



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Mining Kambove and testing for trypanosomiasis: migrant labour, tsetse flies, and consumption, the establishment of colonial authority and suzerainty on the Luapula border, Northern Rhodesia Katanga, 1904-1914

Gewald, J.B.

Citation

Gewald, J. B. (2024). Mining Kambove and testing for trypanosomiasis: migrant labour, tsetse flies, and consumption, the establishment of colonial authority and suzerainty on the Luapula border, Northern Rhodesia Katanga, 1904-1914. *Asc Working Paper Series*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3716700>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3716700>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Mining Kambove and Testing for Trypanosomiasis: Migrant Labour, Tsetse flies, and Consumption, the Establishment of Colonial Authority and Suzerainty on the Luapula Border, Northern Rhodesia Katanga, 1904 – 1914

Gewald, Jan-Bart

ASCL Working Paper 155 / 2024

Table of contents

1. Katanga	5
2. Kambove	6
3. Worker Registration	9
4. Madona	9
5. Purchases	10
6. Tsetse	11
7. Worker Palpitation	13
8. Discussion	14
9. Conclusion	15

African Studies Centre Leiden

P.O. Box 9555

2300 RB Leiden

The Netherlands

Telephone +31-71-5273372

Website www.ascleiden.nl

E-mail asc@asc.leidenuniv.nl

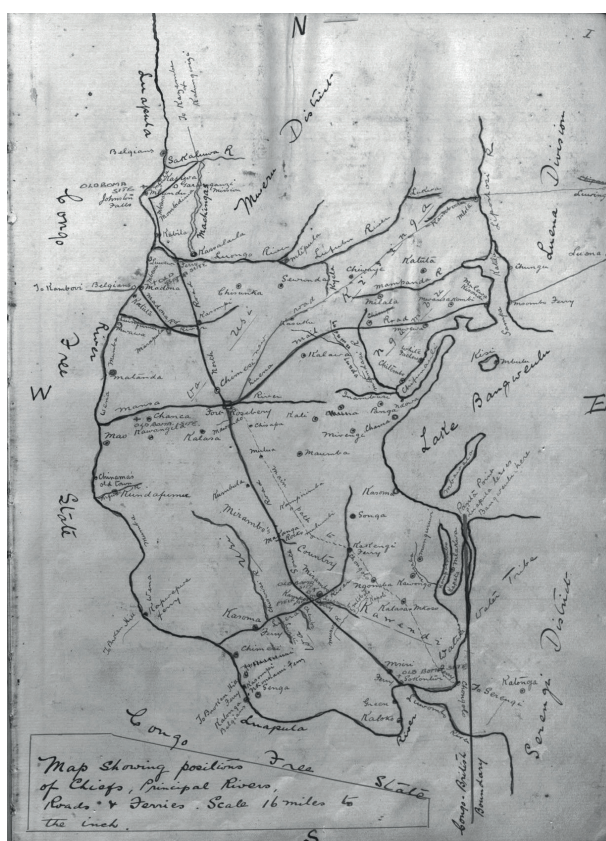
© 2024 Jan-Bart Gewald (j.b.gewald@asc.leidenuniv.nl)

Mining Kambove and Testing for Trypanosomiasis: Migrant Labour, Tsetse flies, and Consumption, the Establishment of Colonial Authority and Suzerainty on the Luapula Border, Northern Rhodesia Katanga, 1904 – 1914

There are two beautifully functional hand drawn maps to be found in the Fort Roseberry (contemporary Mansa) District Notebook in the National Archives of Zambia. The maps, illustrate the district situated on the headwaters of the Congo River, and detail the border crossings between what was then Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo across the Luapula River. The crossings are listed in English renditions of indigenous names “Kapalala” and “Kalasa”, and neologisms “Johnston Falls” and “Madona”. The fords lead on to “Kambovi” in the Congo, the position of which is not listed on the maps. The one map details the district, its chiefs, its routes, and its rivers, the other is virtually identical, but it details the spread of sleeping sickness and the areas affected in the district.

In 1904 Tanganyika Concessions Limited (TCL) established a trading station in the very heart of central Africa just to the south of the Mambilima falls on the Luapula river, which formed the boundary between Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and the Congo Free State (Democratic Republic of Congo). A company agent, Donald Macdonald, was dispatched to the Mambilima falls and ordered to recruit labourers from North-eastern Rhodesia for the copper mines of what would become the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga in the Katanga province of Congo.¹

Between 1904 and 1914 Macdonald recruited thousands upon thousands of labourers for the Katangese mines, and in so doing gave his name to the settlement that developed south of the Mambilima falls. Recruits passing through Madona, as the settlement came to be known, signed on for set contracts, the deferred pay of which could then be cashed in at the trading stores that were established at the border crossing.



Map1
Detailing Fort Roseberry District and border crossings to the Congo Free State²

¹ Northern Rhodesia, present day Zambia, was initially administered by the British South Africa Company as two separate entities, North-eastern Rhodesia administered from Fort Jameson (Chipata) and North-western Rhodesia administered from Livingstone. In 1911 the two separate administrations were amalgamated. For the purposes of this paper I will refer to Northern Rhodesia and Zambia as a whole, and only when I am specifically dealing with one of the two earlier regional administrations will I explicitly note this.

² NAZ, District Notebook KDF3-1/Vol III.

In the course of 1908 Madona as a settlement was abandoned on account of tsetse fly infestation and the danger of sleeping sickness, none the less labour migrants continued to flow to the Katangese copper mines, and one hundred years later the waterfalls on the Luapula River continue to provide home to the Dona fish that provides wealth to all those who are prepared to sacrifice to her and cross the river.

This paper, examines how for a brief period of time Madona became a nodal point in the interplay of tsetse flies, global capital (financing the Copper mines of the Congo), and the hopes and aspirations of young African men anxious to acquire the products of industrial capital in the form of bicycles, phonographs, safety razors, clothing and so forth. In so doing, this paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of historical slogans such as “the penetration of capital”, “consumption”, and the like. The paper provides an insight into the manner in which, through making use of tsetse flies and the disease, Trypanosomiasis (Sleeping Sickness), which these flies are the vector of, the incipient colonial state in Northern Rhodesia gained suzerainty over the people living in Northern Rhodesia. It indicates how the colonial state, in the absence of an effective actual on the ground presence in Luapula, was able, through a complex interplay of Trypanosomiasis (Tryps), international law, and the desire on the part of Africans for the products of industrial capitalism, to establish and extend its control over Africans to the most intimate and basic level.³

Writing on the development of a working class in Katanga between 1907 and 1951, John Higginson noted that:

At the outset of the twentieth century an industrial working class was still in the making in southern Africa. The initial phases of its making, particularly the employer’s transition from formal to substantive control over the workforce, were especially drawn out.⁴

Through looking at tsetse flies and the disease they carry, this paper seeks to give substance to the phrase, “employer’s transition from formal to substantive control over the workforce”. It seeks to do so by attempting to discover the manner in which, through the implementation of measures that sought to control the spread of sleeping sickness, “substantive control over the workforce” came to be established in the daily lived reality of African workers in Northern Rhodesia in the early 1900s.

Operating within the logic of international law, which recognised the validity of bureaucratic state systems, and international concession companies that gave them preference over the aims, ideals, and structures of Africans living in central Africa, the copper mines of the Congo were faced by a colonial administration – run by a concession company - in North-eastern and North-western Rhodesia that demanded the recognition of its suzerainty over the labour being extracted from territories formally under its control. Desperately short of labour and beholden to the logic of a worldview that demanded that “correct procedures” be followed, the companies operating in Congo appointed labour recruiters to liaise and interact with the colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia. One such labour recruiter was a man named Donald MacDonald who established a trading post that would become known as Madona.

African access to manufactured material goods of the industrial world was made possible through engaging in labour contracts with men such as MacDonald. That is Madona, with its trading store, was a place where one could hope to get access to and thus consume a selection of manufactured material goods. But, in order to be able to

³ In a sense the alignment of a series of factors lead to the exercise of power; that is power is not single but is to be found in an alignment of forces that act upon the subject.

⁴ John Higginson, *A Working Class in the Making: Belgian Colonial Labor Policy, Private Enterprise, and the African Mine-worker, 1907 – 1951* (Madison, 1989) p. 7. Italics added.

get access to these goods, one first had to be formally registered to work. The incipient colonial state demanded this registration and by insisting on this registration, which included “palpitation” to determine possible sleeping sickness infection, was able to exert power through determining who was allowed to go to work in the Congo on the basis of bio-medical knowledge.

It could be argued that it was through African consumption mediated through the possible effects of tsetse fly infection that the state gained colonial control in Northern Rhodesia. To be able to consume, migrants had to go through the ritual of registration, work, palpitation and in some cases puncture, before they could finally purchase and consume the objects of their desire. That is, to gain control the incipient colonial state made use of African desires for the manufactured material goods of the industrial world; and imposed and made use of the bureaucratic logic of formal state structures (boundaries and labour registration) and used bio-medical logic to domesticate and discipline the African worker.

The settlement of Madona only existed for five years and now no longer exists on any map yet, to paraphrase Bob Dylan’s Hurricane, at one time it could have been the centre of the world. In describing the rise and fall of this settlement, this paper gives us insight into the manner in which “substantive control over the workforce” came to be established in Northern Rhodesia and the role of tsetse flies in this process.

Katanga

The distinguished historian of Zambia, Andrew Roberts, once aptly noted that Zambia is the detritus of the failure of Cecil John Rhodes, and by extension Great Britain, to gain control of the copper mines of Katanga in southern Congo. And, indeed, a look at the map of Africa shows the two lobes of Zambia embracing southern Congo, as Katanga and the pedicle penetrate deep into the heart of Zambia. Thrust into Zambia the exceedingly rich copper mines of Katanga were henceforth dependent on labour and supplies from territory that now lay across an internationally recognised boundary.

What is today the southern Congolese province of Katanga formerly lay in the heartland of the Garenganze kingdom of the Nyamwezi warlord Msiri prior to its destruction in 1891.⁵ Msiri had established the polity on the basis of controlling long-distance trade from the headwaters of the Congo river to the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. 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”.⁶ Msiri was killed in the infamous Stairs expedition of 1891 which firmly brought Katanga and its copper riches firmly within the ambit of King Leopold’s Congo Free State.⁷ Previously two expeditions financed by Cecil John Rhodes had failed to acquire Katanga for the British South Africa Company.⁸

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 which 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:

5 Thomas Q. Reefer, *The Rainbow and the Kings* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1981), 172 – 180 & Auguste Verbeke, *Msiri, Roi du Garenganze* (Bruxelles, 1956).

6 Robert I. Rotberg, “Plymouth Brethren and the Occupation of Katanga, 1886 – 1907”, *Journal of African History*, V, 2 (1964), 285 – 297, 285.

7 Stairs, a Candaian adventurer, cut his teeth in equatorial Africa through accompanying Henry Morton Stanley in 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 1998.

8 Alfred Sharpe’s Travels in the Northern Province and Katanga. *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, Vol III, No.3 (1957) pp. 210-19.

...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.⁹

This is the period of disruption and destruction that many saw, that Joseph Conrad wrote about in his seminal work, *Heart of Darkness*, and which officers who served in Leopold's mercenary army described in their reports to the Royal Geographical Society.¹⁰

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 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 to the mission established by the Plymouth Brethern Missionaries.¹¹

In the early 1900s the copper resources of Katanga, which had initially attracted Msiri to the area, began to be developed by international mining syndicates working within the aegis of the Congo Free State. Industrial mining began in earnest in 1904 and began drawing in labour from the region and eventually from far beyond.¹²

The industrial mines that came to be established in the territories awarded to Tanganyika Concession Limited in Katanga were eminently and ultimately dependent on African labour for transport, mine work, and the provision of food.

Industrial mining in Katanga was not conducive to forced labour and depended upon the voluntary registration of African labourers for labour in the mines, primarily from territories nominally under the administration of the Northern Rhodesian Governments. Indeed, by 1907 a minimum of 5,000 men constituted "a floating British Native population" in the Tanganyika Concessions Limited area in Congo¹³ However, before Northern Rhodesian African labour could come to be employed in the mines of Katanga, it had to be weaned from other sources of employment and induced to register for work in Katanga. Missionary Campbell, returning to the Mweru Luapula from Lake Malawi in June 1903, reported meeting a number of caravans of African labourers in the Luangwa valley who were returning from work on the mines in Southern Rhodesia. Surprisingly, given the later literature¹⁴, Campbell noted that:

they spoke well of their treatment, some having spent two years over there. I believe we shall soon see a wholesale exodus of natives going south for mining work.¹⁵

Nearly a year later, whilst stationed at Johnston Falls, Campbell reported that formal recruitment for the mines in Southern Rhodesia had also begun in the Mweru Luapula area with "the first visits from "labour agents" from the mines, and they are taking

Kambove

9 S.L. Hinde, "Three years Travel in the Congo Free State", *The Geographical Journal*, Volume 5, 1895, No. 5, 426 – 446, 442.

10 E.G. Ravenstein, "Recent explorations in the South-Eastern Congo Basin", *The Geographical Journal*, Volume 1, 1893, 223 – 228; Joseph A Moloney, "The Stairs Expedition to Katangaland", *The Geographical Journal*, Volume 2, 1893, No. 3, 238 – 248.

11 David M. Gordon, *Nachituti's Gift: Economy, Society, and Environment in Central Africa* (London, 2006), 63.

12 On the beginning of industrial mining in Katanga see, R.R. Sharp, *Early Days in Katanga*, (Bulawayo, 1956).

13 *Africa. No. 1 (1908). Further Correspondence Respecting the Independent State of the Congo*, Presented to both Houses of Parliament February 1908.

14 Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900 – 1933* (London, 1976) & Ian Phimister, *Wangi Kolia: Coal, capital and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1894 – 1954* (Harare, 1994).

15 D. Campbell, 23 June 1903, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord's Name*, September, 1903, p. 356. With thanks to Giacomo Macola for providing me with access to his research notes. All references to *Echoes of Service* in this paper, unless otherwise stated, are drawn from Macola's notes.

numbers of natives south”.¹⁶ Campbell continued by noting that “the hut-tax compels the people to exert themselves, and thus becomes a blessing in disguise”.¹⁷

In an attempt to pay for the running costs of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) administration, as well as to induce African labourers to seek work, hut-tax came to be applied in parts of North-eastern Rhodesia beginning in 1901.¹⁸ Initially the payment of tax imposed by the BSAC administration was haphazard at best. BSAC administrators were few and far between, and more often than not villagers took to hiding in inaccessible areas to escape detection and taxation, or simply moved en masse to another locale beyond the purview of the BSAC administration.¹⁹ Writing a number of years later, BSAC administrator Theodore Williams noted of men that were eligible to pay tax in his district in North-western Rhodesia:

If they feel oppressed with work and the approaching tax due in July they simply have to up and over the border [to Angola], where there are no taxes and no interfering administration.²⁰

Similarly Williams’ colleague Harrington noted in Fort Roseberry (Mansa), that it was inadvisable to attempt to tax the village of Mulewa Kisoni, the people of which ferried goods and mail across the Bangweulu:

Because if worried for tax & being water people they bolt to Kisi and Mbawala and leave no one to work the ferry which requires skilled paddlers as the crossing is 7 ½ miles wide taking 3 ½ hours and when the winds are on it is a dangerous crossing.²¹

None the less, in certain parts of the territory administered by the BSAC in Northern Rhodesia, where the colonial presence was strong, and depending on the whims of individual administrators, failure to pay hut-tax could result in terrible retribution; the exacting of which was couched in language that did not even bother to obscure the events described.²² Thus Chiana Harrington noted with equanimity, in the District Notebook for Fort Roseberry (a document consciously written for posterity), his orders to burn a village that failed to pay tax in 1906.²³

It is clear that by 1906 formal monetary employment within Northern Rhodesia and Katanga had increased to such an extent that African labour no longer needed to trek down to Southern Rhodesia for employment, instead thousands of men came to be employed on the mines of Katanga and the railway being built towards them. Missionary Lammond, writing from Johnston falls on the border with Congo in early 1906, wrote that:

Since the new year over two thousand natives have been collected in these parts and sent down to work on the railway ... Yesterday more than three hundred men from our own district went off to work in the mines at Kambove.²⁴

Eight months later, in December 1906, missionary Campbell wrote that he had been informed by the magistrate “that the railway is coming on shortly to Ndola”.²⁵ Which would mean, as in the previous two years, “the employment of from three to five thousand natives and some three hundred whites”.

16 D. Campbell, 25 April 1904, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord's Name*, August, 1904, p. 3317.

17 D. Campbell, 25 April 1904, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord's Name*, August, 1904, p. 3317.

18 J.B. Gewald, *Forged in the Great War: People, transport, and labour, the establishment of colonial rule in Zambia, 1890 – 1920*, (Leiden, 2015), p. 54.

19 National Archives of Zambia (NAZ), KDF 3/1 Vol. 1. District Commissioner and Magistrate, Mweru – Luapula District at Fort Rosebery. folio 9. M.C. Musambachime, “Protest Migrations in Mweru-Luapula 1900 – 1940”, *African Studies*, 47. 1. 88. pp. 18 – 34.

20 Rhodes House, Oxford (RH), MSS. Afr. S. 776 – 781. Williams (Theodore R.) Administrative Officer, Northern Rhodesia: Diaries, 1912 – 21. 3 vols.; letters home, 1912 – 24. 3 Volumes. Letters Volume 1: 1912 – 1914. Letter addressed to Dear Mother, Tuesday ? Feb 11th? 1913 Mwinilunga, via Kasempa, N.R.

21 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 1, folio 21.

22 On taxation and its evasion and enforcement in the Mweru Luapula see, Giacomo Macola, *The Kingdom of Kazembe: History and Politics in North-Eastern Zambia and Katanga to 1950*, (London, 2000).

23 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 1. folio 20.

24 W. Lammond, 16th March – 31 March 1906, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord's Name*, July, 1906, p. 250.

25 D. Campbell, 1st December 1906, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord's Name*, April, 1907, p. 158.

26 D. Campbell, 1st December 1906, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord's Name*, April, 1907, p. 158.

With the coming of the railroad to the mining areas of Kambove, and thereafter there was a need for porters to transport goods. As long as the railway had not reached the mines in Katanga everything had to be transported by porters, thousands of whom came to be recruited in Northern Rhodesia. Yet, in its building, the Railway also required the labour of thousands of men, all of whom had to be provisioned. In addition, even after the railway had been constructed, and industrial labour saving devices such as steam shovels had come to be employed in the mines of Katanga, there remained a seemingly insatiable demand for African labour for labour and portage. The desire for porters and workers also drove a demand for food.²⁷

A British Parliamentary commission reported in 1908 that the “Tanganyika Concessions (Limited) depends [for its food] mainly upon purchases made from the natives”.²⁸ This stood in stark contrast to what occurred elsewhere in the Congo. Instead of seizing by force, the report claimed that the TCL “sends out agents to buy flour, and natives bring flour and other foodstuffs for sale to the stations”.²⁹ Within the travesty that was the Congo Free State, the African inhabitants of the territory were obliged to pay tax for the right to live and occupy lands within the Congo Free State. Africans were expected to pay taxes for their use of the land, and in vast areas of the Congo they were forced to collect rubber in lieu of paying taxes. In terms of international law in the absence of a civil administration, concessionary companies, such as the Anglo British India Rubber company, were permitted to collect taxes in kind.³⁰ This policy led to extreme excesses in the territory and resulted in the devastation of societies and environment across the Congo Free State.³¹

In Katanga, TCL too, as a concessionary company, was permitted to collect tax on behalf of the Congo Free State, as the report to British parliament noted:

In the neighbourhood of Kambove the villages pay their tax in kind to the Tanganyika Concessions (Limited) ... These amount to from 10 to 12 tons per annum, and are accepted at the tax value.³²

In the absence of a large indigenous population and desperate for labour, the TCL did not aggressively pursue the policies carried out elsewhere in Congo in the hunt for red rubber.³³ Nonetheless, writing in early January 1903 the missionary, Dan Crawford, did foresee major transformations and hoped against better judgment for a favourable outcome when he wrote:

the opening of the Katanga mines threatens the poor Lufira Valley with a cruel stroke. The simple pastoral ideas must all go, just as urban life in England is killing the rural. As ... the land only lives a year at a time in the matter of cereals, the very slightest tampering with the agricultural year in the forcing of labour for the mines would eventuate in a cruel famine, and Africa gets no food imported.³⁴

Food, in addition to comparatively strong wages were a substantial incentive to drive young men, and in their wake women, to the mines. A British Parliamentary report noted in 1908 that:

The mine “ boys “ are usually engaged under a six months’ contract (to be exact, five months and twenty-nine days). They are paid 6s. 8d. a-month and rationed. At Ruwe, which may be taken as a typical example, rations are distributed twice weekly on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Each “ boy “ receives 6 lbs. of Kaffir meal on Wednesdays, and on Saturdays 8 lbs. of meal and 1 lb. of one of the following: beans, sweet potatoes, dried fish, native salt. In order to obtain a sufficiently varied diet, the “ boys “ commonly arrange themselves in messes of four or six. At Kambove fresh meat is given once a-week.³⁵

27 Mwela Musambachime has described in numerous publications the manner in which the mines of the Katangan and Zambian Copperbelts drove the fishing industry in the Mweru Luapula.

28 Africa. No. 1 (1908). *Further Correspondence Respecting the Independent State of the Congo*, Presented to both Houses of Parliament February 1908.

29 Africa. No. 1 (1908). *Further Correspondence Respecting the Independent State of the Congo*, Presented to both Houses of Parliament February 1908.

30 Robert Harms, “The world Abir made: The Maringa – Lopori Basin, 1885 – 1903”, *African Economic History*, 1983, no. 12, pp. 125 – 39.

31 Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost: A story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, London: Macmillan 1999.

32 Africa. No. 1 (1908). *Further Correspondence Respecting the Independent State of the Congo*, Presented to both Houses of Parliament February 1908.

33 For an overview of the literature dealing with the impact of concessionary companies and colonial rule in Congo see, Jan-Bart Gewald, “More than Red Rubber Alone: A critical appraisal of the Memory of the Congo exhibition at the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium”, in *International Journal for African Historical Studies*, 39, 3 (2006) pp. 471 – 486.

34 D. Crawford, 7th December 1902 – 16th January 1903, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord’s Name*, May, 1903, pp. 194-195.

35 Africa. No. 1 (1908). *Further Correspondence Respecting the Independent State of the Congo*, Presented to both Houses of Parliament February 1908.

Converted into contemporary currency values, African unskilled workers on the mines in Katanga earned the equivalent of three Euros per day in addition to food.

Worker registration

Beginning in 1904 Tanganyika Concessions Limited (operating in the Congo Free State) began recruiting labour from areas formally under the administration of the British South Africa Company in Northern Rhodesia, contemporary Zambia. Tens of thousands of men registered for six or three months work, and received their pay once their “tickets” were completed. Upon completion of their contract their tickets could be exchanged for money and goods at the TCL trading and recruiting store on the border between Congo and Northern Rhodesia. Loaded with material goods in the form of bicycles, clothes, and so forth, the migrant labourer could then return to his home village in Northern Rhodesia. Yet, to be able to engage in labour contracts, African workers had to subject themselves to extensive control.

On account of formal agreements between the governments of the Congo Free State and the BSAC administration of Northern Rhodesia, workers recruited in Northern Rhodesia had to be registered. That is, although workers could have chosen to cross the Luapula River wherever they may have wished to do so, their access to the deferred pay and hence the goods on offer in the trading store run by the Tanganyika Concessions Limited at Madona, was only possible if they had registered with the labour recruiter MacDonald. Thus, by default, they unintentionally also submitted themselves to the bureaucracy of the incipient colonial state.

Madona

In May 1906 missionary Campbell spent two days at Madona, the “rising township on the Luapula, with three European stores”.³⁶ Founded less than two years previously the settlement had grown to such an extent that according to Campbell “it needs a missionary, on account of the population and the great traffic passing to and from the Katanga mines”.³⁷ Indeed, so extensive was the settlement and so great was the belief in its continued existence, that “the mining company’s agent ... press[ed] that we should come and build here”.³⁸ The extent to which Donald MacDonald actually pressurised the Plymouth Brethren to establish a post in Madona is debatable, yet that the settlement that bore his name had grown by leaps and bounds since its establishment is beyond dispute.

The commencement of copper prospecting and later mining by Tanganyika Concessions Limited in Katanga had a tremendous impact on Northern Rhodesia and led directly to the establishment and growth of Madona. In 1902 an estimated 100 loads were transported from Johnston Falls (on the Luapula just to the north of where Madona came to be established) to Kambove. In the following year 5,000 loads were transported to Kambove, and a year later “Mr Mac Donald ... took over the Tanganyika Concessions Agency ... & built at Chikovi now known as Madona”.³⁹ In 1905 Tanganyika Concessions recruited 10,500 men at Madona for transport and work to Kambove, 60 % of whom came from areas to the east of Luapula. In addition a further 848 men were recruited for the railway and the Northern Copper Co.⁴⁰ For the year 1906 a colonial administrator noted, “a busy year” with 5,000 men going to Kambove and an additional 1,000 men employed mostly in transport work between Kasama and Madona.⁴¹ MacDonald, as the Tanganyika Concessions agent at Madona, “engaged about 10,000 boys [sic] all of which were paid off at Madona”.⁴²

These thousands of men recruited, were recruited for money which came to be spent in Madona. Thus, it was noted that 1905 was “a good year for the stores, large numbers of

36 D. Campbell, 5th May – 2nd June 1906, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord’s Name*, November, 1906, p. 434.

37 D. Campbell, 5th May – 2nd June 1906, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord’s Name*, November, 1906, p. 434.

38 D. Campbell, 5th May – 2nd June 1906, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord’s Name*, November, 1906, p. 434.

39 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 111, folio 179.

40 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 111, folio 179.

41 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 111, folio 180.

42 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 111, folio 341.

natives ... brought a considerable amount of money".⁴³ It was estimated that African labourers of the Fort Roseberry district alone had earned "fully £ 5000, the greater part of which was spent at the stores".⁴⁴ MacDonald, as the agent of the Tanganyika Concession Company, had "engaged and paid off at Madona 10,500 boys [sic]".⁴⁵ With so many men streaming through Madona the following year, 1906, was reported to be "the best year the traders had", as "large numbers of natives ... returned with good money".⁴⁶ Apart from itinerant traders and at least four trading stores that catered for African tastes, P.J. Posener, the African Lakes Company and the Tanganyika Concession Limited also ran "European stores" in Madona.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly therefore that "Madona soon became a busy little place".⁴⁸

German traveller Theo Kassner, who travelled to Cairo from Rhodesia, visited Madona in 1907 to purchase supplies and acquire new porters for his expedition. Kassner, noted of "the English trading station of Madona in East Rhodesia", that, "an active commerce is concentrated here. I visited Madona and spent some pleasant hours with the British officials and traders, and at a well-stocked store belonging to the African Lakes Company I was able to purchase several necessary articles".⁴⁹

Purchases

The question of course remains what did young African men returning from the Katangese mines, purchase with their hard-earned wages. A Plymouth Brethren missionary, who was opposed to his converts going to the mines, reported in 1907 that at least some of his converts were purchasing New Testaments with their wages:

The price of the New Testament in 'Chi-Luba' 'is high, representing a month's hard work for a native. Very few people at home would care to give a month's salary for a New Testament, and certainly many more here would purchase it if it were, say, two shillings, instead of four. A native has to work a month to secure his hut-tax, besides having wife and bairn to clothe, and frequently mother and father-in-law as well, so you will see the difficulty of sparing four shillings. Of course, if he goes to the mines he gets high wages, but this one seeks to discourage."⁵⁰

The negative views expressed by missionary Campbell, with regard to converts going to work on the mines, are re-enforced in his comments a year later:

there is no sight more common or ridiculous nowadays than a native returning from the mines of South Africa in hob-nailed boots, toiling and sweating in the hot sun with a heavy bundle on his back, consisting of blankets, coats, trousers, shirts, hats, boots, etc., with shawls for his stay-at-home spouse, plus many odds and ends."⁵¹

Admittedly Campbell's rather scathing remarks refer to miners returning from South Africa, yet there is no reason to suppose that the goods that they were carrying back, were in any way different to the goods which they would have purchased in Madona. Indeed, the goods being brought home by the migrants strongly echo those being brought home labourers from the Copperbelt mines twenty years later. In 1933 a commission of enquiry, itemised a list of articles contained in the kits of workers returning from the mines. Included were, women's dresses, women's head-clothes, shirts, shorts, trousers, singlets, tennis shoes, sweaters, cardigans, socks, ties, sun helmets, caps, puttees, sheets, towels, handkerchiefs, blankets, mirrors, enamel dishes and mugs, and so forth.⁵² The researchers also referred to bicycles, gramophone players and sewing machines being amongst the goods normally purchased by returning migrants.

43 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 111, folio 341.

44 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 111, folio 341.

45 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 111, folio 341.

46 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 111, folio 341.

47 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 1. folio 360 – 1.48

48 NAZ, KDF 3/1 Vol. 111, folio 201.

49 Theo Kassner, *My Journey from Rhodesia to Egypt* p.57.

50 D. Campbell, 9th February 1907, 'Johnston Falls', *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord's Name*, p. 215.

51 D. Campbell, 8th – 19th October 1908, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord's Name*, April 1909, p. 156.

52 J. Merle Davis, *Modern Industry and the African*, (London, 1933) pp. 401 – 403.

Writing in 1912 and 1914 Plymouth missionary Lammond noted some negative comments with regard to the impact of the mines. For Lammond, the mines were “draining these parts of many of the smartest and fittest of the young fellows, and they come back with a smattering of “Kitchen Kaffir” and no end of conceit.”⁵³ Two years later Lammond’s sentiments had not changed:

From these remote, out-of-the-way places crowds of young men go to work in the south. They bring a lot of shoddy with them on their return, and hats, jackets and boots are now quite common. It grates badly on one’s ears to hear the oaths some of the lads bring back with them. Weeds seem to catch on easily, but real fruit ... represents years and years of toil.⁵⁴

No matter what Lammond and his colleagues may have felt, it is clear that the mines bore attractions, be it copies of the New Testament, new forms of swearing and cursing, or the chance to access industrial consumer goods.

The slowly advancing sleeping sickness is a dark cloud on our sky-line. This malady is slaying its thousands in Lubaland, a Government “Black Map” having just included the north shore of Mweru in the epidemic zone. Silently and remorselessly as destiny, it is creeping south, entering the Garenganze by the Belgian trunk road.⁵⁵

I have found three cases of sleeping sickness in the course of my work, all with a history of having worked in the Katanga mines. ... Considering the thousands from this country who have worked in the Katanga mines, I am perfectly convinced that there are many more cases scattered through North-East Rhodesia.⁵⁶

In 1906 sleeping sickness (trypanosomiasis) was discovered among African labourers living along the Luapula River that formed the border between Northern Rhodesia and Congo. Tsetse flies act as the vector for this disease, for which until the late 1920s there was no cure.⁵⁷ The word tsetse means “fly” in Setswana.⁵⁸ On the basis of bio-medical findings the colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia undertook all manner of actions in a vain attempt to stop the spread of sleeping sickness. The anti-tsetse activities of the BSAC administration of Northern Rhodesia had far reaching consequences for the populations of Northern Rhodesia and the Mweru-Luapula in particular.⁵⁹

In May 1906 Dr Sheffield Neave was commissioned by Tanganyika Concessions Limited, acting on behalf of Union Minière and the Benguela Railway Company, to ascertain:

In respect of the mining area of Katanga, the distribution of the various species of tsetse and other biting flies, to study the distribution of sleeping sickness... and to investigate the blood of the population in any infected area, ... and to report and advise as to what measures should be taken in respect thereto.⁶⁰

Due to the activities of Sheffield Neave and his assistants and colleagues, Madona has continued to exist in the fields of entomology and ornithology as the geographical site for a number of species types.⁶¹ A few years later, in an academic tit for tat, Sheffield Neave wrote to the British Medical Journal to let it be known that it was one of his team, Dr. Arthur Pearson, who “first found [Glossina] palpalis on the Luapula, 4 miles down stream from Madona and just above the Nafunta Falls ... in the first week of January, 1906”.⁶²

In the course of their enquiries Sheffield Neave’s team, as well as another later team drawn from the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, reported on the existence of *Glossina palpalis* and *Glossina morsitans* on a “stretch of 150 miles from Kazember to

Tsetse

53 W. Lammond, 21st February 1912, ‘Kaleba’, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord’s Name*, May, 1912, p. 194

54 W. Lammond, 18th February 1914, ‘Kaleba’, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord’s Name*, May, 1914.

55 D. Crawford, 1st September – 20th September 1906, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord’s Name*, March, 1907, p. 114.

56 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, “Reports of the ‘Sleeping Sickness’ Expedition to the Zambesi for the Years 1907 – 1908”, *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 65.

57 Hellmuth Unger, *De Slaap des Doods* (Amsterdam, 1920?).

58 D. T. Cole (1995). *Setswana — Animals and Plants (Setswana — Ditshedi le ditlhare)*. Gaborone: The Botswana Society. pp. 11 & 173. ISBN 0-9991260-2-4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsetse_fly (Accessed 28 February 2023).

59 Mwelwa C. Musambachime, “The Social and Economic Effects of Sleeping Sickness in Mweru-Luapula 1906 – 1922”, *African Economic History*, No. 10 (1981), pp. 151 – 173.⁶⁰

60 “Scientific notes and news”, *Science*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 724, November 13, 1908, p. 680.

61 The journal of the British Ornithologists’s Union, *IBIS*, contains numerous references to Kambove for the period around 1910.

62 Sheffield Neave, “The First Observation of *Glossina Palpalis* in North-Eastern Rhodesia”, *The British Medical Journal*, Nov. 6, 1909, p. 1388.

63 "Sleeping Sickness", *The British Medical Journal*, Nov. 2, 1907, p. 1267.

64 "Sleeping Sickness", *The British Medical Journal*, Nov. 2, 1907, p. 1267.

65 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, "Reports of the 'Sleeping Sickness' Expedition to the Zambesi for the Years 1907 - 1908", *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 58.

66 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, "Reports of the 'Sleeping Sickness' Expedition to the Zambesi for the Years 1907 - 1908", *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 60.67 As Kinghorn noted in his report written from Madona, "To digress for a moment, I have a specimen of *Gl. Palpalis* caught on the verandah of the assistant magistrate here".

67 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, "Reports of the 'Sleeping Sickness' Expedition to the Zambesi for the Years 1907 - 1908", *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 62.

68 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, "Reports of the 'Sleeping Sickness' Expedition to the Zambesi for the Years 1907 - 1908", *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 61.

69 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, "Reports of the 'Sleeping Sickness' Expedition to the Zambesi for the Years 1907 - 1908", *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 61.

70 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, "Reports of the 'Sleeping Sickness' Expedition to the Zambesi for the Years 1907 - 1908", *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 61.

71 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, "Reports of the 'Sleeping Sickness' Expedition to the Zambesi for the Years 1907 - 1908", *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 63.

72 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, "The incidence and prophylaxis of human trypanosomiasis in North Eastern Rhodesia", *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 88.

lat. 12 deg. S.", that is effectively the whole of the Mweru-Luapula valley.⁶³ It was considered that the "most likely points of invasion of North-Eastern Rhodesia are at the north-eastern corner of Lake Mweru, and at the ferries across the Luapula River south of this lake, where 20.000 natives are said to pass annually".⁶⁴ Madona, as the main ferry crossing from North-Eastern Rhodesia to Katanga, carried the bulk of the 20.000 who travelled across the river, many of whom being workers for the Tanganyika Concession Limited mines in Katanga. Consequently any activities aimed at combating tsetse and sleeping sickness would have major consequences for the settlement of Madona.

In 1907, following on Sheffield Neave's research, a team of specialists drawn from the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine was appointed to "determine to what extent sleeping sickness had invaded British South African Territory, to map out the distribution of tsetse flies and to advise on means for checking the spread of sleeping sickness".⁶⁵ Based in Madona, Dr. Kinghorn travelled up the Luapula to Kazembe, before traversing eastwards and returning to Madona via Mushota and the Luongo River.⁶⁶ In the course of his trip Kinghorn reported on the presence of *Glossina Palpalis*⁶⁷ and *Glossina Morsitans*, and found two cases of trypanosomiasis on the road to Kazembe:

Both these had decidedly enlarged glands and trypanosomes were present in the gland juice. Both men had worked at Kambove.⁶⁸

Not surprisingly Kinghorn concluded, "we have then, along the Luapula all the factors which are necessary for an extension of the disease, i.e., cases of human trypanosomiasis and tsetse flies".⁶⁹ Kinghorn was uncompromising in his position vis-a-vis the effective combatting of the disease, it was a position that although formulated with regard to the higher ideals of industrial capital, would also have devastating consequences for central Africans living in the Mweru-luapula as a whole. In words that brooked no opposition Kinghorn warned the British South Africa Company administration as follows:

It must be clearly understood, though, that if the disease is to be prevented from getting a foothold, all commercial considerations must give way until such time as the aetiology and treatment of human trypanosomiasis are on a more satisfactory basis.⁷⁰

In concrete terms this meant that everything within Northern Rhodesia had to yield in the interests of combating trypanosomiasis. A form of combat in which the hierarchies of colonial rule were to be ruffled as responsibility was to lie with "the medical officer ... and not the native commissioner". Indeed, "the situation should be entirely under the control of the medical officer, and any assistance granted him from the native department should be subject to his direction".⁷¹

Kinghorn and his colleague Montgomery suggested a number of measures. These they grouped into two categories, major and minor measures. The major measures were to have a tremendous impact upon the daily lives of Africans in the Mweru-Luapula. The measures to be taken all dealt with the containment of Africans, in that a.) African movement was to be controlled, b.) cases were to be segregated, and c.) villages were to be moved from those zones deemed to be dangerous. Minor measures consisted of a.) bush clearing, b.) education, c.) personal prophylaxis, and d.) destruction of tsetse flies, their larvae and pupae.⁷²

Worker Palpitation

One of the extreme measures taken was that each and every labourer recruited by the Tanganyika Concessions Limited had to be checked for sleeping sickness before the person could return to Northern Rhodesia. The British South Africa Company administration of Northern Rhodesia demanded, and was able to enforce that every returning labourer be “palpitated”. That is that the lymph glands of the throat, armpits and groin, be palpitated and checked for swelling. Those found to have swollen or “shotty” glands were to have fluid extracted from their glands and examined for sleeping sickness. Only those found to be free of sleeping sickness could then be allowed to return to Northern Rhodesia the rest were to be quarantined.



Dr. May “palpitating for shotty glands” Mweru-Luapula 1907⁷³

73 National Archives of Zambia, with thanks to Dr. M. Hinfelaar.

74 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, “Reports of the ‘Sleeping Sickness’ Expedition to the Zambesi for the Years 1907 – 1908”, *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 75.

75 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, “The incidence and prophylaxis of human trypanosomiasis in North Estaren Rhodesia”, *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 83.

76 Allan Kinghorn and R. Eustace Montgomery, “The incidence and prophylaxis of human trypanosomiasis in North Estaren Rhodesia”, *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, Volume II (March 2, 1908 to May 12, 1909), p. 87.

Writing from Madona in early 1908 Dr. Kinghorn wrote, “Of 9,005 natives examined by me between July and December [1907], 20.85% had palpable glands, mostly very few in number and shotty to the touch”⁷⁴ Secure in the paradigm of bio-medical knowledge, Kinghorn went on to mention in a further article that, “in as many cases as was practicable, gland puncture was performed and the juices thus obtained examined microscopically”⁷⁵ The whole system of prophylaxis was based on the “application of gland palpation and puncture”. Since it was by this means that Kinghorn and his colleagues were “enabled to detect the disease in its earliest stages in over 97 percent of the cases”, thus they were “in a position to weed out the infected and isolate them before they [sic] ... [could] become very dangerous”⁷⁶

Just stop and imagine what this entailed. A young man went off to work. To do this he had to be registered. Then after a set period of time he was given a ticket. With this ticket he could then hope to gain access to material goods, but before this could take place, he had to strip and allow a complete stranger to “palpitate” his glands. Then depending on an outcome, the logic of which was contained within a bio-medical worldview, the young man could or could not gain access to his highly sought after material goods.

Thus, although the British South Africa Company administration had no actual power on the ground, through international law they were able to ensure that Tanganyika Concessions Limited carried out its wishes, and thus by extension the BSAC administration was able to enter into and control at a very fundamental level the daily lived reality of African labourers in Northern Rhodesia in the early 1900s. Science magazine reporting on the activities of Dr. Sheffield Neave noted in 1908 that:

In 1,327 palpations the percentage of enlarged glands from endemically-infected districts was found to be 62.4 per cent., as compared with 3,972 palpations, with a percentage of 39.2, where the disease did not exist.⁷⁷

Commenting on the work of Dr. Sheffield Neave Science magazine concluded in 1908 that, “the disease is not so severe and widespread in Katanga as was at first thought”.⁷⁸ Thus although it would later turn out that human trypanosomiasis was not as widespread as first believed, yet the threat of this and the desire for industrial material goods was capable of allowing for the extensive disciplining of African people and society in the absence of military might and naked power.

People were forced to move, with disastrous consequences. Interestingly by 1910 the interplay between Tax and Tsetse had come to express itself in daily lived life along the Luapula. Thus missionary Shapland reported in early 1910:

Camped at Chituta’s ... This is a large village, and in the evening two hundred or more gathered. I was rather amused to see the people make for the bush as I entered each village to-day. They thought I had come to collect the tax, or else took me for the doctor on the look-out for sleeping-sickness patients. Sometimes I had to wait twenty minutes or half-an-hour ere they could be persuaded I had only come to tell them that God’s love.⁷⁹

Discussion

The case is fairly simple, yet the ramifications – as always – are extensive. In the early 1900s the legal construction recognised under international law and known as the British South Africa Company, which administered the colony of Northern Rhodesia, entered into agreements with another legal construction known as the Tanganyika Concessions Limited. Although the legal construction of the Colony of Northern Rhodesia had no effective on the ground control in the territories that were formally under its control, it was able to enter into detailed legal contracts with the legal construction known as TCL. That is, within international law, the Northern Rhodesian government could enforce its legislation on the TCL. If the TCL failed to comply with the wishes of the Northern Rhodesian government(NRG), then the NRG could choose to pursue legal cases against the TCL in the law courts of Great Britain, and thereby ensure that the TCL kept to the letter of the law as determined by the NRG.

On the ground in Northern Rhodesia itself the NRG was simply unable to enforce its law. It simply did not have the manpower or the resources available to enforce its will. But, in the courts of law, within the context of international law, the NRG was capable of ensuring that companies operating within its territories kept to the law. If the TCL failed to keep to its agreements with the NRG, then it would be censured by law. Now all of this is all very well at the level of companies and legal constructions; that is at the abstract level of legal entities that battle it out within the context of international law. But, what were the consequences of these battles at the level of everyday people living in Northern Rhodesia and southern Congo in the early 1900s?

⁷⁷ “Scientific notes and news”, Science, Vol. XXVIII, No. 724, November 13, 1908, p. 681.

⁷⁸ “Scientific notes and news”, Science, Vol. XXVIII, No. 724, November 13, 1908, p. 681.

⁷⁹ A.E. Shapland, 3rd May – 17th May 1910, *Echoes of Service: A Record of Labour in the Lord’s Name*, September, 1910, pp. 336 – 337.

The mines of the TCL that lay within southern Congo needed African labour, and they needed lots of it. Within the framework created by the social construct known as international law, the bulk of the labour that came to be employed in southern Congo came from territory administered by the NRG. That is, the TCL was dependent on labour drawn from territory formally under the control of the NRG. Within the context of international law the TCL entered into extensive negotiation with the NRG with regard to the recruitment and employment of African labour drawn from Northern Rhodesia and employed in the mines of the TCL in southern Congo. That is, in what was purely an abstract exercise carried out in the legal chambers of law companies in London, the grounds and conditions on which the TCL could legally gain access to NRG labour was thrashed out. Thus, although the NRG was unable to enforce its will on the ground in Northern Rhodesia, within the context of international law it could make sure that TCL kept to the letter of the law.

The TCL was permitted to formally recruit labour from Northern Rhodesia. TCL labour recruiters kept records – that were then passed on to the NRG - of all those recruited, and kept to the terms and conditions as stipulated by the NRG. Thus, in Northern Rhodesia eight thousand kilometres away from London's law courts the TCL carried out the wishes of the NRG and this had a direct impact on the African Labourers recruited. That is bureaucratic agreements completed in London had direct influence and bearing on the daily lived reality of Africans in Northern Rhodesia. Africans were registered and drawn into a bureaucratic system not because the NRG had any physical presence in Northern Rhodesia, but because the NRG could force the TCL to abide by its wishes in the context of international law. TCL wanted labour, and African labourers wanted work so as to get access to the consumption products of industrial capital. Yet access to these two desires – labour and employment – was regulated and controlled by the abstract authority of international law, which was recognised by both the NRG and the TCL. That African labourers may not have recognised this abstract authority is beside the point, in their desire for employment they submitted themselves to a process of bureaucratic registration that regulated and disciplined their lives. By registering for employment they became drawn into bureaucratic structures that would directly influence their daily lived reality.

Conclusion

The British South Africa Company gained control of parts of Northern Rhodesia (colonial Zambia) through consumption mediated through possible tsetse fly vectored trypanosomiasis infection. African workers, to be able to consume had to go through a ritual of registration, work, palpitation and possibly puncture. That is the use of Bio-medical logic to domesticate and discipline African workers, and thus extend the control of the colonial state.

