
BY

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2001
DECLARATION

I, Gibson Addon Banda, do declare that this dissertation represents my own work and has never before been submitted for a degree at this or any other University.

SIGNATURE: ____________________________

DATE: ________________________________
APPROVAL

This dissertation of Gibson Addon Banda is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History by the University of Zambia.

SIGNATURE OF EXAMINER          DATE
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the provision of social security for African railway workers in Zambia in the period between 1945 and 1967. Social security is defined here as the protection and assistance that the state, employers, individuals, and communities provide to workers to prevent or ameliorate the effects of hardships such as illness and injury sustained while at work. As a result of industrialisation which drew Africans from their rural homes, it was no longer possible for those Africans who took up wage employment on the Railways to adequately rely on the traditional social security system which was based on mutual assistance.

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is the introduction in which we introduce the content of the study. In Chapter Two, we discuss the aspects of social security which were provided for African railway workers in Zambia. In Chapter Three, we examine the roles of the state, the employer, and the employees in the provision of social security for Africans on the Railways. In Chapter Four, we discuss the constraints on the provision of social security for African railway workers. Chapter Five is the conclusion, and draws upon the findings of the preceding chapters.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of individuals and organizations made invaluable contributions to the preparation of this dissertation. The lack of space has allowed me to mention only a few. I would like to acknowledge the guidance of Mr. Friday E. Mulenga, my supervisor, from whose knowledge and experience I gained a great deal in order to make this work a success. In spite of his busy schedule as lecturer and Head of the Department of History, he was always able to attend to me and gave generously of his time.

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Deserving of special gratitude are my wife, Mary Zulu, and my children Golden, Dabwitso, Faides, Grace, Luwani, Emmanuel, and Gibson, who really knew what it felt like to be on their own. I am also deeply indebted to Mr. Goodman A. Banda, my father, for sending me to school and ensuring that I got the best out of it.
This acknowledgement would be incomplete without stating my indebtedness to Boniface Musanki Mwewa and Emmanuel Simfukwe, my childhood friends, who gave me all their support but did not live to see the completed work. I also owe more than a statement of gratitude to Kwibisa Liywalii, Angel Bwalya, and aunt Marjorie Banda.

I bear full responsibility for the views, defects, and errors of omission which might be found in this work.
DEDICATION

To Tiwine Zimba Mwandila, my mother, and Mary Zulu, my wife, who for a long time were deprived of the care and protection of the sole breadwinner and went through traumatic experiences all in support of my setting out in pursuit of an academic career.
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<tr>
<td>A.A.D.</td>
<td>African Affairs Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.E.U.</td>
<td>Amalgamated Engineering Union</td>
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<td>A.R.W.T.U.</td>
<td>African Railway Workers’ Trade Union</td>
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<td>B.S.A.Co.</td>
<td>British South Africa Company</td>
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<td>C.A.F.O.</td>
<td>Chief Accounts and Finance Officer</td>
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<td>C.O.</td>
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<td>I.L.O.</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>I.O.D.</td>
<td>Injured On Duty</td>
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<td>I.S.S.A.</td>
<td>International Social Security Association</td>
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<td>J.I.C.</td>
<td>Joint Industrial Committee</td>
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<td>Legco</td>
<td>Legislative Council (Zambia)</td>
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<td>M.U.Z.</td>
<td>Mineworkers’ Union of Zambia</td>
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<td>N.A.Z.</td>
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<td>N.I.C.</td>
<td>National Industrial Council</td>
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<td>N.N.L.B.</td>
<td>National Native Labour Board</td>
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<td>N.R.G.</td>
<td>Northern Rhodesia Government</td>
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<td>P.T.O.</td>
<td>Privileged Ticket Order</td>
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<td>R.A.W.U.</td>
<td>Railway African Workers’ Union</td>
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<td>R.R.</td>
<td>Rhodesia Railways</td>
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<td>R.R.A.E.A.</td>
<td>Rhodesia Railways African Employees’ Association</td>
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<td>R.R.W.U.</td>
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S.I.C.          Statutory Industrial Council
U.D.I.          Unilateral Declaration of Independence
Z.N.P.F.        Zambia National Provident Fund
Z.R.            Zambia Railways
Z.R.A.W.U.      Zambia Railways Amalgamated Workers’ Union
## CHANGED NAMES

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<th>OLD NAME</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Bancroft</td>
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<td>Bechuanaland Protectorate</td>
<td>Botswana</td>
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<td>Broken Hill</td>
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<td>Kaoma</td>
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<td>Nkana</td>
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<td>Northern Rhodesia</td>
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<td>Nyasaland</td>
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<td>Portuguese East Africa</td>
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<td>Tanganyika</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
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<td>Zaire</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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### A NOTE ON CURRENCY

Until January 1968, Zambia used the British currency which made use of pounds, shillings and pennies. In this study, the old currency is used, and a conversion table is shown below. ‘K’ represents ‘kwacha’ and ‘n’ represents ‘ngwee’.

- £1=20 shillings=240 pence (British)
- K1=100n (Zambian)
6 pence = 5n

12 pence = 1 shilling = 10ngwee

20 shillings = £1 = 2 kwacha
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MAP 2: THE RHODESIA RAILWAYS SYSTEM

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Historians and other scholars who have done studies on labour have mainly concentrated on issues affecting African wage earners when they are functional, able to carry out their duties, and earn an income. Little consideration has been given to the times when African employees were prevented from carrying out their duties, and their ability to eke out a living was partially or completely lost through problems such as illnesses or disablement. In addition, there were instances when incomes could not meet certain demands such as the taking care of an expanded family.

The lack of written history on social security for African workers has created a gap in the labour historiography of Zambia. This study is an attempt to fill that gap by examining the measures which were put in place to protect African workers on the Railways from eventualities such as sickness and injury, and what was done to mitigate such difficulties.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The International Labour Organisation (I.L.O.) defines social security as ‘the protection which society provides for its members through a series of public measures against the economic and social distress that otherwise would be caused by the stoppage or substantial reduction of earnings resulting from sickness, maternity, employment injury, invalidity and death, the provision of medical care and the provision of subsidies for families with children’.¹

The Rhodesia Railways administration did not directly define social security in the conditions of service for African railway employees. The Railways, however, viewed
social security as the coverage of conditions of service such as pensions, gratuities, and workmen’s compensation. These aspects of social security, which included the provision of medical facilities and protective clothing, were laid down by the Railway administration in the conditions of service for African railway workers.

The evolution of modern social security systems was as a result of the socio-economic problems caused by the Industrial Revolution in Europe since there was need to provide workers with protection and assistance which had previously been provided by the family through kinship. The first initiative in the provision of social security for industrial workers was made by Germany in 1878 when Bismarck authorised the enactment of the Employers’ Liability Act which made employers responsible for all injuries not due to the workman’s own fault, for loss of wages, medical expenses, and in case of death, compensation to dependants and funeral expenses.

In Africa, as in Europe and America, pre-industrial social security was provided by the predominantly agricultural communities through the maintenance of kinship links and the obligations of individuals to both the rulers and fellow members of the society.

The traditional social security system in pre-colonial Zambia was based on the responsibility of relatives and friends to look after and help those who were in need such as during illness or bereavement.

The coming of monopoly capitalism to Africa brought with it the need for cheap African labour to support industries and commercial agriculture. As a result of this demand for labour which Africans were initially not willing to provide, taxes and other forms of coercion were introduced so as to force Africans to take up wage employment.

The taking up of wage employment drew Africans from the peasant economies,
and this had profound effects on the links which they had with their kith and kin in the rural areas. According to Charles, the wage system robbed the African of that security which the social group gave him and made him helplessly dependent on the hazards of the employment market, while weakening the cohesion and strength of the social group.\textsuperscript{9}

Wage employment, therefore, made the worker more vulnerable to economic insecurity arising out of eventualities such as injury, old age, ill health, or loss of employment.\textsuperscript{10}

Generally, the development of modern industrial concerns in East and Central Africa was described by Foosbrooke as a process which ought to develop hand in hand with social security provisions in order to maintain the worker and his dependants in the event of hardships.\textsuperscript{11} African workers on the Railways needed social security protection since they could not only make demands which were social security related, but also affected the production process negatively when they were unable to carry out their duties owing to risks such as accidents.

Industrial production is dependent on the availability and productivity of labour. For production to progress, therefore, the labour force needs protection through both prevention and amelioration of hardships. Social security provisions such as workmen’s compensation and medical facilities are part of the costs incurred by the owners of capital for effective industrial production.\textsuperscript{12}

The colonial state in Northern Rhodesia, in line with assisting capitalist development and the exploitation of African labour, followed a health policy which ensured more health care provisions for urban areas ‘to maintain a healthy labour force engaged in industrial and commercial activities’.\textsuperscript{13} The desire to have a disease-free labour force was reiterated by Zambian employers in 1967 when they complained of the
loss of production through the ill-health of employees.\textsuperscript{14} The Rhodesia Railways administration was not unaware of the importance of the provision of social security in order to maintain and improve the productivity of African labour and indicated that it was necessary to provide social security schemes such as pensions and gratuities.\textsuperscript{15}

It is in the context of the need for wage labour to have social security that this study examines social security provisions for Africans in the employ of Rhodesia Railways during the period from 1945 to 1967, and how the contradiction between cost minimization and the costs of maintaining African labour determined the relationship among the state, the employers, and the employees.

The social security situation on the Railways in the period from 1945 to 1967 was different from that existing at the time this study was being conducted. According to the Zambia Railways (Z.R.) administration and the Railway Workers’ Union of Zambia (R.W.U.Z.) officials, it was the policy of Z.R. to provide social security according to the collective agreement.\textsuperscript{16} However, the Structural Adjustment Programme (S.A.P.) started in 1992 by the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (M.M.D) Government created job insecurity through retrenchments. Zambia Railways paid severance packages to the retrenched employees, with higher amounts of benefits for those in higher grades and with more years of continuous service on the Railways.\textsuperscript{17} According to R.W.U.Z., the retrenchments reduced union membership and strength, while depriving the workers of their wages and access to facilities such as medical attention, death benefits, and educational allowances.\textsuperscript{18}
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The growth of industrial capitalism in Europe led to the growth of monopolies which were as a result of competition for the acquisition of raw materials and the establishment of markets. The coming of the railway line into Northern Rhodesia was directly as a result of the establishment of the British South Africa Company (B.S.A.Co.) of Cecil John Rhodes which, through a Royal Charter granted by the British Government in 1889, was given the mandate to engage in commercial activities and establish its rule in the areas north of British Bechuanaland.19

It was in view of Rhodes’ desire and mission to extend the British sphere of influence through the region between Cape Town and Cairo that, by 1897, a railway had been constructed from Kimberley to Bulawayo. This was part of the expected all-British railway stretching from Cape Town to Cairo.20 The establishment of domination over the areas in the north was aimed at creating a conducive atmosphere for the operation of capitalist interests. The B.S.A. Company administered Northern Rhodesia between 1894 and April 1924. In 1924, the B.S.A. Company transferred the administration of the territory to the Colonial Office in London partly as a result of the Company’s financial problems and the constant attacks from the white settler farmers.21

Rhodes’ original plan was to extend the railway beyond the River Zambezi and on to Lake Tanganyika in order to open up trade. However, the difficulty of the route and the availability of coal at Hwange made it imperative for the railway to be extended from Bulawayo to Hwange by 1903.22

Between 1904 and 1905, the extension of the railway line from Hwange Colliery to Kalomo via the Victoria Falls Bridge had been achieved. The extension of the line of
rail from Kalomo to Broken Hill in 1906 was necessitated by the need to supply machinery, labour, and food to the lead and zinc mine at Broken Hill.\textfootnote{23}

The construction of the railway from Broken Hill to the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) border was aimed at linking the Katanga mines to the Rhodesia Railway system.\textfootnote{24} The route which was taken by the railway was largely determined by the availability of resources at Hwange, Broken Hill and the Katanga. In addition to the main line, the economic viability and mineral resources of the Copperbelt invited the construction of extensions such as the Ndola-Luanshya and Chambishi-Mufulira branch lines between 1929 and 1932.\textfootnote{25}

The Bechuanaland Railway Company which was established in May 1893, owned and operated the railway line from Vryburg northwards.\textfootnote{26} The Bechuanaland Railway Company was renamed Rhodesia Railways Limited in 1899, and it was this company that the government of Southern Rhodesia purchased in 1947.\textfootnote{27} In 1949, Rhodesia Railways was nationalised and became a statutory body operated by a board representing Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and the Bechuanaland Protectorate.\textfootnote{28}

During the period of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Rhodesia Railways was administered by the Federal Government. After the dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1963, the ownership of and financial responsibility for the Railways passed in equal shares to the governments of Southern and Northern Rhodesia under a unitary system.\textfootnote{29} Following the granting of independence to Northern Rhodesia in 1964 and the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (U.D.I.) in Southern Rhodesia in 1965, the unitary system came to an end on 30\textsuperscript{th} June, 1967, and each country started operating the railways autonomously.\textfootnote{30}
The Engagement of African Labour on the Railways

Rhodesia Railways, from the period of the construction of the railways to the time the railways were operational, made use of both European and African labour. The engagement of Africans, with whom this study is primarily concerned, was dependent on the labour requirements of the various departments in the railway undertaking. The Labour Control (Study Branch) section of the Railway administration had as one of its duties the making of requests and recommendations to the Regional Controllers with regards to labour needs.\textsuperscript{31} The engagements were made in order to replace employees who had gone on leave, or had left Railway service.

In instances where there was an excess in the demand as opposed to the supply of African labour, the Railways sought the services of the Rhodesia Native Labour Supply Commission. The supply and demand rule was applied in 1957 when recruitment through this Commission ceased because ‘supply exceeded demand in all categories’.\textsuperscript{32} Africans who took up paid employment on the Railways were placed into the unpopular pool gangs which the Railways described as points of entry for new recruits to the service, re-sorting centres for employees found to be unsuitable for work in a particular department, and sources of placement.\textsuperscript{33}

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study has three objectives. Firstly, it investigates whether social security was provided for African railway workers in Zambia. Secondly, it examines the roles of the state, the employers, and the employees in the provision of social security for African railway workers. Thirdly, the study assesses the effectiveness and significance of the social security measures which were put in place for African railway workers.
RATIONALE

This study of social security for African railway workers in Zambia is justified on two grounds. Firstly, the Railways were not only important in the capitalist extraction of wealth from Zambia, but also an important employer of African labour in the colonial period just as the mines were. It is, therefore, important to study the social security measures that the Railways put in place for their African workers and how they treated the indigenous workers. Secondly, this study attempts to fill a gap in the labour historiography of Zambia by covering social security, an aspect of labour which has not received enough scholarly attention. This study begins at 1945 since this was the year in which the first major strike among African employees of Rhodesia Railways took place. The study ends at 1967 since the year marked the end of the unitary system in which the Railways were owned and operated jointly by the governments of Southern and Northern Rhodesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of literature shows that while something has been written on African railway workers in Zambia, little has been written on the aspect of their social security.

The study done by F.E. Mulenga on the development of worker consciousness among African railway workers in Zambia in the period from 1953 to 1972 was, from the onset of our study to its completion, of much value. Mulenga’s work is not only one of the most comprehensive and informative works on African railway workers in Zambia,
but also an in-depth analysis of why and how African workers struggled against poor conditions of service on the Railways.\textsuperscript{34}

The other work which was of much use was that done by G.C. Chishala who discussed the development of trade unionism among African railway workers in Zambia.\textsuperscript{35} Chishala’s article gave an elaborate description of the development of trade unions as well as mutual benefit societies such as the Rhodesia Railways African Benefit Society.

Roy Welensky’s article on African trade unions in Northern Rhodesia,\textsuperscript{36} though short, was of use to our study in that it showed the official opinion of the European employees with regards to African workers on the Railways, and how the European trade unions vowed to protect the interests of European workers partly by perpetuating wage differentials. Our study also addresses the relationship between European and African employees on the Railways, and how this affected social security provisions for African workers.

Of scholarly value was A.A. Turner’s \textit{An Economic and Social History of Kabwe}.\textsuperscript{37} Turner argued that African workers on the Railways went out on strike in 1945 partly as a result of social security issues such as injury compensation, gratuities, and sick pay. However, Turner did not go further than making mention of these grievances. This study has attempted to make a follow up on the developments beyond the 1945 strike among African railway workers.

D.G. Clarke’s book on African old age subsistence in Rhodesia examines how socio-economic changes demanded the provision of old age pensions.\textsuperscript{38} Clarke argued that African employees were denied pensions on the grounds that they would return to the
reserves. Clarke indicated that there was a change of attitude towards providing pensions for Africans as a result of the development of permanent urbanisation and pressure from employees. Clarke’s study invoked our interest in the methods used to withhold social security for Africans, as well as worker agitation for social security provisions.

The other source which discusses aspects of social security is H.S. Meebelo’s *African Proletarians and Colonial Capitalism*. Meebelo discussed the ticket to ticket system which led to the loss of wages among African employees when they were unable to report for work owing to illness. Meebelo also discussed the introduction of the gratuity and pension scheme for African railway workers in 1955, and the 1961 agreement between the Railway African Workers’ Union (R.A.W.U.) and the Railway administration in which the employers undertook to pay full wages for the first three months to African employees who got injured on duty. However, Meebelo’s work is of a general nature and only refers to social security aspects for African railway employees in passing.

V.N. Godfrey’s article on provident funds in Zambia argued that after the Second World War, urban workers became closely identified with the urban centres where they worked, resulting into the loss of the support provided by the rural areas, and ‘no substitute emerged to take over the role of the family in this field’. Godfrey, therefore, emphasised the complete loss of the traditional social security system which was supposed to cater for African workers in the urban areas. The view that there was loss of traditional support was also discussed by H.A. Foosbrooke.

In their works, V.G. Nyirenda and M.G. Whisson argued that the traditional forms of social security continued to exist and were able to provide assistance to Africans in the
urban areas.\textsuperscript{44} These works were of value to our study since they provided some insight into the use of traditional forms of social security by Africans in the urban areas.

P. Charles in his article, ‘Tribal Society and Labour Legislation’, discussed how African societies always helped their members when they were in need and never abandoned anyone to destitution,\textsuperscript{45} and how African traditions were adaptive to new conditions.\textsuperscript{46} Charles’ article was of use to our study since it drew our attention to some of the ways in which African forms of mutual assistance were adapted to urban situations.

Grillo and Moock\textsuperscript{47} both discussed the maintenance of rural-urban ties among workers in the urban areas and their kinsfolk in the rural areas. The two studies were of much use to our study since they helped to illuminate the aspect of rural-urban networks as a source of social security.

Croxton gave a well detailed and lucid description of the construction and development of the railways of Rhodesia. Croxton’s work was invaluable to this study since it gave the background of the Railways up to the break up of the unitary system in 1967.\textsuperscript{48}

Jeffries’ study of the railway workers of Sekondi-Takoradi in Ghana discussed the growth of trade unionism and collective organisation. Jeffries showed that although virtually all the railway workers wished to return to their villages after retirement, most of them settled around Sekondi-Takoradi because of their success in developing small scale businesses or were reluctant to leave friends.\textsuperscript{49} The work by Jeffries was of importance to our study since it discussed trade unionism and rural-urban ties which we also consider.
The review of literature shows that very little scholarly work has been done on African railway workers in Zambia, and on their social security provisions in particular. The general works on labour, however, do refer to African railway workers and even cover some aspects of social security. This study is expected to contribute to the already existing knowledge on African railway workers and fill a gap in the labour historiography of Zambia by focusing on social security and related issues.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The data for this study was collected over a period of about 9 months.

The initial stage of the research was done in the University of Zambia Library where both primary and secondary sources such as Legislative Council Debates, annual reports, books, journals, and dissertations were consulted.

Most of the material that was used in the preparation of this study was located in the National Archives of Zambia (N.A.Z.) in Lusaka, where newspapers, annual reports of Government Departments and Rhodesia Railways and commissions of enquiry evidence and reports were consulted.

From N.A.Z., we moved to the Zambia Railways Archives in Kabwe. The sponsors did not release funds in time, leading to a delay in the shift of the research from N.A.Z. to the Zambia Railways Archives. The Zambia Railways Archives are a new establishment and, at the time the research was being conducted, there were some files which had not been indexed. Despite this constraint, the files we managed to consult gave us some useful additional data.
While in Kabwe, efforts to have access to most of the files at the Railway Worker’s Union of Zambia (R.W.U.Z.) Head Office did not prove as fruitful as had been expected due to circumstances beyond our control. Even so, we were availed the opportunity to go through a few of the available files.

The next stage of the research involved the conducting of oral interviews with members of the Railway administration, R.W.U.Z. officials, and current and former employees of the Railways. It was not, as expected in a venture which was so poorly and erratically funded, easy to locate respondents or let alone travel to visit those whose whereabouts were known.

The last part of the research was the analysis of the data accompanied by the continued consultation of sources in the University of Zambia Library, which was followed by the writing of the dissertation.

**ORGANISATION OF THE WORK**

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction to the study and deals with the relationship between labour and social security, as well as the historical background of Rhodesia Railways which was the employer of the workers with whom this study is concerned. In the first chapter, the major argument is that as a result of industrialisation and the drawing of Africans from their traditional social security systems, there was need for an accompanying provision of social security by the employer.

The second chapter deals with the social security measures which were put in place for the Africans in the employ of Rhodesia Railways. The central argument in chapter two is that aspects of social security were introduced in different stages owing to
their importance, the pressure from the African employees, and the resistance of the Railway administration.

In the third chapter, we discuss the roles of the state, the employers, and the employees in the provision of social security for African railway workers. In this chapter, we show that there was an alliance between the colonial state and Rhodesia Railways which delayed the introduction of social security schemes. In addition, we show in this chapter that through trade unionism and agitation, Africans made demands for the introduction and improvement of social security measures.

The fourth chapter examines the constraints which affected both the introduction and effective provision of social security for African railway employees. The last chapter is the conclusion, which draws upon the findings of the preceding chapters.

GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF ZAMBIA

Zambia lies in Central Africa between longitudes 22° E and 33°E, and between latitudes 8° 15’ S and 18° S. The railway line which was operated by Rhodesia Railways/Zambia Railways cuts across the country, running from Livingstone on the border with Zimbabwe in the South, to the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) border at Chililabombwe in the North.
NOTES


26. N.A.Z., HM 56/1, Rhodesia Railways Historic Milestones.


31. Z.R. Archives, DES 138/139 N, Labour Control (Study Branch) and Labour Control (General Manager's Department), Broken Hill to Regional Controller, African Affairs Department, 22nd October, 1952.


33. N.A.Z., HM 56/18, Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Industrial Committee Held on 17th and 18th June, 1958.


CHAPTER TWO

ASPECTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY FOR AFRICAN RAILWAY WORKERS IN ZAMBIA

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the measures which were put in place to protect African railway workers from the risks that they were exposed to. The chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section of the chapter we discuss injuries sustained by African employees in the course of carrying out their duties. In the second section, we discuss medical and maternity care which were provided for African employees and their dependants. In the third section, we examine family and children’s allowances which the Railways withheld from Africans for a long time as a way of cutting down on costs. In the fourth section of this chapter we discuss pensions and gratuities. In the fifth part we address the occurrence of deaths among employees on the Railways.

EMPLOYMENT INJURY

Employment injury denotes both work connected accidents, and diseases contracted in the course of one’s employment.¹ Diseases which are prescribed by legislation, just like accidents, may result in a total or partial loss of earnings and a loss of support for dependants as a result of the death of the employee.² Cases of scheduled diseases in industry are not only dependent on the type of industry, but also on the level of industrialisation. In 1953, for example, a survey by the International Labour Office indicated no incidences of occupational diseases in Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Northern Rhodesia ‘owing to the low levels of industrialisation’.³