama, and seemed set to continue onwards.⁷⁹ Mwelwa Musambachime described how, in seeking to comprehend events, people in the Mporokoso district attributed the epidemic to the death of soldiers and porters in the war.⁸⁰ Melvin Page writing on Malawians and the First World War noted that:

In the minds of Malawians, the connection between the war and the pandemic of influenza was not only immediate, but also causal. A common expression was that the ‘war air’ had brought the new and devastating disease, blown in by winds from the front.⁸¹

⁷³ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 58.

⁷⁴ Terence Ranger, ‘The influenza epidemic in Southern Rhodesia: a crisis of comprehension’, pp. 172-188. In: David Arnold, ed., *Imperial Medicine and Indigenous societies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

⁷⁵ Tsuneo Yoshikuni, ‘Strike Action and Self-Help Associations: Zimbabwean Worker Protest and Culture After World War 1’. In: *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 15, no. 3, April 1989, p. 442.

⁷⁶ For a closely detailed example of the rapid spread within a specific territory in Africa see, K. David Patterson, ‘The Influenza Epidemic of 1918-19 in the Gold Coast’. In: *Journal of African History*, 24 (1983), pp. 485-502.

⁷⁷ Juergen D. Mueller, ‘What’s in a name. Spanish Influenza in sub-Saharan Africa and what local names say about the perception of this pandemic’, paper presented to *The Spanish Flu 1918-1998: Reflections on the Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1919 after 80 years*, held in Cape Town, South Africa, 12-15 September 1998.

⁷⁸ The work of Giacomo Macola is particularly illuminating in detailing the impact of the war in North-eastern Zambia. Macola, *The Kingdom of Kazembe*, pp. 206-209. Gregory Maddox has documented similar developments in Tanzania, Maddox, ‘*Mtunya: Famine*’.

⁷⁹ Hoyt, *Guerilla, Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck*; Von Lettow-Vorbeck, *Meine Erinnerungen*; Paice, *Tip & Run*, pp. 383-386.

⁸⁰ Musambachime, ‘The influenza Epidemic’, p. 59.

⁸¹ Page, *The Chiyawa War*, p. 171.

Spanish influenza struck people irrespective of race or class, and this had a profound effect on European and African perceptions. In the disbelieving and shocked words of a British Governor elsewhere in Africa:

The disease spread with devastating rapidity, disorganizing everything. Everybody was attacked almost at once. Of my own household of twenty servants not one escaped; and *on one day I had to attend to their work myself*. It can be easily understood what such a state of affairs would mean to others less fortunately situated.⁸²

Similarly the combination of war, famine, and influenza in Northern Rhodesia appeared to put the world on its head, particularly as it served to bring about a religiously inspired movement which shook the very foundations of British colonial rule in the northeastern districts.⁸³

Watchtower

In the immediate aftermath of the German invasion, and whilst the influenza epidemic continued to rage throughout the world, a millenarian movement developed in Northeastern Zambia that heralded a new order and dismissed the authority of the chiefs and the colonial authorities. Perceptive as always, the historian L.H. Gann drew attention to the link that existed between the demands for labour for the British war effort and the sectarian movement that rocked the colonial administration in Northeastern Zambia. As Gann noted, 'Recruitment was done through chiefs who had to supply a specified quota, a task which made their position with the tribesmen no easier, and goes some way towards explaining the bitter propaganda that was subsequently made in North-Eastern Rhodesia by African sectaries against the institution of chieftainship.'⁸⁴ Historians Rotberg and Meebelo followed Gann's intuition and referred to official reports dealing with the rise of Watchtower, in particular the words of Hanoc Sindano, a Watchtower preacher who was quoted as saying:

There they are, they who over burden us with loads, and beat us like slaves, but a day will come when they will be the slaves. ... God only is to be respected and obeyed, nobody else on earth has any right to it; no more the European than the native chiefs. The English have no right whatsoever in the country, they are committing injustice against the natives in pretending to have rights.⁸⁵

Along with the anthropologist Karen Fields, Rotberg and Meebelo drew extensively on the reports of Fife Acting DC Tanganyika District Charles Draper who reported on 'Watchtower' and expanded upon 'a youth who got up and commenced to preach in an excited manner'. When companions 'read out a Bible

⁸² NA, CO 879/118, War and Colonial Department and Colonial Office: Africa, Confidential Print, folio 176. Emphasis added.

⁸³ Fields, *Revival and Rebellion*, p. 143.

⁸⁴ Gann, *History of Northern Rhodesia*, p. 163.

⁸⁵ Rotberg, *Rise of Nationalism*, p. 135. Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism*, p. 160.

text ... he would dilate upon it.’⁸⁶ Both academics noted that ‘the congregation consisted mostly of young women and children’, yet Rotberg, by failing to transcribe the remainder of the sentence, ‘most of the village being stricken with Spanish Influenza’, effectively obscured the reason as to why the audience was constituted as it was. Influenza had felled the bulk of the population, and the remainder turned to the metaphysical in search of an answer that would explain the condition in which they found themselves.

Throughout the remainder of the twentieth century, Watchtower and associated movements such as Mwana Lesa and Alice Lenshina’s Lumpa Church, remained a proverbial bogey that could be dragged out of the cupboard of history to explain events whenever and wherever, should the need arise.⁸⁷ Thus, when mineworkers went on strike for higher wages in the early 1930s, Watchtower was resuscitated in the subsequent commission of enquiry as an explanation for strike action:

The Commission finds that the teachings and literature of the Watch Tower bring civil and spiritual authority, especially Native Authority, into contempt; that it is a dangerously subversive movement; and that it is an important predisposing cause of the recent disturbances.⁸⁸

Yet, the reasons for Watchtower were far more prosaic than seemingly unintelligible beliefs in the metaphysical. Instead, coming on the back of the global influenza pandemic and a bruising four-year war, in which colonial rule came to be effectively established in Northern Rhodesia, Watchtower can be seen to represent a desperate last ditch attempt by people to retain their independence, free from colonial rule.

It appears that the ideas associated with Watchtower arrived in northeastern Northern Rhodesia when at least two of six men, who had been deported from Southern Rhodesia for involvement in Watchtower activities in Bulawayo, arrived in the Tanganyika District in October 1917. In September 1918, two of these men, Sindano and Kanjelo ‘were charged before the magistrate, Abercorn, with spreading “Watch Tower” Doctrines’.⁸⁹ The men were not convicted at the time, as the movement was not considered serious. However, in December 1918, that is, in the immediate aftermath of the German invasion that had seen the

⁸⁶ Rotberg, *Rise of Nationalism*, 137. Fields, *Revival and Rebellion*, p. 149.

⁸⁷ Terence Ranger, ‘The Mwana Lesa Movement of 1925’. In: *Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa*, Terence O. Ranger and John C. Weller, eds, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975) pp. 45-75. David Gordon, ‘Rebellion or Massacre: The UNIP-Lumpa Conflict Revisited’. In: *One Zambia, Many Histories: Towards a History of Post-Colonial Zambia*. Edited by Jan-Bart Gewald, Giacomo Macola, and Marja Hinfelaar (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 45-76.

⁸⁸ NA, WO 32/2515, Northern Rhodesia Disturbances in the Copper Belt 1935. ‘Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into The Disturbances in the Copperbelt, Northern Rhodesia, October 1935’, p. 51.

⁸⁹ NAZ, BS3/417, Watch Tower Movement HC1/3/50, ‘Watch Tower’ Movement in Tanganyika District 1919.

British administration fleeing in disarray, and in the midst of the influenza epidemic, the words of the Watchtower preachers appeared imbued with particular validity.

Watchtower in central Africa was particularly associated with Joseph Booth and Kenan Kamwana. Although Booth had been ‘expelled for his attempts to incite unrest and sedition amongst the native population’, Kamwana continued preaching.⁹⁰ According to the reports submitted to the British High Commissioner in Pretoria in South Africa in 1919, Kamwana was alleged to have preached the following doctrine in 1914 before the outbreak of war:

The time is at hand when God will end the world. The end of the world will be October 1914. There will be a great war, famine and pestilence. God will reign on earth. There will be no white men and no tax and the power will be taken from the Europeans by God, who will give power to his people, the Jews. Every nation will have their own king.⁹¹

Perhaps not surprisingly Kamwana was arrested and tried for his efforts at Zomba, and expelled from Nyasaland in 1914, whereafter he joined Booth in South Africa before being deported yet again to Mozambique.⁹² But, more importantly than his multitude of expulsions, one can see how his message of imminent war, pestilence, and the ending of European rule must have resonated with people in Northern Rhodesia as the war progressed and Kamwana’s prophecies appeared to be fulfilled.

In October 1918, German forces under the command of General Lettow von Vorbeck had successfully invaded Northern Rhodesia, overrun Kasama, which had been hastily abandoned with all its stores, and marched southwards as far as the Chambeshi River. By their own account, British forces believed that Von Vorbeck, had the war not ended in Europe, could have marched on to the mines of southern Congo and on to Angola.⁹³ In late November, as the influenza pandemic spread, Lettow von Vorbeck’s forces, ‘11 companies, comprised of 150 Europeans, 1165 Asikari [sic], an immense column of porters, amongst whom were 800 women, ... 24 maxims and 14 Lewis guns’, marched into Abercorn to formally surrender to British forces.⁹⁴ Whilst the German force as a whole was disarmed, the European soldiers were permitted to retain their firearms, after which they returned to Tanganyika via Kasanga. Acting District Commissioner C.R.B. Draper concluded his report on the surrender of Von

⁹⁰ NAZ, HC1/3/50, ‘Watch Tower’ Movement in Tanganyika District.

⁹¹ NAZ, HC1/3/50, ‘Watch Tower’ Movement in Tanganyika District.

⁹² NAZ, HC1/3/50, ‘Watch Tower’ Movement in Tanganyika District.

⁹³ NA, CO 417/606, Surrender of Gen Von Lettow Vorbeck under the Armistice Terms, C.R.B. Draper, Acting District Commissioner, Abercorn, 28th November 1918, to Administrator Livingstone.

⁹⁴ NA, CO 417/606, Surrender of Gen Von Lettow Vorbeck under the Armistice Terms, C.R.B. Draper, Acting District Commissioner, Abercorn, 28th November 1918, to Administrator Livingstone.

Lettow-Vorbeck with the following comments, ‘Natives have quite settled down again ... a good deal of looting must have occurred in S. part of the District, and it may be necessary later to extend some relief against famine’.⁹⁵ Aside from a remark dealing with the outbreak of Spanish flu at Kasanga, there was no indication that British authorities had any idea as to what was about to occur.

Less than a month later events appeared to spiral out of control, as Draper, the man who had so confidently asserted that the ‘Natives have quite settled down again’ came to be directly involved in clashes with Watchtower. In a report compiled shortly after the incidents, Draper asserted that he had sought to assist ‘chiefs and headman who were not in favour of the movement’ by attempting to arrest ‘fanatical “prophets” and converts’. However, he was prevented from doing so by ‘mostly young men of the “military porter class”’, who arrived ‘singing hymns lustily and at intervals shouting prayers and exhortations’.⁹⁶ Unable to affect his arrest, Draper put in an urgent request that a ‘Company of Northern Rhodesia Police, with experienced officers and reliable Non-commissioned Officers’ be sent to him as soon as possible.⁹⁷ Two weeks later, Draper put in a further request, as he was ‘convinced that one platoon of police was insufficient’ and that he ‘considered at least 100 men necessary with European officers and maxim, at any rate for display’.⁹⁸ Whereas twenty years earlier a request for a maxim gun on the part of Collector John M. Bell, who anticipated a ‘troublesome time with the Awemba this dry season’⁹⁹, had been turned down, now a full platoon with Lewis gun (which was as much a machine gun as a Maxim gun) were despatched to Draper.¹⁰⁰

In the event, the uprising was not to be, and approximately 100 Watchtower supporters were eventually arrested and marched under armed guard to Kasama. Far from the German invasion heralding the end of British rule and the end of time, it heralded instead the definite establishment of colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia. With Germany defeated, and with an enormous army in the field, the colonial administration of Northern Rhodesia could pretty much do what it liked. In contrast to the first twenty years of colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia, the administration in 1918 had the means, the will, and the power to

⁹⁵ BNA, CO 417/606, Surrender of Gen Von Lettow Vorbeck under the Armistice Terms, C.R.B. Draper, Acting District Commissioner, Abercorn, 28th November 1918, to Administrator, Livingstone.

⁹⁶ BNA, CO 417/606, ‘Watch Tower’ Movement, ‘Watch Tower’ Movement in Tanganyika District.

⁹⁷ BNA, CO 417/606, ‘Watch Tower’ Movement, ‘Watch Tower’ Movement in Tanganyika District.

⁹⁸ BNA, CO 417/606, ‘Watch Tower’ Movement, ‘Watch Tower’ Movement in Tanganyika District.

⁹⁹ NAZ, BS1/1 1896 Collector Chambezi District (2 files) Ikawa collector to administrator Blantyre reporting on various subjects: Arab slavetrade. (A1/1/1) Ikawa 24/4/96 John M. Bell to the Administrator for Northern Rhodesia Blantyre.

¹⁰⁰ The Lewis gun was, as with the Maxim gun, a machine gun and carried magazines of 47 or 97 rounds. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_gun accessed, accessed 11 August 2014. Indeed, with its 500-600 rounds per minute, the Lewis was a lighter and more formidable weapon.

enforce its will across the territory. Richard Goode, who would later become the governor of Northern Rhodesia, wrote to the British high commissioner in Pretoria in early 1919:

We are relieved that Draper managed to arrest the W.T. gentlemen without a row and hope the movement will soon die out. It might have spread very quickly and if it had reached Ft. Jameson district I think there would have been trouble.¹⁰¹

In the aftermath of Germany's defeat in Europe, the principal preachers and adherents of Watchtower were rounded up and transported in chains for trial in Kasama.¹⁰²

Conclusion

Writing to his mother from Solwezi in early 1919, Theodor Williams described in detail the victory celebrations that were being prepared to reward the people of Northern Rhodesia for their participation in World War One. In itself, Williams's letter is particularly interesting in that, although it indicates very clearly that the war had a tremendous impact upon the country as a whole, it was particularly the northeastern regions of the territory that had been hard-hit:

... today I have dished out 700 lbs of corn with the messenger and warden wives to brew beer with: it will be a terrific orgy. Not that these people deserve anything – war transport work has been immensely popular on its own account and the assistance headmen give us in providing men is chiefly ideal. The demand has not been greater than volunteers could fill. It is over in NER that natives have done really nobly: there they have not had a month's rest since 1915: if they were not actually humping loads they were being driven to their gardens to raise more food. If these Kaonde and Lunda had been asked to do quarter that they would have revolted, or gone to the Layo! Still as HQs [headquarters] have allowed us the money and as we have always had out of the natives all we wanted we will cut the credit and let the cash go! And make our loyal subjects as blind as we must need be to their unworthiness.¹⁰³

At the same time, as Williams prepared to drive his subjects to drink, on the other side of the country the District Commissioner in Mpika described the transport of Watchtower prisoners in chains southwards and the return of the motorcars that had been used in the war effort.¹⁰⁴ In effect, without realising it at the time, the DC Mpika was describing, not only the end of World War One but also the end of the independence of people in Zambia and the establishment of British colonial rule. Watchtower prisoners, primarily young men who had been subjected to four years of hard labour as carriers and porters in the war, were led

¹⁰¹ NAZ, BS 3/417 1919, Watch Tower Movement, HC 1/3/50, Richard Goode, Livingstone 4th February 1919, note to Dear Stanley.

¹⁰² NAZ, Secretary for Native Affairs, ZA/7/1/4/9, Tanganyika Province Annual Report 1919, Fife Subdistrict Annual Report 1920, 10.

¹⁰³ RH, MSS. Afr. S. 776-781. Letters, March 31 1919, NC office Solwezi, 'My dear mother'.

¹⁰⁴ NAZ, KSD 4/1, Mpika District Note Book, May 1919, 'Lieut. Castor passed through for L'stone with "watch Tower" prisoners'.

southwards in shackles, whilst the motorcars that were meant to have alleviated the carrier shortages also returned to the south, leaving a country defeated and devastated by war, but subject to effective colonial control and rule.

Conclusion

Formally on paper and in terms of international law, the territories that now make up the Republic of Zambia became part and parcel of the British Empire in 1891. However, formal jurisdiction did not equate with effective on-the-ground control and administration of the territory. This book has examined the manner in which between 1891 and 1920 effective British colonial control and administration came to be extended across colonial Zambia. Central to this process was the specific and unique relationship that existed between labour and transport in Central Africa at the time. This book has argued that World War One, with its incessant demand for transport labour, was fundamental to the process through which British colonial control and administration came to be extended across colonial Zambia. The limitless funds made available during World War One by the War Office in London to the BSAC in Northern Rhodesia, enabled the colonial administration to co-opt and procure the support and services of Zambian chiefs and headmen. In a symbiotic relationship that developed during the course of the war, Zambian chiefs and headmen, who supplied transport labour in exchange for funding, support and privileges, became evermore dependent upon the colonial administration, and the colonial administration was able to extend its authority and mandate across all of colonial Zambia.

Chapter One examined the nature of colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia, and indicated that prior to 1914 British authority remained confined to a few select administrative centres, but did not extend beyond these. Specifically the chapter examined the failed attempt by the colonial administration to carry through and enforce agricultural reforms and legislation aimed at preventing the chopping down of trees and the establishment of villages beyond the jurisdiction of the colonial administration. Thus, although in 1906 a colonial official wrote that, ‘the carefully thought out rules for Vitemene cutting and restrictions, were communicated to the chiefs and all approved of by them’, the truth of the matter was that within three years the administrative plans had come to nought, and the administration was incapable of enforcing its wishes.¹ That is, on paper Northern Rhodesia fell under the administration of officials of the BSAC, in reality these

¹ NAZ, KSL 3/1, Isoka District Note Book, vol. II., folio 401.

officials were severely limited as to what they could do on the ground. On the issue of chopping trees for gardens, the chiefs and headmen chose to completely ignore the colonial administration, and side with their subjects. However, the chapter indicates that there was an emergent alliance between the BSAC and certain chiefs and headmen on issues of mutual importance and shared interest. Specifically, it was in the legislation's appeal for the concentration of people in villages around chiefs and headmen that the BSAC and the chiefs and headmen found one another. In a context in which 'wealth in people' was of crucial importance, African leaders, recognised as chiefs or headmen by the BSAC, strengthened their position by siding with the BSAC and enforcing its legislation with regard to the ending of *mitanda* and newly established independent villages.

Chapter Two examined the new economic order that came about in Central Africa following the military defeat of a string of polities in the territories surrounding contemporary Zambia. Specifically the chapter described the new economic opportunities that arose for Central Africans, primarily as transport labourers, independent of the control of their chiefs and headmen, as mines and railways came to be established. The chapter indicated that the violent and brutal establishment of colonial rule in the territories surrounding Northern Rhodesia in the 1880s and 1890s effectively cut off the inhabitants of the territory from the carrier-borne long-distance trade. Chiefs and headmen who had long overseen the trade and thereby bound followers to themselves through the allocation and redistribution of trade goods, lost their authority and were powerless to prevent their erstwhile followers from moving elsewhere. In the early 1900s, as the copper mines of Katanga in southern Congo came to be developed, and an infrastructure, consisting of telegraph lines, railways, crushers, smelters, and towns constructed to facilitate these mines, thousands upon thousands of people were able to find employment as workers, carriers, and porters. Interestingly, although a railway line was constructed to facilitate the mines, this did not have any further impact on transport elsewhere in the country beyond the railway line. The absence of any alternative form of transport ensured that carrier transport remained of central importance till the mass introduction of motor vehicles that could operate independently of the railway line in the 1920s. Until then, carriers remained of central importance and in a context in which labour was scarce could demand and depend on a fair wage.

Chapter Three examined the manner in which during World War One the colonial administration supported and rewarded African chiefs and headmen, in exchange for labour and food, and thereby extended its control over Northern Rhodesia. The chapter illustrated how anxious for carriers and food supplies, yet thinly spread across the territory, BSAC administrators needed to work through the chiefs and headmen, and were dependent on their support. In turn, in

exchange for carriers and food supplies, the BSAC administrators promised and undertook steps to support and increase the authority and influence of the chiefs and headmen of Zambia. A decade and a half prior to the formal introduction of indirect rule, BSAC administrators, operating under the pressures of wartime conditions, began attempting to administer the territory and its African population through Zambia's chiefs and headmen. In this 'marriage of convenience' African chiefs and headmen were able to extend and expand their influence and authority through the acquisition of all manner of material and immaterial provisions from the BSAC administration in exchange for labour and food supplies. Yet there was a flipside to this, in that the colonial administration did not lose sight of its goal to extend and expand its authority across the territory. Consistently, the administration ensured that its labour recruitment, and the subsequent enhancement of the status of chiefs and headmen, was in keeping with its ultimate aims and objectives: to establish and consolidate its control over the territory.

For four years during World War One, labour was recruited all across Northern Rhodesia, from Mwinilunga to Chipata, from Mumbwe to Serenje, and in all of these places across Zambia the BSAC was able to extend its influence. In a process that covered four years, Zambia's chiefs and headmen supported and assisted the British war effort through the supply of labour and food stuffs; in exchange the chiefs were rewarded in a number of ways, as outlined above, ranging from financial incentive through to the supply of messengers and policemen that were used in enforcing the will of the chiefs on their subjects. Through their alliance with the colonial authorities, chiefs and headmen were once again able to centralise their power, for the first time since the ending of the long-distance trade in the 1890s. However, although the chiefs were able to extend their control over their subjects, at the same time, the colonial state, by supporting and working through the chiefs, extended its control over the chiefs and their people across all of Zambia.

Chapter Four examined the variety of schemes and technological innovations introduced and implemented by the British colonial and military authorities in an effort to overcome the limitations in terms of distance and capacity associated with carrier-borne transport. The chapter showed that far from reducing their dependence upon African labour, their schemes and innovations necessitated evermore labour, and thus the necessity of evermore cooperation with and dependence upon Zambian chiefs and headmen. Whilst attempting to conduct war in central and East Africa, the British military deployed waterborne transport, in the form of canoe flotillas, and forms of transport that stood at the very forefront of imperial industrial technology in the form of steam-traction engines and petrol-driven motor vehicles. In the event, as the chapter indicated,

the deployment of these forms of technology depended upon large amounts of African labour, and it is debatable whether the technology was as efficient, reliable, and useful as popular perception at the time would have had one believe.

In popular perception and in much of the academic discourse emanating from the Global North throughout the past two hundred years, the African continent and its people have all too often been presented as the epitome of backwardness and underdevelopment. Interestingly, in this same period of time Africa was consistently the location where the cutting edge of technological developments, particularly in the field of armaments and communication, were deployed. The Maxim gun, rockets, telegraph, radio, and aeroplane were all first deployed for the purposes of war in Africa. All too often this faith in the capabilities and capacities of these products of industrial technology did not live up to expectations. In effect, one can argue that this was a fetishisation of industrial technology on the part of military planners. This fetishisation of industrial technology, in the face of its patent failure to deliver the envisaged savings in terms of labour, is clearly illustrated in Chapter Four by the British war planners who continued to rely on steam-traction engines and petrol-driven motor vehicles even when these examples of cutting edge imperial industrial technology could only function through the liberal application and extensive use of African labour. The continued, indeed ever-increasing reliance, upon African labour through the course of the war, although it showed up the myth of technological advantage, did have as its corollary that the British colonial administration gained an ever-increasing level of control over labour and thus the population of Northern Rhodesia as the war progressed.

Chapter Five examined the manner in which through the limitless demand for labour, engendered by World War One, and the willingness of British colonial and military authorities to pay for this labour, the British were able to extend their authority across Northern Rhodesia. The chapter indicated that the enormous demand for labour and food led to a collapse in food production across much of the territory. In exchange for food evermore people were drawn into working as carriers for the British war effort, which led to a further deterioration of local food production and increasing dependence upon the colonial administration. This dire situation was exacerbated by the outbreak of the Spanish influenza pandemic which reached Northern Rhodesia in the dying months of World War One. Influenza, coupled with incessant labour demands and famine, disrupted African society and created a context within which Christian inspired millenarian movements could come to be established. The syncretic teachings of Watchtower adherents appeared to herald the end of the world and the promise of salvation for the righteous. Unfortunately for the people

of Northern Rhodesia this was not to be as British colonial rule came to be entrenched.

In early 1919 the District Commissioner for Mpika described the transport of Watchtower prisoners in chains southwards and the return of the motorcars that had been used in the war effort. In effect, without realising it at the time, the DC Mpika was describing, not only the end of World War One, but also the end of the independence of people in Zambia and the establishment of British colonial rule. Watchtower prisoners, primarily young men who had been subjected to four years of hard labour as carriers and porters in the war, were led southwards in shackles, whilst the motorcars that were meant to have alleviated the carrier shortages also returned to the south, leaving a country defeated and devastated by war, but subject to effective colonial control and rule.

In contrast to the work of Yorke, who argued that the colonial state was threatened and nearly collapsed during the course of the war, this book has argued, instead, that it was precisely on account of the war, and in particular the limitless funding made available to the BSAC by the War Office during the course of the war, that the BSAC was able to establish an effective administration in Northern Rhodesia. This book argues that although the territories that would make up Zambia had officially become British in 1891, this did not equate to an on-the-ground presence of colonial authority capable of affecting the daily lives of people, let alone determining their destinies. The establishment of effective colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia only came about on account of the unique conditions that developed in World War One, conditions which necessitated the massive application of human labour, which could only be effectively obtained through purchase, which in effect bound Chiefs and Headmen to the incipient colonial administration. World War One did not weaken the colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia, instead it provided the BSAC with an opportunity to extend and impress its authority across the territory.

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