The Role of Women in Labour Stabilisation at Mufulira Mine, 1930 to 1964.
The Role of Women in Labour Stabilisation at Mufulira Mine, 1930 to 1964

By

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262334
A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a Master of Arts in History

University of Zambia
2001
DECLARATION

I, Foster Sakala, hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work, and that it has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or another university.

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Sakala

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23/02/01
This dissertation of Foster Sakala is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History of the University of Zambia.

1. Ann Kanduza, 12 April 2002

2. [Signature] 13/6/3

3. [Signature] 13/08/03
ABSTRACT

This study examines the role that women played in the stabilisation of the African labour force at Mufulira mine between 1930 and 1964. 1930 is significant to this study because that was the year in which the company, Mufulira Copper Mines Limited (M.C.M. Ltd), was incorporated while 1964 signified the end of colonial rule and its policies, which were detrimental not only to the development of Africans in the territory as a whole, particularly those who went out to work in industry, but also their women folk whom the government pretended did not exist.

This study, therefore, is devoted to bringing out the role that women played in labour stabilisation at Mufulira mine and contends that the explanation of this phenomenon lies in the neglected issue of women's reproductive labour which served to maintain mine employees on a daily basis through domestic and sexual services as well as generation reproduction of a future labour force. We further argue that although wives were a major factor in inducing stabilisation, unmarried (or unattached women) played an equally important role as they also participated in the general reproductive roles assigned to women.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not be complete if I did not express my profound gratitude to a number of individuals and institutions whose assistance and co-operation made it possible. First and foremost, my gratitude goes to my supervisor, Mr. F.E. Mulenga for his guidance, constructive criticism and probing questions through all the stages of this study. This helped a great deal in shaping this study. Next, my gratitude goes to the whole Department of History at the University of Zambia for their advice and suggestions during the preparation of the proposal and writing of the dissertation, especially Dr. Siamwiza who allowed me to use some of his books. The Ministry of Education also deserves my thanks for not only granting me study leave but also for funding my study programme at UNZA. I also thank the M.A. History class of 1998 and all residents of Dag Hammerskjöld House (1998-2000) for their friendship and encouragement, especially Hilda Chella, Felix Musonda and my roommate, Maria Tembo. For assistance rendered during my research, I am deeply indebted to the staff at the Z.C.C.M Archives for their hospitality, the staff of the National Archives of Zambia and UNZA Main Library, especially those of the Special Collections. Further thanks go to Miss Evah Mudenda for not only typing the work but for her patience too. To my sisters, Mrs Monica Mumba for allowing me to stay with her family during my research, Mrs Mody Melu (Late) for her encouragement and the enthusiasm shown in my study and the rest of my family, who each in their own way contributed to the successful completion of this study. I thank them all. Finally, to Teddy Amankwah for not only being there through it all, but also for his love, understanding and encouragement. Words alone cannot express my gratitude.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother and father,

Christine and Adam Lungu.
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<td>B.S.A.Co.</td>
<td>British South Africa Company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C.</td>
<td>District Commissioner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.R.C.</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo.</td>
</tr>
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<td>M.C.M.</td>
<td>Mufulira Copper Mine.</td>
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<td>N.A.Z.</td>
<td>National Archives of Zambia</td>
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<td>N.I.L.A.B.</td>
<td>Native Industrial Labour Advisory Board.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NORCOM</td>
<td>Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRAMTU</td>
<td>Northern Rhodesia African Mine Workers' Trade Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRAMU</td>
<td>Northern Rhodesia African Mine Workers’ Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Provincial Commissioner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.S.T.</td>
<td>Rhodesia Selection Trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.M.H.K.</td>
<td>Union Miniere du Haut Katanga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.N.Z.A.</td>
<td>University of Zambia</td>
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<tr>
<td>V.D.P.</td>
<td>Voluntary Deferred Payment.</td>
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<td>V.S.S.</td>
<td>Voluntary Savings Scheme.</td>
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<td>Z.C.C.M.</td>
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Source: Z.C.C.M Archives.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The aim of this study is to examine the role of women in the stabilisation of the African labour force at Mufulira mine. Stabilisation involved encouraging African mine employees to stay at the mine for periods longer than the few months that they usually stayed when the mine began operations. As women were already present at Mufulira and other mines from the beginning of construction work on the mine, stabilisation involved formally allowing the African workers to bring their wives to the mine compounds when it was noticed that married men stayed longer.

However, despite this long presence of women on the mines, scholars who wrote about labour issues generally overlooked the role that they played in labour stabilisation. In fact, very often writers make reference to stabilisation of men without necessarily investigating the role which women played in it apart from mentioning that they were brought in to help stabilise labour on the Copperbelt. Different scholars, including historians have written about labour issues including stabilisation but show, as the literature review indicates, very few details about women, let alone the role they played in stabilising labour. This leaves a gap in the colonial labour historiography of Zambia.

Although some studies pertaining to women on the Copperbelt have been carried out in the last two decades, much more needs to be done because this is an important issue and further research would highlight the importance of women in the history of the
mining industry. Besides, as these studies tend to discuss the Copperbelt as a whole, issues that are particular to individual mines such as Mufulira are not given full attention.

**Historical background.**

The mine at Mufulira belongs to a group of copper mines that developed on the Copperbelt in the late 1920s. This period marked the beginning of large-scale mining which was initially carried out on the sites where traditional mining had been done for centuries by the local people. Traditional mining was done on a very small scale as the people did not develop an advanced technology with which to extract a lot of copper. In fact iron picks and the same hoes used to cultivate the land were used to dig out copper ore.¹ The ore extracted was used to make objects such as bangles and copper crosses. In this regard, perhaps the amount of copper produced was enough for local needs.

The lack of advanced technology that would have enabled the local people to dig deeper probably explains why a lot of the traditional mines had been abandoned by the time European prospectors came searching for mineral deposits. The British South Africa Company (B.S.A.Co) employed the prospectors who came mainly towards the end of the nineteenth century. By then, the B.S.A.Co had, by a series of treaties with native chiefs established successful claims to these still unknown mineral resources which were recognised by the British Government.² With these claims, agents of the Company set about prospecting for minerals. The first copper discoveries were made at Nkana in 1895 when Rhodes was anxious for the country's mineral wealth to be explored and when rising copper prices gave an impetus to prospecting.³ More copper was discovered in the next century around the Copperbelt area leading to the opening of four big mines – Roan
Antelope, Nkana, Mufulira and Nchanga which all began production in the 1930s,\(^4\) after completing construction work, which began in the late 1920s.

**Geographical Position of Mufulira.**

Mufulira mine, as the maps on pages viii and ix show, is one of six mines situated in an area of Zambia known as the Copperbelt. It lies approximately 13 degrees south of the equator at an altitude of about 4000ft (1200m).\(^{34}\) Although the area receives a lot of rain, the soils are generally poor and this probably explains why the local Lamba and Sanga people made no settlements there as they did near Bwana Mkubwa, Nkana and Roan Antelope mines. This situation affected initial labour supply at the mine which, therefore, depended on migrant labour from elsewhere.

**The Birth of Mufulira Mine**

The discovery of copper deposits in Katanga revealed the possibility that there was copper on the other side of the border, which, however, turned out to be low-grade oxide ore at Nkana. The situation made it difficult for much to be done until the discovery of a new extraction process, the Ammonia Process for the treatment of low-grade oxide copper ore to yield large quantities of copper. This discovery led to the formation of a syndicate, Copper Ventures (C.V.) Limited, to acquire low grade-copper deposits in 1920. Members of the syndicate included Mr. Francis Gibbs, Mr. Chester Beatty, Colonel W.W. Webster, Captain W. Broadbridge, Messrs. Horner, Perkins and C.G. James.\(^5\)
On the advice of P.K. Horner, formerly of Union Miniere du Haut Katanga (UMHK), a mining company in the Katanga Region of the Congo, the syndicate approached the B.S.A. Co. and obtained the Nkana Concession. Work was started on Nkana by February 1922 while prospecting continued. Soon after, Chester Beatty acquired the Roan and Chambeshi Claims from Sir Edmond Davies and sent out Mr. Russel Parker to report on them while Horner checked the Nkana property and also arranged for mine development work on Bwana Mkubwa. Based on the reports received, the syndicate obtained the much larger concession called the Rhodesia-Congo Border Concession, which included the Nkana Concession. Arrangements were then made for prospecting which led to the discovery of Mufulira ore deposits.

The discovery is believed to have been made by James Moir who found copper-stained moss on the Mufulira stream around in 1922. He returned for further investigation with Guy Bell about six months later and collected samples from the outcrops. Very little happened in the next five years and it was only in 1928 that these outcrops were more thoroughly investigated by geologists and the riches of Mufulira revealed. In March 1928 the first drill-hole showed a width of 20.7 feet (6.21m) of high-grade sulphide ore averaging 9.49 per cent copper. By the end of 1929, ore reserves of 40 million tons at 4.68 per cent copper had been established. In 1928 a new company, Rhodesian Selection Trust Limited (R.S.T.) was incorporated by Selection Trust Limited, the mother company based in London. And by an agreement dated 30th May 1928, Selection Trust assigned their rights in the Nkana Concession to Rhodesian Selection Trust Limited.
In 1930, however, the Concession changed hands again when by an agreement dated 5th February 1930, R.S.T., B.S.A. Co. and the Bwana Mkubwa Company (all share-holders in the Nkana Concession) agreed to sell the Mufulira Special Grant to Mufulira Copper Mines Limited (M.C.M. Ltd), a new company which was incorporated on 3rd February 1930 with a capital of 600,000 pounds divided into six million shares of 2 shillings each. The amount was meant to cover the development of the property under the concession. It was envisaged that the cost could be reduced by unifying the management of its mines which included Baluba and the claims at Chambeshi under M.C.M. Company. R.S.T. became the investment holding company with two-thirds interest in it. By April 1931, the total ore reserve at Mufulira, Chambeshi and Baluba was 162 million tons with about 4.14 per cent copper. By 31st December, 1931 the share capital had increased to 900,000 pounds in 2 shillings shares. In 1937, the 2 shillings shares were consolidated into 900,000 shares of 1 pound and the capital of the Company increased to 5,000,000 pounds in 5,000,000 shares of 1 pound each. This amount was supplemented by loan capital.

Whereas most of this capital went into developing the mine through shaft sinking and putting up supporting infrastructure, some of it was used to develop other amenities such as housing for African and European workers. During the construction period both African and European workers lived in round huts known as rondavels. By 1929 however, all the Europeans were in mosquito proofed houses, many in permanent sand-brick houses. As housing for Europeans improved, African housing remained much the same as it was built generally to cater for a migrant labour force. It was only when the mine experienced a shortage of African labour towards the end of 1929 that management
was in 1930 prompted to construct some permanent Kimberley brick houses shown on page x. They were meant for married employees although they had only one room. Lack of improvement in African housing earlier was because during the first years of mining at Mufulira and the other copper mines, the companies begrudged the extra expense on married quarters. When calculated, the capital cost of providing a home for a worker and his family was roughly six times that required to accommodate a single man in the dormitory type of houses.14 After the 1930s, when the Copperbelt mines in general and Mufulira in particular, realised the importance of employing more married labour because of its tendency to stabilise, they became more willing to incur expenses on it.

This expenditure on housing at Mufulira Mine led to the development of a vast African mine compound, Kantanshi, divided into eight sections. Other African compounds followed later as the mine expanded its operations. They included Kankoyo and Butondo in the 1950s. The expansion in the housing stock in Mufulira was made in response to the growing mining operations and the growing need to accommodate a married work force which tended to stabilise.

**Defining Labour Stabilisation**

Labour stabilisation was a labour strategy adopted by Mufulira mine in 1930 after experiencing a severe labour shortage at the end of 1929. Labour stabilisation defined a change in work patterns in which previously migrant workers began staying in urban centres longer than they had done before. Perrings defined labour stabilisation as the establishment of adequate conditions to maintain the worker and his family over an extended period. The Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines (NORCOM) defined it as the close connection of an African labourer with one class of employment for long terms
of work. The Chamber however, emphasised the need for this work period to be broken by periods of leave to enable the employee maintain links with his rural home.\textsuperscript{15} Although the two definitions emphasise different factors about the worker, both basically express the change from the days when labour was predominantly migrant doing short working stints of only two months before returning to the villages.\textsuperscript{16}

The increase in the length of stay however, developed gradually because initially employers preferred a migrant labour force to avoid the costs inherent in employing a permanent one. The employers' preferences matched with those of the African workers themselves who, having been forced by Government's demands for hut tax, only came out to earn enough money to fulfil this obligation and probably buy a few imported goods such as blankets and then return to their villages. Later, the labourers began to stay longer probably because the need to acquire more imported goods grew. They therefore, began to come up for six, nine or twelve months on contract. And after spending time at home the labourers tended to return to centres of work where they stayed for even longer periods.\textsuperscript{17} This pattern at Mufulira and the other Copperbelt mines characterised the late 1920s when the mines were under construction and labour continued to be mainly migrant.

From the 1930s, when workers began to stay longer, the labour pattern changed with workers giving years instead of months of service. Labour stabilisation therefore, can be seen as a progressional stage from migrant labour. For the purpose of this study, labour stabilisation will refer to the prolonged stay by African men at their places of work, in this case Mufulira mine, in which management allowed the presence of both married and unmarried women in the compound.
The Need to Stabilise African Labour.

The necessity to stabilise African labour arose from two major developments. The first one was the precarious labour supply to the whole mining industry on the Copperbelt as it competed with other regional employers such as South Africa, Zimbabwe and the Congo. At one time, as we shall learn later, when labour became scarce, two shafts at Mufulira mine had to suspend work. The second was that copper mining required, among other things, a large and reliable skilled labour force. This labour was offered by whites who, by virtue of their skin colour and skill, demanded high wages. The mining industry as a whole realised that the net cost of training black workers to perform a particular job was lower than the cost of attracting white workers with the requisite skills and accepted that this meant stabilising the African labour force. They, therefore, envisaged training Africans for skilled jobs and still pay them a fraction of what they paid whites, and subsequently, realise a greater surplus value. This need to upgrade the skills of African copper miners, as Parpart observed, helped to shape the corporate labour policies of the mining companies,\(^{18}\) which included labour stabilisation especially at the RST mines, Roan Antelope and Mufulira.

As the companies implemented stabilisation and more employees began living with their wives and families, government foresaw a problem in which many Africans became detribalised or urbanised or both. Detribalisation refers to the complete severance from rural life and its traditional structures while urbanisation is described as the tendency by people, to settle down permanently as town dwellers.\(^{19}\) The development of either of them among Africans was anathema to the colonial administration which wanted to curb it. It feared that the development of industrial towns and the sudden
growth of large urban communities would result in slums and vice\textsuperscript{20} such as prostitution. Moreover, urbanisation was associated with the growth of political dissidence. This attitude by government influenced future state policy which was aimed at prohibiting urbanisation. Since women were seen as the promoters of these 'vices' because their presence encouraged men to prolong their stay in town, some of the regulations passed, as the study will show, were directed against them with the view of discouraging them from migrating to towns.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this study are to examine the process of labour stabilisation at Mufulira mine, determine the role the women played in the stabilisation of labour at the mine and investigate how the laws and regulations of the mining companies and the colonial government tried to ignore the role of women, particularly in Mufulira, as they participated in labour stabilisation.

**Literature review.**

Historically, women, in most aspects of life, have been remained in the background while their contribution to historical processes were, until recently, overlooked by historians and other scholars alike. In the same way, the historiography dealing with labour on the Copperbelt shows this gap. Although a lot of literature about the Copperbelt exists, the themes are generally biased towards issues of labour and capital. The labour issues which mainly deal with labour migration and stabilisation also show a bias towards men – men as migrants and men as mine labourers despite the fact
that women too migrated. Generally, women are only mentioned as incidentals in historical processes in a man’s world. It is probably due to this trend that writers dealing with labour issues on the Copperbelt mines neglected to examine the role African women played in the stabilisation of the African women labour force at Mufulira and the Copperbelt as a whole.

The theme of labour which includes labour migration and labour stabilisation in Southern Africa in general and the Zambian Copperbelt in particular, has attracted a lot of scholarly interest. A number of the studies done on African mine workers have proved invaluable to the present study.

Charles Perrings’ discussion of the stabilisation of the labour force on the mines in Katanga and the Copperbelt is invaluable as it offers information on the reasons why the mines opted for the policy of labour stabilisation as opposed to migrant labour. Perrings’ major argument on the subject is that stabilisation was adopted to avoid shortages of labour, to reduce the cost of training and retraining of recruits as well as the realisation that keeping workers longer increased efficiency and therefore, profits. This study, however, does not give women the attention they deserve for their role in labour stabilisation. As John Higginson pointed out, the focus is more on management’s justification of its economic policies and little on the workers collective response to such policies, and even less on the role of women in stabilising labour.

Jane Parpart’s *Labour and Capital on the African Copperbelt,* like Perrings’ study is a detailed account on labour. It is a more valuable work because it is specific to the Copperbelt style of stabilisation. It gives a very detailed account of labour issues on
the Copperbelt and also acknowledges the extra effort made by the mining companies to attract and keep married employees while spending very little on the families.\textsuperscript{24} Although the author gives a very explicit account of labour stabilisation in the context of unionism and others, the reference to women in the whole text is scanty.

Parpart's later work, 'Class and Gender', like George Chauncey's 'Locus of Reproduction', \textsuperscript{25} however, fill the gap left by her previous work. The two works tackle women's issues in vivid detail and as a result were a major source of information for this study. Both works state very clearly that the mining companies on the Copperbelt made a deliberate policy to allow women into their compounds in order to stabilise labour. Both noted that mine managements acknowledged the fact that the married employee was healthier and contented because he was better fed and better looked after by the wife who cooked and did other chores. They also argued that unattached women in the compound and, to a small extent, some married women offered the same sexual and domestic services to the single employees\textsuperscript{26} and in this way contributed to the general well being of the mine employees. Chauncey's work, however, added the less discussed reproductive role of women in labour stabilisation which proved invaluable to our study.

The value of Hortense Powdermaker's \textit{Copper Town} and Taylor and Lehman's \textit{Christians of the Copperbelt}\textsuperscript{27} lies in the fact that they offer a commentary on some aspects of life in the mine compounds which gave us a valuable insight into some of the activities that went on in the compounds. But of even more value was Van Onselen's \textit{Chibaro},\textsuperscript{28} whose detailed discussion of the State-Capital alliance in encouraging sex work in the mine compounds of Zimbabwe to achieve stabilisation gave us an insight into major aspects of our study.
Elena Berger's *Labour, Race and Colonial Rule* provided us with a lot of useful insight on the pre-stabilisation policy situation in the territory.\(^{29}\) As this work discusses labour issues on the Copperbelt including Government and company polices, it proved invaluable and helped clarify some of the issues important to our study. However, like most of the earlier works, it does not focus on women, let alone on their role in labour stabilisation. Instead it focuses on the relationship between state and capital.

The works by Merle Davis, Major G. Orde-Browne and C.F. Spearpoint\(^{30}\) all availed us valuable information on the early years on the mines. As they were written when the mines had been in operation for a few years, these works offer data on the early days in the compounds. It is from them that we obtain a clear understanding of early mine and compound life and the fact that women's cooking and food supplements made the employee more efficient, healthier, and more contented and therefore, remained longer in employment than the single man.\(^{31}\) They also give details about the conditions and development of the compounds from the early times.

The issue of labour migration, which precedes labour stabilisation, was widely discussed in a lot of major works. To gain a wider insight in labour migration, constraints to labour stabilisation, and other labour issues we consulted Robert Bates, Robert Baldwin, Richard Grey, and Francis Wilson, among others.\(^{32}\) The value of these works is that they widened our perspective of labour issues on the Copperbelt.

As women's issues have taken centre stage especially in the last ten years, we consulted some work devoted to women's issues to have a wider perspective about women and their aspirations. Such works, which proved helpful in this aspect include those by Karen Tranberg Hansen, Luise White, Kenneth Little, James Ferguson, Karen
Jochelson, Christine Obbo and Bruce Fetter. These authors have discussed women whom they have collectively cast as active participants in the process of migration from the rural to urban areas and that they took advantage of their new environments for economic gain. These, however, are not about the Copperbelt or Mufulira Copper Mine but still suggest the universality of the response of women to the type of changes taking place on the Copperbelt. This is the same position reiterated by the more recent studies by Parpart and Chauncey discussed earlier.

The review of literature shows that a considerable amount of work has been done on labour migration and stabilisation. This vast literature also indicates the inexhaustible nature of issues pertaining to labour. However, the review has also shown that very little material is available on the role that women played in labour stabilisation on the Copperbelt. Moreover, the review has revealed that most of the literature that discusses labour stabilisation has taken a general view of the Copperbelt. Our study therefore, will contribute to this body of knowledge by focusing on the role of women in labour stabilisation at Mufulira mine.

**Methodology and Data Collection**

Collection of data for this study was done over a period of eight months. The initial research was conducted in the University of Zambia (UNZA) library in September 1999 where we consulted mainly secondary published sources such as books and journal articles. Also consulted were unpublished sources such as dissertations and theses as well as Government publications such as annual reports of different departments, commissions of inquiry reports and others.
The next stage of the research was carried out between October and December 1999 at the Z.C.C.M. Archives in Ndola. There, we consulted primary sources which included files on Mufulira mine, the Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines (NORCOM) and the Northern Rhodesia African Mineworkers' Union (NRAMU). More information was obtained from the magazines and newspapers published in Mufulira.

The most difficult part of the research was experienced in Mufulira where interviews were carried out in December 1999. The research was conducted at a time when a lot of miners had been retrenched, or were about to be retrenched or suspected they were earmarked for retrenchment. This situation rendered many would-be interviewees suspicious of anyone going round asking questions. This includes those in management who alsoproved unco-operative. Some interviews, however, were recorded with people who appreciated the fact that the exercise was purely academic and not a Z.C.C.M Head Office survey for pruning purposes. The National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) was the next area of research. Although the lack of sufficient research funds created many gaps in the visits to the archives, the research was carried out between January and April 2000. At NAZ we consulted mainly primary documents in the government files of the Labour and Mines Department, annual reports, magazines and newspapers. The final part of the research was continued in the UNZA library and was followed by data analysis and writing of the dissertation.

**Organisation of the Dissertation**

This study has been divided into five chapters. After the introduction which is chapter one, chapter two deals with the issue of labour stabilisation. In this chapter we
tried to show the debate leading to the formulation of a policy of labour stabilisation by Government. The chapter also demonstrates that labour stabilisation was in practice at Mufulira mine long before Government declared the policy in 1945.

Chapters three and four deal with women. The former gives details of the role that women played to stabilise labour at Mufulira mine. We emphasise that the role of stabilising labour was not the preserve of wives but, included sex workers and those in cohabitational relationships with mine employees. The chapter also details the chores and duties performed by women, which, apart from their presence, encouraged labour to stabilise. Chapter four discusses Government policies passed to discourage women’s migration and stay in urban centres. It also shows the antagonistic response of the mine management as well as the women’s defiant response to such policies.

The final chapter restates the arguments and conclusions made in the study. Our main conclusion is that not only did women play a role in stabilising labour, but, more than the employees themselves reduced the company’s expenditure which ensured a very high surplus value.
5. Z.C.C.M. 16.1. 7A/1 History of Chambeshi and the Copperbelt.
8. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.7A/1. History of Chambeshi and the Copperbelt. See also Coleman, *The Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt*, p. 52.
12. Z.C.C.M.16.1.7A/1. History of Chambeshi

CHAPTER TWO
STABILISATION OF LABOUR AT MUFULIRA MINE, 1930-1964

Introduction

This chapter discusses labour stabilisation at Mufulira Mine and our main argument in it is that Mufulira Mine management encouraged the stabilisation of African labour in the absence of a state policy on stabilisation. We shall then examine the move towards a labour stabilisation policy in the territory and demonstrate that the state was reluctant to formulate the policy in spite of the increased tendency by Africans at Mufulira and other urban centres to stay longer. It is hoped that this discussion will create a better understanding of labour stabilisation at Mufulira Mine and also provide us with a base from which we shall later in the study examine the role of women in Mufulira Mine’s strategy of stabilising its African labour force.

Background to Labour Stabilisation at Mufulira Mine

Labour stabilisation was practised at Mufulira Mine long before the government declared the policy of labour stabilisation. A few years after construction work at Mufulira Mine began, mine management encouraged its African employees to bring their wives and children to live with them in the mine compound. The decision was made out of necessity because the company faced serious competition for African labour not only with the long established mines in the region, but also with the other copper mines that were developing on the Copperbelt at the same time.

From the onset of work at Mufulira, the labour situation remained unstable. One of the reasons was most likely because the Copperbelt was sparsely populated and the mine, like the other copper mines, depended on labour procured from elsewhere. As the
mines were just being established, they could not obtain adequate labour supplies from outside the Copperbelt immediately. The problem at Mufulira was further compounded by the fact that it offered the lowest wages among the copper mines.\textsuperscript{1} As such, the mine did not compete favourably with the other mines which offered slightly higher wages. In 1929, Mufulira mine suffered the consequences of paying the lowest wages when they experienced a labour shortage. Although the other mines experienced the same problem, the shortage was more severe at Mufulira and eventually the management was forced to stop work firstly at Selkirk (Number Two shaft) and later at Number Four shaft.\textsuperscript{2}

The labour shortage experienced by the mine in the first couple of years inevitably shaped the company's future labour policy. Late in 1929, Orenstein, a medical consultant of the mining companies, advised the companies to encourage those Africans proceeding to the mines to go with their wives and children for health reasons as women kept their homes and surroundings clean.\textsuperscript{3} Apparently, the management at Mufulira agreed with Orenstein because they had foreseen the need for attracting married labour which, when accompanied by the family, tended to stay at work longer. Moreover, it was a known fact that married labour was healthier because wives provided a variety of well-cooked food to supplement company rations. It was also more contented and stable, and therefore tended to be more efficient than single men or those who left their families in the villages.

To attract and retain labour, the company embarked on a project in which Section Two, which was mainly a married quarters section was constructed in 1929.\textsuperscript{4} The houses, unlike those for bachelors which were shared by four men, were allocated to one married couple each. The management also made provision for its employees and their
families by issuing them with food rations. In 1930, Mufulira management began implementing the labour strategy which ensured that African workers remained at the mine for longer periods by bringing their wives and families with them. This strategy however, was abandoned in 1931 when the effects of the World Economic Depression reached the Copperbelt leading to the temporary suspension of operations at the mine,\textsuperscript{5} which meant laying off the bulk of the workforce.

In July 1933, Mufulira mine reopened and construction work, which had reached an advanced stage, resumed. The reopening took place at a time when there was an excess of African labour which was laid off during the economic depression. The mine managers therefore, had their pick of labour to finish off development work and begin production. Bearing in mind the 1929 labour shortage, when work resumed, the need to pursue a strategy that ensured a flow of labour which stayed longer was even greater than it had been during the construction period. They therefore, relentlessly pursued a system much like the labour stabilisation policy followed by the Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK) since 1927.\textsuperscript{6} Under this scheme the UMHK encouraged workers to bring their families with them and to stay at the mine for longer periods than before. At Mufulira Mine the scheme was adopted in the absence of Government policy on labour stabilisation. In fact, it was against Government regulations which:

in an initial colonial period a whole paraphernalia of measures reminiscent of those (still) operational in South Africa, were used to limit the presence of Africans in the towns and the mines to those who were employed and for the periods when they were employed.\textsuperscript{7}

Regulations such as the Employment of Natives Ordinance and the Registration of Natives Act\textsuperscript{8} were some of the measures Government took to limit African presence in industrial areas.
Despite these measures, Mufulira mine management pursued its system of encouraging workers to stay for longer periods. Moreover, as early as 1929 married accommodation was offered to those workers who came with their wives. In 1930, the company replaced some of the mud huts with permanent Kimberley brick houses in which they accommodated those employees who had their wives with them. This marked the beginning of the process of labour stabilisation at the mine. There was no Government objection evident then, although this was probably due to the shortage of manpower, since it had neither the manpower nor the money to enforce its own regulations.⁹

The idea of encouraging African workers to settle in the urban areas was discussed at a meeting between Government and Mine officials in 1933 where the absence of such a policy was highlighted. The meeting was held to clear the position and possibly to change existing restrictive measures of the Colonial Government which were not effectively enforced anyway. The revelation by the Secretary for Native Affairs that Government had accepted the policy that an African industrial population was necessary so that the agricultural population would have an outlet for its produce suggests that initially this phenomenon was unaccepted. Mr Scrivener, the Compound Manager at Nkana instead insisted that it was against Government policy to allow workers to stay at work for periods longer than a few months. The Governor of the territory, R. Storrs, however, revealed, contrary to popular belief, that no such declaration preventing Africans from staying at work for long periods had been made in his day nor had he seen any papers or heard anything to that effect.¹⁰ This attitude gave credence to the system that Mufulira Mine was following as it indicated to them that Government allowed them
to pursue whichever system suited them. This explained the difference between R.S.T. Company policies and those of Anglo-American Corporation companies such as Nkana. The former, as shown earlier, favoured stabilisation while the latter encouraged migrant labour, believing it to be Government policy.

Two years after the meeting, in 1935, Mufulira confirmed its commitment to labour stabilisation after studying the policy at Katanga. In fact on the Copperbelt:

all the Managers agreed that it was the policy of the companies to try and get employees to stay as long as possible but that the policy should not be implemented as it was at Katanga.\textsuperscript{11}

They therefore continued to encourage as many miners as they wished to stay longer at their mines. In 1936, Mufulira which began encouraging workers to stay long a couple of years after inception, still had the highest turnover rates, being three times that of Roan and twice Nkana’s.\textsuperscript{12} This was probably because the mine had just been open for three years after being closed for close to two years, from April 1931 to July 1933, which probably disturbed the company’s plan to encourage workers to bring their wives with them. By the end of the 1930s however, Mufulira had about 75 percent workers who had their wives with them.\textsuperscript{13} As shown in table I, this probably accounted for the change in the tide in the 1940s when Mufulira mostly recorded the highest number of married employees which had a bearing on turnover rates.

**Towards a Labour Stabilisation Policy in Zambia**

As the number of African workers staying on the mines for longer periods increased, there were growing concerns that there still was no official policy on labour stabilisation. Apart from the 1933 declarations by Government officials, there was still
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**KEY:**
- P/M: Percent married
- N/E: Number employed

**Source:** Compiled from the Northern Rhodesia Mines Department Annual Report of 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, and 1952.

**NOTE:** Multhill showed the highest percentage of married employees.

**TABLE 1**
no official Government policy by mid 1930s. In 1935, however, the Government realised the need to have a mechanism for dealing with the problems of African labour in industry when all Copperbelt African miners went on strike and revealed the lack of policy. Later that year the Governor formed the Native Industrial Labour Advisory Board (N.I.L.A.B.)\textsuperscript{14} whose task was to debate issues concerning African workers in industry and advise the Government on policy formulation.

Evidently, the composition of N.I.L.A.B.\textsuperscript{15} suggested the great influence that it had on recommendations concerning African mine labour and consequently African labour in other industries. The largest number of members was drawn from the mining companies and these had something in common as they all employed large numbers of African labour. With this common background, they pooled together and influenced the decisions of the Board in their favour. More importantly, having the largest number of African employees, they were better placed to give advice on Africans in industry.

The formation of N.I.L.A.B., however, did not lead to an immediate formulation of a policy although the population of Africans in the industrial area was constantly growing. This was probably a reflection of N.I.L.A.B.’s stand at their December 1935 meeting which stated that:

\begin{quote}
The board is of the opinion that there is a gradual tendency towards stabilisation of labour in the industrial areas, but recommended that no special steps are necessary or desirable to encourage or discourage this tendency.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

The N.I.L.A.B.’s recommendation created a basis for Government’s reluctance to commit itself into declaring a policy therefore leaving, an atmosphere of \textit{laissez faire} about the issue of stabilisation. The argument was that such a problem could only be solved in the long-term. This attitude by Government encouraged the mining companies to pursue
policies that suited them. Perhaps the reluctance also stemmed from the fact that it was too early to measure the degree of stabilisation that had already taken place as the mines had not been in existence for long. Mufulira itself had only been operational for two years after re-opening.

The opinion of Government Officials remained varied. For example, at their 1937 meeting, the Provincial Commissioners agreed that in spite of N.I.L.A.B.’s advice that nothing be done, their opinion favoured arresting stabilisation. They argued that it was desirable that Africans should return to their villages frequently to prevent detribalisation. The Provincial Commissioners further suggested that all Africans in urban centres be induced to go back home. Failure of inducement should result in compulsory repatriation of Africans from the town. The Chief Secretary of State rejected the idea and further disputed the belief that encouraging workers to stay longer at the mines led to detribalisation. The apparent differences in the statements made by Government officials emphasised the fact that Government was undecided about making a commitment into formulating a policy and consequently gave the mining companies leeway to pursue their own kind of stabilisation to get the best out of their labour.

One area in which the Mining companies and the Government agreed, was on the aspect of preventing detribalisation and urbanisation of Africans. Berger also observed that ‘Probably none of the parties intended that the entire mine workforce should be permanently settled on the Copperbelt.’ At the beginning of work on the mines, probably because they could not cope with the demand for married quarters, they had a mechanism which ensured that Africans returned to their villages at regular intervals.
This mechanism worked alongside the companies’ measures to induce workers to stay longer at the mines.

To achieve that objective of getting workers to stay longer and then still go home afterwards, the companies paid transport bonus to workers who completed 18 tickets (calculated at one ticket per month) and then only when they were leaving the mine. Workers leaving before completing 18 tickets were not entitled to transport bonus. They were therefore, encouraged to work at least 18 tickets and sometimes more in order to accrue a bigger bonus. As this prolonged stay was undesirable at some mines like Nkana it was suggested that transport bonus be accrued at 2 shillings per ticket to ensure that they left after 18 tickets but with a higher bonus. In the early 1940s, Mr. H.H. Field, the Compound Manager at Mufulira, maintained that he made all the Africans go on long leave of one to six months every 18 months to two years at which time they received their transport bonus.\textsuperscript{19} In this way, the mines managed to keep the labourers longer without allowing them to become urbanised.

Other measures introduced by the Government to encourage Africans to go back to the village after serving their contracts were the Voluntary Deferred Pay (V.D.P.) and the Voluntary savings scheme (V.S.S.) The V.D.P. involved having part of the worker’s pay held for him and paid in his home village while in Voluntary Savings Scheme (V.S.S.) the workers put some money aside as savings was another measure used to encourage workers to go back home when they completed their contracts. While the former proved unpopular the latter attracted many volunteers from African workers who, unlike under the V.D.P. could withdraw the money to buy whatever luxury goods they might have been saving for. The introduction of the pension scheme for workers who
worked for many years was another of the measures meant to encourage workers to stay at the mines for prolonged periods. Unlike the V.D.P. and the V.S.S., the idea of pension was meant to encourage even longer periods of work. Alongside pension was the long service awards which were introduced much later in the 1950s but still served to encourage labour to stay long before retiring to their villages. African workers received this award when they worked for twenty years.

With these measures, although they were by no means the only ones, employers at Mufulira Mine and the other Copper mines managed to keep workers for longer periods, but with the compulsion for them to return to their homes. These strategies on their own, however, were not enough to attract long term service. The added advantage of being with their wives and families was the main bait for African workers to stay at the mine longer. Stabilisation therefore, was just a device intended to provide industry with the benefits of proletarianisation without incurring the associated costs of subsistence when they retired. While the Government remained non-committal over establishing a policy, the mines capitalised on the situation by stabilising their African labour only long enough for them to give their value, then retired them to their home villages. With this trend being encouraged at the mines the numbers of Africans staying long increased steadily.

In 1943, at the fourth meeting of the African Labour Advisory Board (A.L.A.B.), formerly N.I.L.A.B., the members disagreed with the Board’s opinion of 1935. They stated that:

A definite policy should be adopted and that a degree of industrialisation was inevitable, should be recognised and suitably provided for. A drive towards stabilisation in the rural areas was essential.
The recommendation for a policy and provision of amenities for those Africans that had become industrialised was a popular theme of the early 1940s. Lynn Saffery, an officer of the Labour Department, made the same recommendation in his preliminary report on ‘The Cost of Living in Industrial Areas’ after a survey carried out mostly on the copper mines on behalf of the Department. The report showed that the mining companies followed a policy of labour stabilisation and that stabilisation had already taken place and would continue.\textsuperscript{23} The findings were however, disputed by NORCOM. In fact, the Chamber of Mines concluded that the report was an attack on their members and went on to challenge the accuracy of many of the survey’s findings. On stabilisation of labour, the Chamber of Mines declared that, ‘No Copper Mining company has favoured or preferred a policy of building up a stabilised labour force, or of returning its labourers to the villages.’\textsuperscript{24} The statement, in effect denied the existence of any policy but contradicted Mr. Scrivener’s 1933 declaration that his company encouraged workers to return to the villages as stabilisation was against Government regulations. Besides, it was not in line with the 1935 position taken by all the Mine Managers (apart from Nkana) that they followed that policy of retaining workers for long periods as pointed out earlier.

Mr Field, responding to a questionnaire sent out by the Chamber of Mines, also concurred with the latter’s attitude towards Saffery’s allegations that the mining companies followed a policy of labour stabilisation and denied the existence of such a policy. He declared that Mufulira Mine had never pursued a definite conscious policy and that it had always stressed the necessity for long leave especially where the employee showed ‘signs of going stale’. The statement contradicted the one he made the previous year that the company was committed to a policy of having women and children in the
compound because the latter stabilised the African labour force\textsuperscript{25}. The Chamber's attitude was probably a reflection of the members' policies in 1943 as opposed to those of the 1930s and contradicted both Saffery's and the N.L.L.A.B.'s recommendations. It is worth noting that from 1941, the copper mines had only one representative on the A.L.A.B.\textsuperscript{26} therefore, no longer had the numbers to influence the decisions of the board as they had done in the 1930s. This probably explains the Chamber of Mines' hostility towards statements that recommended stabilisation. As discussed earlier, they evidently did not favour the idea of an official policy on labour stabilisation because of the envisaged costly conditions such a policy might dictate. If, however, this was the official policy of the Chamber, the situation at Mufulira Mine did not reflect it.

The Compound Manager's statement not only contradicted earlier statements by the mine officials but also the real situation on the ground where the mine favoured employing married men who stayed longer. However, the answer from Mufulira Mine could have been instigated by the Chamber which, evidently, was seeking evidence to substantiate their claims that none of their members followed a policy of stabilisation. This could easily explain the responses of the Compound Manager when evidence showed an increasing number of Africans staying longer. The Chamber also argued that the survey was carried out in too short a time (six months) to be conclusive. They, therefore, urged the Government to ignore the findings and the recommendations of the report. This attitude prompted the Labour Commissioner to treat the report as a Departmental undertaking and was not forwarded to higher Government officials for consideration although the preliminary report had already been circulated earlier.\textsuperscript{27}
The Chamber's reaction to the Saffery Report indicated that it was against the declaration of a policy of labour stabilisation as recommended by Saffery. This was probably because they expected such a policy to dictate stabilisation conditions that would be costly to the industry. They therefore, argued:

We agree that urbanisation is taking place but we disagree that this is any reason at all for advocating a policy of stabilisation. Mr. Saffery should be the first to admit that the mere fact of something taking place is no indication whatsoever that thing is correct.\textsuperscript{28}

The Mining Companies probably preferred the situation where the lack of a policy on stabilisation allowed them to deal with their African labour as they wished without being subjected to increased expenditure if there was a policy to compel them to do things as dictated. Despite all these denials by the Chamber, evidence as shown earlier in Table I indicates that Mufulira Mine continued employing more married workers.

After 1943, interest in the issue of stabilisation increased. There was some opposition. Some people argued that should there be a depression such as the World Economic Depression of 1929-1933, the Zambian Copperbelt, which felt the impact in 1931, would be faced with the dilemma of dealing with large numbers of unemployed Africans.\textsuperscript{29} However, arguments in favour of a policy of stabilisation were also numerous. The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society and the British Parliament were among those that supported the establishment of stabilisation.\textsuperscript{30} Thus, when the issue came before A.L.A.B. in 1943, the board recommended full provision for balanced stabilisation in both urban and rural areas.\textsuperscript{31} Government Officials took up this recommendation. The Secretary of State also agreed with A.L.A.B. He however, added that even as stabilisation was being fostered by the provision of amenities, Africans should be encouraged to return to their villages at frequent intervals. The intervals were
to be at least eighteen months or two years in order to delay urbanization,\textsuperscript{32} which the Mining Companies were already doing.

Throughout the early 1940s, the British Government exerted pressure on the Colonial Government to make its stand on stabilisation of African labour clear. In 1944, the Governor, advised the Secretary of State for Colonies to make an interim statement if asked in the House of Commons to the effect that:

\begin{quote}
Government recognized the degree of stabilization that had already occurred and although services would be provided, it was not Government policy to actively encourage the building of the permanent urbanized population comprising the whole African labour.\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

The statement marked the beginning of the British Government’s official recognition of the Colonial Government’s stand on the issue of stabilisation of labour in the country. With more pressure from the British Government therefore, the Governor, E.J. Waddington, in January 1945, suggested that:

\begin{quote}
The declared policy in this matter should be the recognition of and provision for the degree of urban stabilisation which exists from time to time and the progressive development of rural areas to keep pace as far as possible with progress in the urban areas, special provision being made to encourage the retirement of urban workers to village life with the object of achieving a balanced stabilisation in both rural and urban areas.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

As it served as an official policy statement and heeded the British Parliament’s calls for stabilisation of African labour in industry, the Governor’s statement was accepted by the Colonial Office and was approved as policy in December, 1945.\textsuperscript{35} The declared policy allowed some African families to stay in the urban areas permanently while the majority were prohibited. The policy such as it was seemed to have changed nothing on the ground because what was declared as policy was already being practised at Mufulira
mine. In fact, the Government appears to have declared the policy to ease the pressure from the Colonial Office as well as to make legitimate what the Mining Companies were already practising.

The policy also prompted the Chamber to formulate a policy to guide the members on the issue of stabilising their African workforce. The Chamber, having opposed the recommendation for the declaration of a policy on labour stabilisation in urban areas in 1943 could then only work within its premise. In a bid to slow down stabilisation which was expected to increase due to the existence of the policy, the Chamber advised members that there was no need to erect larger or more elaborate housing for African employees than provided for in the regulations, which set a minimum standard of a two roomed house with a kitchen. In the 1940s, therefore, two-roomed houses became a common feature all over the Copperbelt in line with Government regulations.

As not much seemed to have happened in the first few years after the declaration, and probably owing to post-war preoccupations, the Chamber was seemingly not alarmed. Towards the end of the 1940s, some Mines, such as Mufulira put up measures to retain their workers longer. However, the Chamber advised its members in 1953 that it was best that they limited the provision of married quarters to only 60 per cent of their labour strength. This, if nothing else, was to ensure a limit in the numbers of married workers employed on the Mines as well as limiting their period of stay, thereby preventing wholesale urbanisation.

Before these limits were set, Mufulira Mine Management tried to improve the state of its housing stock through repairs and construction of new houses to allow for a
stabilised labour. The plan could not be carried through immediately because the country as a whole was experiencing war time shortages of building materials. The first three years after the policy was declared, therefore, saw very few changes in the housing stock at Mufulira.

This situation as well as management's preference for employing men who had their wives with them, accounted for the perpetual shortages of accommodation and subsequent overcrowding in the compound. Overcrowding was also due to the fact that Government allowed African marriages to be contracted in the industrial areas. From 1944, African couples could obtain marriage certificates in town, whereas previously only the Native Authorities issued them in the rural areas. The change in policy was an advantage to the Mines because, with the value they placed on married workers, marriages could be conducted within the urban centres without having their workers going on leave to do so. With their wives with them in the compounds, the need for the men to go back home was reduced and they only went on compulsory leave insisted on by the Compound Managers. Their working period, therefore, was greatly increased.

The Management at Mufulira responded to the increased demand for married quarters because it realised the importance of women to the stabilisation of its labourers. It, therefore, embarked on a housing programme from 1949 to the late 1950s. Initially they improved on the one-room rondavels of the 1930s which the companies considered adequate (even for married couples) and better than what Africans were used to in their villages. Part of the motivation for embarking on the housing project could have been the acute shortage of labour experienced at Mufulira during the general post-war shortages. This was when Africans remained in their villages on the orders of the
Government to grow maize and sweet potatoes while Nyasaland labour was prohibited from leaving the country to go and work outside.\textsuperscript{42} Moreover, the demand for African labour had greatly increased towards the end of the 1940s as the mine competed with new contractors who set up businesses in Mufulira.

In 1949 Management at Mufulira Mine asked for and got permission from the RST Head Office in London to build 150 houses to supplement the existing stock of 4,046 married and 2,772 single quarters for 4,765 married and 2,972 single workers respectively.\textsuperscript{43} This number was well within the 60 per cent limits set by NORCOM. By then, in deviation from the 1943 stand of the Chamber it was recognised that, on all the mines labour stabilisation was desirable therefore, it was desirable to provide adequate accommodation for those African workers who had their wives and families with them in the compounds.\textsuperscript{44} From the 1953 onwards Mufulira Mine continued with large scale improvements by adding an extra room to the houses in Section Two. In 1955, work started on bigger three-bedroom houses in the area near the Ronald Ross Hospital between the African and European townships.\textsuperscript{45} These were earmarked for the more advanced (skilled) African workers and was Mufulira's indication of its commitment to stabilising some of its African workforce. This development did not mean the management was deviating from the policy of preventing detribalisation because as late as 1953, there were still very few detribalised Africans.\textsuperscript{46} In fact, it was fully in force even at the attainment of Zambia's independence as workers continued to retire to their villages after working at the Mine for many years.\textsuperscript{47}

Stabilisation at Mufulira showed a steady increase from the 1940s, through the 1950s and right up to independence. The mine had stabilisation figures higher than the
other Copper mines. In 1945, for example, there were only 139 employees who had worked ten or more years at Nkana while Mufulira and Roan (both R.S.T. Companies) showed a greater number of people who had worked for more than ten years.48 At Mufulira alone, 425 African workers of whom 302 were still working received long service awards in 1950. This trend continued throughout the 1950s with large numbers of African workers receiving awards for clocking 20 years in service. Even after receiving these awards, some of these workers continued working for the mines for many more years.49

By the end of the 1950s the stabilisation policy was being implemented fully and many Africans had become stabilised because although the policy was formulated reluctantly, its implementation assumed an air of desperation as world copper prices and demand soared towards the end of the decade.50 To meet this demand, the companies had to increase their copper production and they needed to employ labour urgently. Fortunately, the Copperbelt had a large number of unemployed Africans loitering around the industries never complained about lack of labour. In fact, the number of loafers had reached such proportions that it began to be a problem but still it was generally acknowledged that the Mine Companies were not likely to do anything about it.51 They needed the surplus to be readily available when labour was needed. These, however, were only tolerated when they stayed out of the Mine Compounds or when they had passes to visit and stay with their relatives or friends.52

To further their desire to continue making the stabilisation of labour force, the Mining Companies conceded to the call by the Africans for the formation of African Trade Unions and to be allowed into more advanced jobs as they had acquired the skills
to perform such work. The Companies also set up an elaborate welfare scheme for workers and their families. Moreover, the Companies started employing miners’ sons who had been born and bred in the compounds. By 1963, it was mine policy that preference would be given to miner’s sons when there were other applicants with similar qualifications. This trend created a new aspect to stabilisation in that those being employed had been born in or brought to the compound as children. They were, therefore, already urbanised at the time of their employment.

The problem with this trend was that whereas it was possible to make those who originally came from the villages go back after their working period, it was not easy to do so for those who were born in towns. Moreover, stabilisation of labour which was being implemented fervently in the 1950s and continued at the same pace in the early 1960s, was followed by virtually unrestricted movement to the towns when Zambia attained independence, because the rural dwellers were no longer required to obtain passes to go to town. This meant that the ideal situation of stabilising labour during their working period and retiring them to the village afterwards as envisaged by both mine and Government officials was no longer a practical reality. Although retired workers left company housing on retirement, not all of them went to their villages. From the late 1960s onwards, it was common for some retired and discharged miners to settle in Murundu near the border with Congo. There was, therefore, not only stabilisation of labour at work but detribalisation of Africans in urban centres which the Colonial Government had feared greatly. Detribalisation referred to people who did not go to their villages after completing their contracts. Detribalised Africans were seen as a potential
source of political dissension which they had tried to curb earlier through the policy of stabilisation without urbanisation.

Although some retired miners settled in urban areas, the Mufulira Mine Management continued to encourage retirees to go back home. A lot of these African workers were compelled to go back to their villages, probably because leaving employment meant loss of their major source of livelihood and, therefore, opted to go back to the village to settle among their people. With or without encouragement workers continued to retire to their home villages well after independence and into the 1980s. This was probably because the precedence set by the Colonial Government continued even without encouragement by the new Government.

**Conclusion**

This chapter set out to examine labour stabilisation at Mufulira mine and we argued that labour stabilisation was practised at the mine from as early as 1930 after experiencing a severe labour shortage at the end of 1929. We argued that labour stabilisation was encouraged by allowing employees to bring their wives and families to the mine. We also argued that although management encouraged stabilisation shortly after the inception of the mine, there was no Government policy to that effect. This probably explained the differences in policy between the two copper mining companies on the Copperbelt, R.S.T. and Anglo-American with one favouring stabilisation and the other preferring migrant labour.

To highlight the labour stabilisation issue on the Copperbelt in general and Mufulira mine in particular, this chapter also examined the move towards a policy of labour stabilisation in the territory. We demonstrated that in the mid 1930s there was
growing Government interest in African labour in general which culminated in the formation of N.I.L.A.B. (later renamed A.L.A.B.). The existence of A.L.A.B. however did not lead to a policy on stabilisation as the colonial Government remained non-committal over the issue. We further demonstrated that the Government continued to avoid the issue of stabilisation in the early 1940s and that this period was characterised by increased interest from many groups of people and individuals who expressed different opinions. Among Government Officials, there were some who favoured stabilisation and others who argued against it. The year 1943 in particular was very significant in that recommendations for the establishment of a policy on stabilisation were made to Government in that year by N.I.L.A.B. in one instance and Lynn Saffery, on behalf of the Labour Department in an another. Other organisations such as the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Committee and the British Parliament also put pressure on the colonial Government to formulate a policy on stabilisation of African labour in the territory. The Chamber of Mines on the other hand continued to show an uncharacteristic lack of support for a policy that would have guaranteed the mines a constant supply of labour.

Despite NORCOM's strong opposition, the policy of labour stabilisation was declared in 1945 and we contend that the Chamber of Mines preferred a situation where there was no official policy so as to stabilise labour without the dictation of Government regulations. With the declaration of the stabilisation policy in 1945, the Chamber reluctantly accepted it, but set a 60 percent limit to the degree of stabilisation that members should attain which influenced the incidence of stabilisation at Mufulira Mine. The discussion has however, shown that Mufulira mine favoured stabilisation of labour.
END NOTES

10. NAZ SEC 1/1468, “Industrialisation of Natives”. Note of a Meeting held in the Office of His Excellency The Governor, 13th December, 1933.
11. NAZ SEC 1/1327, “Native Industrial Labour Advisory Board”, Minutes of Meeting held on November 7th and 8th, 1935.
12. Z.C.C.M. 16. 1. 4E. Memo From Mr. Ayer, Manager (R.S.T.) to Mr. J.D. Tallant (Manager, M.C.M.), 10 January, 1956.
  1. NAZ SEC 1/1326. Note: N.I.L.A.B. had four Mine Managers from the Copperbelt Mines and One from Broken Hill Mine.
16. NAZ SEC 1/1468, “Minutes of a meeting between His Excellency the Governor and N.I.L.A.B. 15th December 1935”.
17. NAZ SEC 1/1468. From Honourable Chief Secretary to the Managers (Roan, Mufulira, Nkana and Nchanga), May 7th, 1938.
20. Interview with Mr. A. Lungu, Retired Mine Policeman, Mufulira, 30th November, 1999.
Initially Africans were given a certificate and a badge after serving for 20 years. Later they also received a wristwatch. The trend continued long after it became unnecessary to induce labour to stay for long periods.


23. NAZ SEC 1/1363. “Confidential memorandum setting out the comments of the Northern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines on the Report dated 28th February, 1943 by Mr. Saffery.”

24. Z.C.C.M. 16. 1.6A/1. African Employees. “African Labour Policy Memo Setting Out the Chamber’s comments on Mr. Saffery’s Reply to the 14th September, 1943 memorandum”.


26. Z.C.C.M. 13.4. 7C. “Employment, Conciliations, Strikes”. In 1940, Frank Ayer advised the Manager at Mufulira Mine to transfer part of the men’s full rations to women who received less or just show it as women’s and children’s rations on Mufulira Reports.

27. See Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A/1. “Memo setting out the Chambers Comments, 14th September, 1943” and NAZ SEC 1/1320. Stabilisation of African Labour.


30. NAZ SEC 1/1320 P.C. Western Province to the Honourable Chief Secretary, 29th June, 1944. Extract from memo by the Anti- Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society on the Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the 1940 Disturbances of the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia and SEC 1/1327 Vol. V. The A.L.A.B. Minutes of Meetings on Recommendations made at the 26th Session of the International Labour Conference. 20th April to 12th May, 1944. Z.C.C. M 16.1. 6A/1 Memo on Native Labour. Kitwe, September, 1944.


32. NAZ SEC 1/1320. The Secretary of State. In his confidential dispatch to the Forster Commission Report dated 28th April, 1941.

33. SEC 1/1320. Dispatch: From Sir Stanley (Colonial Office) to Sir E.J. Waddington (Governor, Northern Rhodesia), 21st April, 1944.


35. SEC 1/1320. From G.W. Wall (Secretary of State for Colonies) to E.J. Waddington 28th December, 1945. Note: F. Wilson placed the start of stabilisation of labour at 1940, Chondoka, 1940. Baldwin and Bates in 1930.
36. 16.1.6A. Record of Decisions Reached at the 65th Meeting of the Executive Committee at Kitwe, 21st November, 1946.

37. Northern Rhodesia Ordinance number 32 of 1948, Housing Policy, p.91-92.

38. Z.C.C.M. 13.2 10C. “Housing Construction Executive” Committee Meeting, 27th May, 1952.

39. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A/1. NORCOM. Memorandum on Native Labour. September, 1944. p.27,
   Z.C.C.M. 16.1.5F. “Minutes of a special meeting called at the Request of the Traditional Representatives”, 23rd October, 1941.

40. NAZ SEC 1/1320. Draft dispatch to Secretary of state (confidential). 1944.

41. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A NORCOM. Memorandum on Native Labour, September, 1944.

42. Department of Labour and Mines, Report for May, 1949, p.4. See also The Central African Post.
   February 17, 1949.


44. Z.C.C.M. 15. 1.6A/1. “Commissions and Conferences with Managing Directors. Record of Decisions Reached at the 65th Meeting of the Executive committee, 21st, 1946”.

45. Mufulira Star, January, 1963. Reported the building of 75 houses of which 60 were in the former Orchard area and 15 at Butondo. Design was similar to the ones built earlier.


47. Interview with Meki Mpukuta at Murundu, Mufulira, 3rd December, 1999.


52. Z.C.C.M. 13.11.5A. Record of Meeting held with the Resident Magistrate E.H. Hamburger at the Boma, Mufulira on 29 Aug., 1955.


54. LSSI/20/82. “African Mineworkers’ Union Vs Zambian Mining Companies”. Closed Shop Principle Established in Mining Industry. Re: Be extended to African Mine Workers’ Trade Union and Interview with Kachepa Tembo Nkonkalufu - interviewed in Mufulira in December, 1999. Stated that many miners took their sons to the mines to be employed.
56. Interview with Meki Sakala at Murundu, Mufulira, 3rd December, 1999.
CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN AND LABOUR STABILISATION AT MUFULIRA MINE: 1930-1950

Introduction

From the early 1930s, as shown earlier in the study, Mufulira mine management acknowledged the importance of having women in the compound to stabilise its African labour. This chapter will discuss the role of women in labour stabilisation at Mufulira in three parts. The first part discusses the activities of women in the compound that had a bearing on stability which include both domestic chores and sexual activities. The next part will deal with African rations and wages in which we shall show that both were inadequate and compelled women to engage in activities such as beer brewing and gardening between 1930 and 1955 which enabled them to augment the two. Beer brewing and Gardening referred to as women’s labour, will be discussed in the third part. We shall then argue that the presence of women in the compound and their labour contributed to the running of the mine because their contributions to rations and wages enabled African labour to stabilise despite the low wages obtaining there. We shall further argue that the presence of the women and the activities they engaged in from 1930 to the late 1950s, not only stabilised labour but were also a major contribution to the reduction of the running costs of the mines and ensured greater profits. In all this we shall argue that wives were not the only ones who contributed to stabilising labour at Mufulira Mine. The single women also played a very significant role.

Allowing women into the mine compound was part of Mufulira mine's labour strategy to ensure a stable labour supply and greater profit margins. The latter was to be achieved by utilising labour more efficiently through encouraging it to stabilise at the
mine. This entailed bringing women to the mine because mine management had observed that men tended to gravitate where women were. For example, Mr C. F. Spearpoint, the Compound Manager at Roan mine, observed a slackening off of the annual exodus of workers who went to help in the tilling of gardens, which he attributed to the fact that many had brought their wives and their interest was centred mainly at the place of domicile and employment. The importance of women was recognised not only on the mines within the territory but in other colonial African states. For example, Theresa Barnes, in her study of African Railway workers in Zimbabwe referred to Colonial administrators’ sentiments all over Africa which were echoed by the Secretary for Native Affairs of Colonial Zimbabwe who recognised the need to create conditions to allow a labourer to live with his family and so stabilise labour. At Mufulira mine for example, the Mine managers recognised that by building special housing facilities for their married workers and their families, they could attract and keep more of these workers. They, therefore, constructed permanent brick houses shown on page x for their married employees. This project signified the importance Mufulira mine managers attached to women in the process of stabilisation.

Women’s Activities in the Compound: 1930–1955

The value of the women who were initially brought to the mine compounds to stabilise labour, increased when it was realised that workers who had their wives with them not only stayed longer, but were also healthier, contented and more efficient than the single employees. These traits in married workers made them valuable to the mine and were attributed to the presence of women who cooked and generally took care of
them. The single employee on the other hand, evidently had only two advantages - he was cheaper to house and cheaper to feed. This labour, however, remained mostly migrant and in the long run, not much cheaper than the married employee as the Company continued to spend money on training and retraining these migrant labourers. In fact, when the extra cost of feeding and housing a married couple was calculated in 1944, it was discovered that the direct excess cost of married over single workers was only 5.07 pence per day. It was the total of amortisation of houses and also the cost of feeding the family at 1.53 pence and 3.54 pence respectively. There were other undeterminable expenses on the family such as medical and welfare facilities. These were obviously offset in many different ways through women's chores, for example, women at Mufulira mine maintained their huts by annually plastering them with clay at no cost to the Company.

By law, the Company was prohibited from demanding and using the labour of their employees' families when they lived with them. Moreover, the Employment of Women, Youths and Children Ordinance of 1933 also prohibited the employment of women in industry. Mufulira mine, however, obtained women's labour albeit indirectly and at no cost to the Company. As this mainly involved menial work in and around the compound and not in the mine, the Company was within the law. In fact, the law that prohibited women from working in industry served to enhance the earlier law, the tax law, which required only men to pay hut tax. This was done in order to push them into wage labour while women stayed in the village probably to act as custodians of their customs and traditional way of life which probably sustained the colonial indirect rule system. Both laws could be interpreted as the colonial system's way of introducing the
European way of life at that time, in which women usually stayed at home to run the domestic side of life. African women living in the mine compound at Mufulira mine were expected to stay at home and keep house for their husbands. The laws however could also be explained in terms of a larger capitalist strategy which ensured that as one part of the indigenous population worked at producing wealth directly, the other was assigned the duty of maintaining the producers.

The capitalist producers adopted this division to suit the different labour policies that they practised. For example, when migrant labour was the preferable labour policy, women remained in the village and maintained the men upon their return. And when the mine embarked on labour stabilisation, the same trend continued, with men engaged in direct production while women were relocated to the urban centres to continue maintaining the men on site. This was the role assigned to women at Mufulira mine from the time it was decided to stabilise labour. They were denied participation in actual production of minerals. And no evidence was found showing that women were ever employed in the production of copper despite the fact that women were involved in pre-colonial copper mining. In fact ‘The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children (Amendment) Ordinance of 1936’ prohibited the employment of women underground. Even when women entered previously male dominated jobs such as law, medicine and others, women still did not work at mineral production. Although there may be other reasons for keeping women out of mining, such as the job being too physically demanding for them, it still remained in the company’s interest to have one sex free to look after the other.
When management began encouraging African workers to bring their families to the mine compound, they knew that the wives would influence long work periods, make their lives more comfortable by keeping the houses and surroundings clean, and cook their food. They expected the women to perform all the domestic duties that they had transferred from the traditional setting such as fetching water from communal taps and firewood from the bush. They also collected and grew crops to supplement company rations. What management had not envisaged was the extent to which they would prove valuable. Their labour in the compound appeared to have reduced company expenditure on African rations and medical bills and made it possible for low wages to be paid without the threat of losing employees. It was on the basis of these chores by women that this study concluded that the expenses on employees' families were adequately made up.7

The inclusion of women in the long-term activities at the mine was a calculated labour process which ensured that the future labourers came to the mines with their mothers or were born on site. In fact, the company aimed at instilling the rigors of industrial discipline in the children at an early age as this was lacking in adult recruits.8 Employing children as sweepers was one way of achieving this goal. The value of both the children and their mothers to the mine was highlighted when, the General Manager of R.S.T., Mr. Frank Ayer, refused to participate in a programme to repatriate children from the African Mine compounds of Mufulira and Roan in 1939, if it meant separating them from their parents and guardians. Mr Ayer emphasized that African parents really wanted their children to stay with them in the compound on one hand, moreover, no parent in the mine compound surrendered a child to the Traditional Chiefs who came to take the children and unmarried women back to their villages. On the other, those children who
grew up in the compounds had demonstrated their potential as future mine workers. The company also utilised the labour of the employees’ children and other dependants by employing them to sweep the grounds of the compound at minimal cost. The employment of children at the R.S.T. mines was so common that in the 1940s it became an issue at N.I.L.A.B. meetings when members challenged this trend. They contended that it violated the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Ordinance of 1933, which prohibited the employment of children under the age of sixteen (16). Mr. Ayer, a representative of the copper mining companies at N.I.L.A.B., defended the practice and argued that sweeping in the compound could hardly be classified as industrial work. His arguments were made in the interest of the copper mines especially R.S.T. mines which saved the company money they should have paid in wages had they employed adults. Children were only given a token amount of money or food for their work.

The women’s chores outlined above and their children’s sweeping were just some of those easy duties performed in the compound. Women were also involved in the more exacting task of reproduction which Chauncey refers to as social reproduction which involved both generational reproduction of labour as a whole and the reproduction of the labour force through the daily maintenance of the workers. The two were the most important aspects of women’s labour as the profitability and eventual survival of the company depended on them.

This labour process, however, was not openly done at Mufulira. In fact, the desire for the generational reproduction of labour was only discernible through the provision of
some rations and medical facilities for mothers and their children. Moreover, in the early years of the mine medical personnel embarked on a campaign to persuade African women, especially maternity cases, to seek medical attention to ensure their and their babies’ survival.\footnote{14}

In Katanga, mining companies such as UMHK, from which Mufulira and the other copper mines copied the idea of stabilisation, were more open in their motives. They brought women to their compounds for the purpose of reproducing the labour force. The UMHK not only encouraged married employees to bring their wives and family but also encouraged single men to go back home and marry. Management went even further and got involved in the bride price negotiations, advanced the men bride price money and paid for the transportation of the new wife to the mine. However, the new wife was only acceptable in the compound if the medical examination she was subjected to proved she could bear children.\footnote{15} This was done to ensure that labour was produced on the mine.

Although Mufulira mine management seemingly showed less enthusiasm in the reproduction of labour than their counterparts at UMHK, management was more enthusiastic in their quest for daily reproduction of their labour force more especially that this aspect of women’s labour played a big role in stabilising it. According to Chauncey, allowing women in the compound ensured the provision of a variety of services such as domestic and sexual which the mining company quickly realised were an added non-monetary inducement for men to work in the mines despite the low wages offered there.\footnote{16} The availability of these services in the compound at Mufulira mine also influenced the African employees to work for longer periods.
The services offered by women had such a profound effect on the men who received them that management at Mufulira mine, which officially allowed wives to live in the compounds, unofficially allowed women who were not wives, children or dependants of their employees into the compound. This slack on the part of management was a calculated strategy to give single workers access to the services that these women offered. As the wives cooked, cleaned, drew water, and washed clothes among other things for their husbands, so did many of the unattached women for the single employees in the compound.

As married employees received these services consistently, Mine management concluded that they were more stable and efficient at their work and caused fewer accidents than the single employees who mostly relied on the availability of the unattached women to offer these services. One Compound Manager illustrated the lower percentage of accidents by married compared to single employees as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Single</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incidence of diseases:</td>
<td>15.05</td>
<td>31.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents:</td>
<td>10.51</td>
<td>18.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loafing:</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These were figures recorded at an unnamed mine but which the Chamber of Mines acknowledged as being a reasonably accurate picture of the position at all the mines. However, the lower incidence of accidents among married men should not be attributed to their marital status alone but also the fact that they were more experienced than unmarried men. This was because the policy of stabilisation enabled married men to stay long enough for them to gain experience, hence, the lower rate of accidents among them.
The incidence of disease among single workers was also noticeably higher than among married men. This was attributed to the poor hygiene, which according to Kalusa, contributed to a higher occurrence of diarrhoeal diseases among single men. Poor meals, especially when prepared by the single men themselves, and the general lack of care probably contributed to the higher incidence of disease among the single men whereas married men were generally healthy because of the care given to them by their wives.

The fact that management at Mufulira favoured issuing uncooked rations to all its employees, irrespective of their marital status, was another factor that determined the health status of the mine employees. Men had little time and strength after a shift at the mine. The single men most likely ate poorly prepared food that probably contributed to the higher incidence of disease among them. Some of them, however, got round this problem by employing children and in many instances they had women to do these chores for them.

Issuing uncooked rations had several advantages. For example, the mine management realised that cooked rations created a deadly monotony of a hard and fast menu which had no provision for the natural relishes and variation in cooking dear to the native heart. By receiving uncooked rations, employees, probably employed different recipes to create variety in taste. More importantly, management also realised that uncooked rations were also a cheaper option for the company because they cut running costs by not employing extra personnel to cook the meals and at the same time removed the burden of procuring firewood for cooking. The burden was instead placed on the women who cooked for the men in the compound.
Cooking and other domestic activities were not the only chores women performed. They also had the tedious task of going to the Feeding Stores to pick the rations for their families. Obtaining food from the stores meant standing in a queue for a long time. This process of procuring food was less taxing than in the village. Although procuring food was less taxing and faster in the compound, women were still expected to go out in the forest to collect different kinds of traditional foodstuffs to supplement the rations issued by the company. For example, they collected seasonal wild vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, as well as edible insects such as inswa, caterpillars and others to add value and variety to the issued rations. The men who had to work long hours at the mine did not have time to go out to collect these items. Later, these foodstuffs could be obtained at the market which was opened in the early 1930s. According to A. J. Orenstein, the items, proved popular because they replaced the ration vegetables such as cabbages, turnips and spinach which were not to African taste. Orenstein and the Compound Manager at Mufulira mine in the Mufulira Compound Magazine concluded that, Africans preferred a certain type of wild spinach (known as ibondwe or lengalenga in Bemba). Orenstein added that, in many cases, African enjoyed the leaves of the cassava, pumpkin, sweet potatoes and others because company rations left them craving for the traditional foods.  

The women collected firewood from the nearby forests because it was not part of the ration from the mine. The nearest place they could get firewood from was the bush (now Section Four) behind Section Two and the forest which was part of the Crown land adjacent to the mine. As collecting firewood in this forest was illegal, women found doing so were arrested and fined much to the chagrin of their husbands. When the
problem was brought before the Tribal Representatives meeting, it received no attention from the mine management. Women therefore resorted to going to the forest at dawn, before the forest rangers began their patrols. This went on up to the 1950s when women were able to buy either firewood or charcoal from hawkers who came into the compound from Kabembe (a settlement which developed beyond the Boating Club's present site) and much later from business men who had licenses to cut trees for firewood and charcoal in the Crown land. Although this meant extra expenditure for some women and loss of business and extra income for those miners' wives' who sold firewood in the compound, the development was welcome as it removed the hazards of being caught and fined for trespassing on Crown land. Moreover, if they were arrested they paid the fine from the same low wages they were trying to supplement. This explains the contradictions in the management's policy. On one hand they wanted the women because they contributed to the well-being of their employees by performing domestic chores, on the other, they failed to come to their aid when they needed management's assistance in procuring firewood.

Domestic services offered by women such as those outlined above, were by no means the only ones. Sexual services were also very common in the compounds. These were generally offered to single employees mainly by single women. The single women engaged in commercial sex work for the same reason that they performed domestic chores, for monetary gain. In the course of offering these services some of the women contracted temporary marriages with the miners.

Although stabilisation required wives to be allowed in the compound, management at Mufulira ignored the presence of unmarried women because their
services contributed to the well being of their single workers, which they desired as it increased their efficiency. The fact that unmarried women came into the compound reduced some of the problems experienced by other mines where employees went off into the nearby Lamba villages to look for women and beer and in some cases failed to turn up for work after the weekend. This problem was avoided at Mufulira mainly because there were no nearby villages within the territory. The mine, was however, close to some settlements in the Congo. According to Taylor and Lehmann, Mufulira’s proximity to the settlements in the Congo attracted a lot of unmarried women from there who came to the mine to earn money as sex workers. As there were no strict rules to stop women in the beginning, Mufulira experienced an influx of single women, especially from the Congo. In one instance, as many as ten women were believed to be living as visitors in one miner’s house in the African mine compound, to which they brought a lot of money earned as sex workers.

That sex was an important part of the miners’ lives was widely acknowledged. Mine management at Mufulira, acknowledged this by refusing to prohibit single women from entering the compound. This was when married employees requested management to ban single women from the compound. Mine management argued that, the presence of single women enabled single men have access to the services they offered. This trend was also observed in mining areas of Zimbabwe, where, mining officials openly acknowledged the importance of sex to workers. According to Van Onselen, ‘the mines in the Bulawayo district, not only had their resident women within the compound but also had weekend visits of literally truck-loads of prostitutes from Bulawayo location.’ He went on to highlight the collaboration between the Government and the mining
companies and noted that, 'state officials accepted that the *mahure* (sex workers) assisted in labour stabilisation and were thus willing to “regulate” but never to eliminate prostitution.'\(^{29}\) This attitude placed the responsibility of stabilisation on both married and single women.

The state and the mining companies did not openly encourage sex work in the industrial areas. They, however, realised that their employees who were separated from their women, needed the comfort and services offered by single women for them to perform efficiently.\(^{30}\) For this reason, the mining companies made no concerted efforts to remove the unmarried women from the compounds.

The attitude of the mine management at Mufulira and other mines led to the development of different types of unions between the mineworkers and the women. Godfrey Wilson in his essay on Detribalisation in Northern Rhodesia identified three types of unions that developed among Africans in urban areas. There were the marriages contracted according to tribal traditions in which the groom paid the bride price to the parents of his wife. Then there were temporary unions which were sometimes long-term, but involved neither the payment of the bride price nor the consent of kin. It was more or less like marriage, in which the woman rendered domestic and sex services but received payment in cash or gifts. The man, therefore, enjoyed the benefits such as those enjoyed by his married counterparts without the responsibilities of a legal marriage in what Theresa Barnes calls a *mapoto* relationship.\(^{31}\) A *mapoto* relationship was firmly based on the domestic services a woman rendered to a man, especially that of cooking his food for him on a semi permanent basis. A woman, because she cooked, usually owned most of
the pots in the house. When the relationship broke up, she left, taking her pots with her. When another woman moved in with the man, she brought her own pots with her. 32

The third type of union, which was also identified by Epstein, men had liaison with women picked from beer halls and other places. These unions, in which women offered sex in exchange for cash or gifts, were purely commercial arrangements in which no other services were expected. Some of these women who usually wore make up in order to attract men were popularly referred to as bakapenta milomo (women who painted their lips with lipstick). The word, as Epstein also noted, was used synonymously with prostitutes. 33 The term was used all over of the country but, it was more common on the Copperbelt. Since women were not mandated to carry passes to enter the mine compounds before 1944, the prostitutes were a common feature in the single quarters where temporary relationships flourished. In fact, even when passes were made compulsory, the mine management, as pointed out earlier, generally accepted that there was need to have some ‘loose women’ (mahuwe) in the single quarters to keep miners happy. 34

In 1943, the Tribal Representatives at Mufulira complained about the presence of unmarried women in the Compound whom they accused of having bad morals. When they suggested that those who did not produce marriage certificates should not be allowed to remain there, the one single man present at the meeting protested strongly. He challenged the Lunda Tribal Representative who brought up the issue to talk to the single men in the Compound. The Compound Manager, who chaired the meeting, also observed that prohibiting these unmarried women from entering the Compound would upset the single men 35 and emphasised that women were allowed in the Compound. As
the desire was to maintain a sexually contented labour force to foster efficiency and consequently boost production and profits, both the colonial state and the mining companies clearly wanted African women in the urban areas as did the single employees, as long as they served state or corporate goals. It was an alliance similar to one which existed in Zimbabwe. In this regard therefore, the fact that the management at Mufulira allowed single women into the compound, they initially encouraged prostitution in the compound and the state was a reluctant ally. This state and capital alliance effectively used the women's instinct to be with their natural partners to exploit them.

**African Rations and Wages**

Under the Employment of Natives Ordinance of 1929, employers were legally obliged to issue rations or cash in lieu of if preferred. The employer was, however, not legally obliged to feed the wives and children of the employees. The mining companies which encouraged men to bring their families fed them out of necessity. This was because, as one Compound Manager observed, 'If the women and children are not fed, then the men have to share their rations with them and in doing this the man is insufficiently fed to enable him to perform the work which is expected of him.' The women and children, as Appendix I indicates, received their own rations separate from and less than those issued to men. Mufulira mine management began issuing food rations to the wives of employees, as shown below, in about 1930. This demonstrates the importance that the company attached to women in the compound, especially that Government had made no provision for them in the gazetted ration scales. The rations given to the women however, can only be described as paltry. This, management argued,
was because the men's work was more strenuous than the domestic chores performed by women and therefore needed more nourishment than their families.

This was a clear demonstration of management's reluctance to spend a lot on the employees' families. The women therefore, found themselves in a very precarious position where they were excluded from wage employment by law, given very little to eat and yet were expected to survive and continue their task of caring for their mine employee husbands by providing extra food and other services for them and themselves. In fact the colonial government's disregard for the plight of women was emphasised by the fact that the gazetted minimum ration scales for employers to follow had no provision for the employees' families.

Gazetting the minimum ration scale for African employees was Government's way of ensuring that they were given enough food. Employers could however, issue more if they desired. The rations issued by the mining industry as a whole were generally considered generous as they were above the minimum recommended by Government. Although the ration scales were constantly reviewed by both the Government and Mufulira mine management, by 1943, they were still remarkably limited in variety and showed little change from those of previous years. The women's rations too, although the quantity improved over the years, evidently remained nutritionally insufficient and hardly comparable to the men's. They were given 4 lbs of mealie meal and 2 lbs of maize grain per week in 1930. This is the earliest evidence found of women receiving rations at the mine. In 1935, the food rations for women at Mufulira per week consisted only of 6 lbs of mealie meal while their children received 2 lbs of maize grain. In 1940, the women received 11 lbs of mealie meal and 3 lbs of cassava while the
children’s rations remained the same. At the beginning of World War Two, the women’s rations were reduced to 7 lbs. The rations were increased to 10 lbs in 1944. In addition to the mealie meal, women also received extra rations of 1 lb of beans and 2 lbs of meat. The children continued to receive mealie meal only which had increased to 3½ lbs in 1944.38 The men’s rations on the other hand, as shown in appendix I for example, appeared adequate in quantity, but still lacked variety.

However, the fact that the rations of the women and their children consisted mostly of mealie meal suggests that they were expected to find their own relish. They probably ate some of the men’s relish because once cooked, the food could hardly have been eaten in the ratios that it had been received. The bulk of it however, had to be procured through their own effort in order to supplement the rations of their husbands and families. This explains why despite these less than adequate rations, it was evident that married employees were healthier than the single employees. This was attributed to their ‘women folk who were able to get a good variety of local relishes which the women had plenty of time to collect in the bush.’39 As we saw earlier, this was just one way in which women supplemented the rations issued by the Company. There were however, several other activities in which wives were involved as a way of raising money to supplement the wages of their husbands.

As women continued to supplement the rations, the mining companies failed to acknowledge that they were inadequate even when they knew this to be true. They argued that the rations issued to mine employees were adequate and reasonably balanced. They however, acknowledged that there was some possibility of doubt as to whether they were really palatable to native taste.40 Taste however, was not the biggest problem that
the rations had. The problem as highlighted earlier lack of variety and nutritional value of both the rations of the men and their families as most of the calories were derived from the carbohydrates in the diet. And knowing this, the Chamber acknowledged that, rations should continue to be the subject of close investigation not only from the scientific aspect but also from the viewpoint of the African.41

The issue of feeding Africans was a very delicate matter for mine managers. Although they publicly defended the adequacy of rations issued to Africans, privately, they acknowledged their inadequacy. For example, Frank Ayer, General Manager of the R.S.T. mines, after attending a meeting of the Chamber of Mines to discuss African living conditions in 1940, warned the Manager at Roan mine to be on the lookout and increase the women’s rations along the lines agreed on by Nkana and Nchanga. The manager at Mufulira was advised to transfer part of the men’s ration to women’s – or at least show it as women’s and children’s on Mufulira reports.42 In 1942, women’s rations showed an increase in the maize ration, from 6 lbs, in 1935 to 10 lbs, while the beef ration remained at 2 lbs, per week.43 The warning was probably meant to advise on future ration scales and also in anticipation of a survey in the mine compounds following the 1940 strikes on the Copperbelt mines. This clearly shows that the mine management was used women to achieve labour stabilisation but did not give them the attention they deserved.

This indicated management’s awareness of the inadequacy of the rations, especially those issued to employees’ families. While the men received a carbohydrate-loaded full ration, the wives, who were deemed an essential stabilising factor, received a paltry ration which was also mostly carbohydrate. Women were expected to supplement
whatever rations were issued. In fact, since theirs and their children's rations were mostly maize meal with a bit of meat or beans, most of the relish was procured through their own effort. These efforts by women produced the healthy, contented and efficient worker desired by the mines whom Mr Field, the Compound Manager at Mufulira, reluctantly admitted in 1943, was a more valuable and tractable worker than the single man. He added that this was induced by his responsibilities to his family. While recognising the role women continued to play in stabilising labour, the mining companies maintained that a married man should shoulder some of the responsibility of feeding his family and should not be wholly borne by the employer. They emphasised that married men should not expect their families to be fully rationed by employers especially that they were not legally obliged to do so. As men could only contribute their wages, the onus was on women who presumably had a lot of time to devote to activities that would earn them money to supplement the rations or wages. As his family responsibilities made him less mobile, the married employee was more stable and therefore preferable to management at Mufulira mine. The women responsible for this stability however, continued to be treated as necessary burdens.

From 1956, the mining companies' policy was to pay an inclusive wage, in which African employees were paid an allowance instead of food rations. This was done so that Africans could buy their own food. However, they could not buy enough food for their families, mainly because the allowance was calculated on the basis of the employee, his wife and two children. The extra children were ignored while those born after the policy was implemented were also not catered for, nor was the rising cost of living taken into consideration. It was therefore, still up to women to make up the short fall.
Furthermore, wages had become more and more inadequate as Africans acquired a growing taste for European food and other goods. This change in taste was highlighted in the strike action of 1952 by African mineworkers. The strike, which was for higher wages, also revealed that both those in the low wage scale who received rations and those in the inclusive wage scales considered sugar, bread and even tea more and more as necessities rather than luxuries. Those earning less than 6 pounds a month could not easily afford them, especially that other necessities such as clothes, bathing and washing soap and many others were bought from the same wages. The mine management rejected this bid for higher wages on the grounds that it had no effect on greater stability of labour, and argued that only marital status had a bearing on length of service.

As wages did not seem to accelerate stabilisation, the mining companies deliberately kept them low. Throughout the colonial period, wages paid to Africans were generally low. Low wages were one of the factors that influenced labour policy at Mufulira. Seeing that wages would not stabilise labour, management enticed workers by permitting them to live with their families in the compound. In fact this strategy enabled Mufulira to compete for labour within the Copperbelt as well as in the region favourably.

The strike action of 1952 over wages was by no means the only one. From the inception of Mufulira mine wages were low and were a constant source of problems for both management and workers. For example, low wages caused a labour shortage in 1929 while they were also an issue in the 1935 strike on the Copperbelt. In 1939, some Government officials wanted the mines to limit the number of Africans living with their wives. These officials observed that an African receiving less than 20 shillings found it
difficult to maintain a wife and family. As many African families relied on the supplements procured by women, the suggestion is that low wages prevailed in the industry. Moore also noted that the African workers complained about their static wages in 1940. The Labour Commissioner was greatly shocked by the comparatively low wages paid locally. The remark was substantiated by Saffery who also stated that the wages of the African workers were not enough to live on.

Although they were higher than what most Africans earned elsewhere in the territory during the colonial era, an examination of African wages in the mining industry revealed that they were paltry. Moreover, there was a wide gap between the African and European wage bills as the latter were highly paid. In fact even when the cost of rations is added to the wages and bonuses paid to Africans at Mufulira and the other mines, and considering that they were more in number, Table II shows that the total fell far below the wages and bonuses paid to their European counterparts.

**TABLE II: NORTHERN RHODESIA MINEWORKERS SALARIES AND WAGES**

The amounts paid in salaries and wages to employees at the various mines in the case of the bigger mines, the cost of African rations during the year, 1946.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MINE</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>AFRICAN RATIONS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EUROPEANS</td>
<td>AFRICANS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken Hill</td>
<td>Pounds 167,743</td>
<td>Pounds 59,816</td>
<td>Pounds 30,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bwana Mkubwa</td>
<td>5,776</td>
<td>5,925</td>
<td>2,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mufulira</td>
<td>548,482</td>
<td>178,811</td>
<td>112,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nchanga</td>
<td>269,500</td>
<td>72,623</td>
<td>52,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nkana</td>
<td>804,977</td>
<td>254,470</td>
<td>158,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roan Antelope</td>
<td>695,118</td>
<td>235,110</td>
<td>135,963</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northern Rhodesia, Mine Department, Annual Report, 1946, p. 18.
Low wages for Africans appeared to be the policy throughout the copper industry. The women who received the food ration easily noticed the inadequacy because it is the women who cooked food for their husbands and children. They were, therefore, as Parpart argues, very influential in the miners' demands for adequate food rations and higher wages as the onus was on them to fend for their families. They did this by brewing beer and growing crops which ensured a flow of cash and adequate food for their families.

**Women's Labour: Beer Brewing**

Beer brewing was the preserve of women. It was one of the most important aspects of women's labour effectively utilised by management in that it had the dual purpose of providing a means of social interaction among its employees and also enabled women to earn money needed to supplement the wages of their husbands. The Company allowed women to brew beer in the Compound. Since it formed the core of social interaction and was prominent at village gatherings as a prime incentive to labour and a display of hospitality in the village, it was expected to play a similar role in the compound as well as provide a means of relaxing after a hard day's work in the mines. Moreover, the Company recognised that the sale of beer in the compound earned the women so much money that they supplemented the wages the men received. The significance of the extra income was that it distorted the real wages paid to the men and consequently, the men whose wives brought in such an extra income could stay longer at the mine despite receiving a low wage.
Management, believing beer to be of utmost importance to the Africans, initially allowed any woman who wished, to brew beer whenever she wanted. Beer brewing was so profitable that in some cases the brewers made more money in a month than their husbands did in a 30 day ticket. As women realised the profitability of beer brewing, there was growing competition which resulted in some making their beer stronger than other women’s to attract more customers. This affected the performance of the miners at work and in some cases they failed to appear for work.

Rather than ban beer-brewing however, knowing that workers would still get beer somehow no matter what restrictions were introduced, and depriving women of their income, the copper mining companies resorted to the permit system in which different sections of the compound brewed beer on a rotating basis. This was in accordance with the Native Beer (Amendment) Ordinance of 1927. The scheme was meant to limit the quantity and possibly the potency of the beer in the compound. The permit system continued until the Native Beer Ordinance of 1930 limited beer brewing to licence holders who were permitted brew beer under supervision at designated places such as beerhalls and canteens. Beer brewing was transferred from the women’s homes to the canteens where it was brewed under supervision. This system helped reduce illegal brewing in most mine compounds on the Copperbelt but not at Mufulira. This was because the canteen in Mufulira was located outside the mine compound therefore illegal brewers continued to get people to buy their beer. This was because of the illegal brewers’ proximity to their customers. This meant there was still a lot of beer available to the miners and this consequently affected their performance at work, induced a rise in absenteeism and also caused fighting and brawling in the compound.
In 1944 brewing at the canteens was abandoned and the mandate placed in a new brewery, which opened in the same year. The Mufulira Township Management Board managed the brewery. From that time, Africans were required to buy only brewery beer. This move deprived African women of their income. The authorities maintained that taking control of beer brewing was done so that illegal brewing would be controlled. It was however, probably because the authorities were not comfortable with the independence that women gained through profits from the sale of beer. They preferred women in urban centres to be economically dependent on their husbands. This meant the profits previously enjoyed by women went into the Township Management Board’s coffers from which some was channelled to the mines Welfare Section. This was the money management at Mufulira mine like other mining companies, used to provide welfare amenities such as libraries, welfare halls and cinemas for Africans, therefore making them pay for their own welfare facilities albeit indirectly. All this did not have the desired effect on illegal brewing. Women who needed the extra income continued brewing despite the risk of being caught, fined or even jailed.

Women’s Labour: Gardening and the Plot System

Involvement in agriculture on the mines was one of the most important forms of women’s labour. Through agriculture, the women supplemented the meagre company rations. Mining companies supported gardening because unlike beer, there was no danger of work at the mines being disrupted. The importance of agriculture to the women cannot be over emphasised because while the miners were supplied full rations as part of their non-monetary wages, their families were only issued with an insufficient
supplement of food. Saffery, in his 1943 survey observed that, the rations issued by the mines to the wives and children were merely a contribution towards the food of the family, as they were obviously inadequate. The bulk of what the women and children consumed was what they produced in the gardens or plots. The men who supposedly received a full ration still needed the extra food provided by women because they also desired the extra nutrients and variety they offered. This situation enhanced the need by the wives to be involved in agriculture.

Agriculture was usually done on demarcated plots of land. This plot system was initially practised at Broken Hill mine where five-acre plots were allocated to married workers as a way of encouraging them to stabilise at the mine. The success of the plot system at Broken Hill encouraged some Copperbelt mines such as Roan Antelope to adopt it because apart from attracting married labour, it also ensured the production of extra food for the worker's families. Since they could sell extra produce to their neighbours and the Company, they were also assured of making some extra money. In this manner therefore, the Company had transferred the burden of looking after their employees to the wives. Since the women fed the families, the Companies paid low wages and still achieved stabilisation.

Although it was observed that women's labour reduced the companies' wage costs by inducing men to work at low wages and also by reproducing labour on a daily basis more effectively and cheaply than could the company, the plot system which ensured this, developed rather slowly at Mufulira. In 1941 Mufulira was the only copper mine without a plot system. Apparently, land had been demarcated for use by the wives of the African mineworkers in the early 1930s but was deemed unsuitable for
agriculture\textsuperscript{61}, and was therefore, not allocated to the women. When Saffery also reported the lack of the plot system at Mufulira in 1943, the Chamber of Mines argued that, more than 1,000 acres around Mufulira were under cultivation but, admitted that there was no organised system for laying out plots.\textsuperscript{62} With or without an official allocation of plots, and probably driven by the necessity to produce extra food for consumption and sale, women still went out and staked their claims to plots. For example by 1936, the wives of miners at Mufulira were growing rice, cassava, sweet potatoes and pumpkins near Kansuswa stream while others, and evidently the employees themselves, for instance, one miner, Lameck Ngwira, acquired plots for his family near the stream and two on the banks of the Mufulira river in 1937 and 1945 respectively.\textsuperscript{63}

Gardening was so successful that it attracted the attention of the Chamber who probably begrudged the extra money women made from selling their agricultural produce. In 1941, the Chamber raised objections to the companies’ buying produce from Africans’ plots and argued that they also saw no good reason why a mine employee should be permitted to be a market gardener on mine property and that there was no reason for plots to be greater in size than those necessary for growing vegetables for the personal consumption of the owner.\textsuperscript{64} At the same time, mine management probably welcomed the production of these items as they were instrumental in reducing company expenditure on the wages and rations of the Africans.

In the 1950s, gardening was fully established at Mufulira although it was done without official allocation of plots. By the 1960s, it was generally accepted that people needed gardens to provide a variety in diet and supplement the monthly incomes of many families.\textsuperscript{65} Almost every family had a garden on which they grew the types of food not
issued as rations or could not afford to buy from their low wages. It was therefore, a fact that the rations and wages of Africans had to be supplemented through the agricultural labour of women. Some women also engaged in other activities such as gambling with beads (*ukupama icibale*) in order to earn extra money. This activity involved a group of women who each pooled a measured amount of a chosen colour of beads in a plate. The measures were usually the lids of Vaseline containers which each player used to make her contribution to the plate. One player then played the game by mixing the beads by repeatedly scooping them in her palm and then pouring them back into the plate at the same time trying to make a few jump out. The winner was the one whose beads came out of the plate or if it was the only one among several of the other colours. The winner retained the contents of the plate, while the losers had to redeem their beads by paying the winner the agreed amount of money. This vice was however, stopped by management as many women lost ration money through it.\(^{66}\)

The women were compelled to engage in these activities not because they had too much time and very little to do as some company officials argued, but because it was necessary for them to do so. This was a manifestation of a desperate struggle for survival otherwise many would have succumbed, not from starvation but from nutritional related illnesses. Kalusa observed that more women than men died due to lack of medical facilities in the early days of the mine.\(^{67}\) However, it could also have been because of poor nourishment as the ration they received was inadequate. A reduction in the morbidity of women on the Copperbelt generally could be attributed to the improved provision of medical facilities on the one hand and on the other, their involvement in food production on the plots which also served to sustain the work force in the mining area.
On the whole, women continued to play the role that had been imposed on them because of the labour migrant system which was well entrenched.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have argued that the 1930s at Mufulira mine were characterised by the practice of labour stabilisation in which men were encouraged to bring their wives and families to live in the compounds with them. We have also argued that the mere presence of women was instrumental in inducing stabilisation. This was demonstrated by the fact that while the companies allowed wives to reside in the mine compounds, unattached women, who were considered undesirable, were also allowed in. We further argued that the women’s domestic chores and sexual services contributed to the general well being of labour and therefore, played a role in stabilising it. The chapter also showed that women engaged in activities such as beer brewing and gardening. These activities were both for use value and sale. The profits from selling these products went towards supplementing the meagre wages of their husbands as well as the inadequate rations they were issued. Labour stabilisation was therefore, achieved because women supplemented both rations and wages, which made conditions appear better than they would otherwise have been and enabled labour to stay longer. On the other hand, we showed that the men were attracted to and stayed at the mine for long working periods despite the low wages because they could live with their families. We have also argued that despite contributing so much to labour stabilisation at the mine, women, like their men folk, were exploited by the mine by issuing them inadequate rations, and yet they were expected to reproduce labour to ensure future labour supplies as well as to care for
men in order to stabilise them. In all these arguments, we have shown that the role of stabilising labour was not confined to wives but also included unmarried women.
END NOTES


3. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A/1 NORCOM, Memo on Native Labour, September 1944, p. 17.


7. Z.C.C.M. 16.2.6E. Correspondence. From the Compound Manager (M.C.M. Ltd.) to The Manager (Roan), 16th November, 1938. Chairman’s Report December 20th, 1939.


10. NAZ SEC 1/1327 vol. II. “Native Industrial Labour Advisory Board”, Minutes of Meetings.


14. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A. NORCOM, September, 1944, p. 17.


17. NAZ SEC1/1349, “Children in the Industry Areas (Repatriation)” Memo from Provincial Commissioner, Western Province to Chief Secretary, 5th January, 1939.


29. Interview with Margaret Chilando. She explained that kapenta milomo was a derogatory term used for sex workers who painted their lips. Other women did not like them because they took good care of themselves to attract men including married men. Married women, who were usually less polished than bakapenta, blamed their appearance on not having enough time to spend on their appearance because they were busy looking after children and cooking for their husbands. For another definition of bakapenta see E.L. Epstein, Politics in an Urban African Community, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), p.10.
33. For details on the different ration scales see NAZ SEC1/1306. Migrant Labour Agreement:
   Inter – Territorial Conference. From the Chief Secretary’s Office to all Heads of Department and P.C.’s, 8 November, 1940. NAZ. LSS1/9/10:2036. Native Labour Conditions of Service. Housing in the Mines – Mufulira Mine. From Provincial Administrator (Ndola) to the Chief Secretary,5th April, 1940. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A/1. NORCOM: Comment on Saffery Report, 14th September, 1943.
36. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A/1, NORCOM. Memo on Native Labour, September, 1944, p. 21.
37. Z.C.C.M. 13.4.7C. Memo From General Manager (R.S.T.) to Managers of Roan Antelope and Mufulira Mine. Note also that the Commission of Inquiry was scheduled to begin its inquiry into the 1940 strike action by African miners in July, 1940.

38. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.5F. Memo. From Compound Manager (Mufulira) to Manager, 21st April, 1947.

39. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A/1. Statements to be checked by all Members, 3rd July, 1943.


41. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A/1. NORCOM. Memo on Native Labour, September 1942, p. 23.

42. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A/1. NORCOM. Memo on Native Labour, September 1942, p. 23.


44. Z.C.C.M. 16.2.5A/1. Extract from the New Statesman and Nation, 1st November, 1952.

45. NAZ SEC1/1399. Correspondence, From Provincial Commissioner, (Western Province) to the Chief Secretary, 6th February, 1939.


47. Parpart, “Class and Gender”, p. 142.

48. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.4F/1. From Compound Manager (M.C.M. Ltd) to Manager, 1st September, 1942


51. Z.C.C.M. 13.4.3A. Extract from Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of NORCOM, 16th and 17th December, 1948.

52. Z.C.C.M. 13.4.3A. “NORCOM. African Labour. Illegal Brewing.” Extract from Minutes of Executive Meeting of NORCOM. 16th and 17th December, 1948.

53. Z.C.C.M. 13.2. 9C/6. “Beerhall and Eating House”. Memo. From Compound Manager to Acting Manager, September 11th, 1941

54. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.9C/6. “Beerhall and Eating House,” Correspondence. From Township Manager to Manager, Mufulira Copper Mines, 18th August, 1944.

55. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A/1. Saffery’s Reply to Chamber’s memo of 14th September, 1943. See also Chauncey, “Locus of Reproduction”, p. 138.


58. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A/1. Memo Setting out the Chamber’s Comments, 14th September, 1943.


60. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.6A/1 NORCOM. Memo on Native Labour, September, 1944. p. 65.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EFFECT OF STATE AND MINING COMPANY POLICIES ON WOMEN

Introduction

As Mufulira and the other mines on the Copperbelt developed, a large African population grew that included a significant number of women. The presence of women was undesirable to Government. In this regard, policies were designed to regulate the movement of women to the industrial areas. In this chapter we discuss some of the Government and Mining Company policies which affected women. We shall begin by discussing the migration of women to Mufulira Mine. This part will try to bring out the ingenuity shown by some women in getting to the urban centres despite the disapproval of the Native Authorities and the Government's prohibitive measures. The approach and attitude of the Northern Rhodesia Government contradicted those of the mining companies. The mining companies welcomed and encouraged the presence of women in the compound to help stabilise male mine labour. The conflict between the two will be discussed in terms of Government decision to repatriate women and children from urban areas while at the same time mining companies saw retention of women and children in the mine area as helpful in stabilising male mine labour.

We also discuss the changing attitude towards women and argue that as higher degrees of stabilisation were achieved, the need to have large numbers of unattached women lessened. We also argue that this demographic change at the mine led to the introduction of policies such as the pass system and dawn inspections in order to regulate the presence of women in the compound. Finally, we discuss some policies such as housing and African Advancement with regard to the aspirations of both the Government
and the mining industry. We argue that the availability of married quarters attracted married labour and that access to these quarters depended solely on the change in attitudes, practices and policies of the mining companies to allow married miners to keep their wives in the mine compound wives. On Advancement we have argued that both State and Capital acceded to the African’s call for advancement to more skilled jobs in order to create an African middle class to act as a buffer between them and the rest of the African population. We have further argued that the change to this new way of life succeeded because women shouldered the burden of this transformation. Finally, we demonstrate that women were not unwitting victims of the colonial system which was hostile to them but people who responded to the general economic changes taking place in the territory.

The Migration of Women to Mufulira Mine

The presence of women at Mufulira mine can be traced to the opening of the mine. As men left their villages to participate in labour migration, so did women. In fact, areas that recorded high percentages of men who left as migrant labourers also experienced the departure of large numbers of women. For example, in 1957 the Labour Commissioner for the Copperbelt reported that male migration from Northern Province was as high as 60 percent. A large number of these went to Mufulira mine.¹ The departure of young men deprived the women of husbands and suitors.² This explains why the women left their homes to go to urban centres such as Mufulira from the late 1920s.

Although contemporary historians argue that labour migration had a positive impact on rural societies and that women took over the economic roles of men,³ not all
societies made this adaptation, especially in those areas where food production involved a large input from the men such as in the chitemene system in Northern Province. While the old men and women continued to scratch a living from the land, many young women followed the young men’s example and left for the towns. The District Commissioner of Mumbwa, for example, reported very large numbers of women absent from the District and observed only small numbers of unmarried women and girls as most were reported away looking for food and in many cases brought back goods such as blankets, clothes and aluminium pots.\textsuperscript{4} The same trend was observed among the Lamba women, who tended to disappear from their villages to the mines if only for short periods. Others came from areas outside the Copperbelt, including outside the territory, with a number of them coming into the Copperbelt from Zimbabwe and the Congo whenever they managed to get past the border control with or without permits from local authorities in their countries to visit their ‘brothers’.\textsuperscript{5} The mine compound therefore was full of both married and unmarried women.

The women who followed their husbands had the approval of both the Native Authorities and that of the state. The authorities were very hostile towards unmarried women leaving their villages especially if they were unaccompanied. Many of them usually made their way to the mines independently and in defiance of all authority. They were what became known as ‘town women’ and were stereotyped by chiefs, colonial administrators, missionaries and men in general as immoral, irresponsible and shockingly independent.\textsuperscript{6} This was in spite of the fact that a good number of them left their villages in the hope of contracting marriages on the mines which, according to Clyde Mitchell, quite a number of them succeeded in doing.\textsuperscript{7}
The movement of women to the mines increased over the years and Mufulira mine experienced an influx of unmarried women because management tolerated them. Despite this tolerance by the mine there was strong opposition from other authorities such as Government and Native Authorities. Moreover, getting there, and indeed any other urban centre, was a Herculean task, as they had to overcome all odds. It required evading both Native Authorities and other Colonial Government barriers. The latter were usually in the form of checkpoints on every major route at which women without proper papers were removed from the vehicles carrying them and turned back. The women showed ingenuity born of determination to escape their villages in response to the growing disparity between conditions at home and those in the towns. They were not averse to offering bribes to bus or lorry drivers to let them down before the checkpoints which they walked round and only got back onto the vehicles when they had gone past the barriers. Furthermore, some women evidently forged letters purporting to have received them from men inviting them to join them on the Copperbelt. Using these forged letters, the women obtained permission from their Chiefs. Others forged letters granting them permission to leave and claimed the chief had written them. In this way therefore, women routinely circumvented the barriers placed to prohibit their movement to towns.

The obstacles to hinder women were usually placed at strategic points on the routes. Kasai women from the Congo, for example, encountered the barrier at Mokambo border while those from Northern Province passed the checkpoint at Chembe and at Luangwa bridge for those from the Eastern Regions. The Southern and Western regions did not reveal evidence of women trying to reach the Copperbelt although those from Zimbabwe probably came through the South while evidence shows that women from the
western region gravitated to Livingstone.\textsuperscript{10} The women's ingenuity, especially among unmarried women, therefore, rendered Government's policy to try and keep them away from the urban centres rather ineffective.

The women who defied all odds to reach towns went for three major reasons. There were wives who went to join their husbands, single women who hoped to contract marriages with the employees, and those who went 'to work'. As there were regulations prohibiting the employment of women in industry, and there was no chance that they would be employed at Mufulira mine or any other industry, it was assumed that they were going specifically to engage in sex work. Karen Hansen observed that the Lamba women who came into the mine compounds from the beginning of the construction of the mines, were depicted as 'champions' among prostitutes. She also noted that Government Officials usually assumed that young women leaving Mumbwa did not go to town to marry but used the word, \textit{kusebenza}, to work, in order to secure a better life by selling their bodies.\textsuperscript{11} Hansen, referring to Clement Doke's study of the Lamba and in agreement with Orde Browne's observation about women on the Copperbelt, argued that sex work did not stem from inherent immorality and that the extent to which women did so on a purely commercial basis was limited. What was more common was the co-habitational and house keeping arrangements with men to whom they were not legally married, as a way of ensuring economic support in towns.\textsuperscript{12} This observation puts the assumption that women went to urban centres specifically to engage in sex work to question. The assumption further fails to appreciate that the women could have migrated in the hope of obtaining jobs in towns as others did on white-owned farms.
Having arrived in town women faced hostile sexist colonial laws which barred them from being employed in industry while white women preferred male domestic servants. Faced with the need for economic survival, women took the options open to them such as those advanced by Hansen. Besides, these arrangements were very common in the compound at Mufulira mine because management, as discussed earlier, deliberately ignored the presence of single women there because of their effect on labour stabilisation. The experiences of women at Mufulira mine have been documented by historians who have worked on other parts of Africa such as Louise White on Kenya and Charles van Onselen or Teresa Barnes on Zimbabwe.

Women were victims of the colonial policies which prevented them from working in industry and denied them the chance of contracting legal marriages in the urban centres by only recognising marriages contracted by the Native Authorities under customary law. Many women who found men in the mining area ended up contracting temporary marriages which became a common feature on the Copperbelt from the mid thirties. Apart from these marriages, domestic and sex work was another option open to women in response to these discriminating regulations. It was their way of participating in the capitalist system of the migrant labour economy and as it was generally acknowledged, were important factors in stabilising labour. In this regard women like their male counterparts were workers whose jobs were unwillingly created by colonialism.

The value placed on these women was evident by turning a blind eye to many vices such as the higher incidence of sexually transmitted diseases which cost the company not only in lost man hours but also in the treatment of the workers who contracted the diseases. Moreover, bakapenta milomo were the cause of many fights

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among the African workers,\textsuperscript{16} which not only disturbed the compound but also disrupted work at the mine when the fights resulted in serious injuries. However, because the benefits of having women in the compound surpassed the disadvantages, the company allowed women to be part of the single miners' lives. This was because their presence in the single quarters like the presence of wives who cooked and tended to the men's needs improved the men's productivity on the mine without the companies incurring the extra costs such as those incurred to maintain wives and children.

Repatriation of Women and Children from Town: 1930-1945

The State, wanted to have all these women and the children removed from the urban centres and issued some repatriation orders to that effect. The desire to prohibit the migration of women to the urban centres was expressed by Government officials in the early years of the mining industry. However, the Government realised that there were problems in effecting this policy. In 1931 the Government noted that Native Authorities were not empowered to prevent the movement of women to the labour camp.\textsuperscript{17} At the same time the Government faced a precarious situation in that the difficulty of preventing women migration to the Copperbelt produced the unintended result of helping production in a sector which had become a major source of Government tax revenue. As Government derived most of its revenue from the mines, it was in its interest to ensure that the mines continued to run smoothly by giving them a free hand to pursue policies that guaranteed them a supply of labour. The mines therefore, allowed women in the compound because they attracted and stabilised labour.

Towards the end of the 1930s, the labour position at Mufulira Mine improved. The improvement followed the adoption of the stabilisation policy at the beginning of the
decade. The end of the depression and the increased demand for copper for the manufacture of arms for the looming war contributed to improved labour strength at the mine. Increased labour figures had a corresponding increase in the number of women and children in the compound. This growing population at Mufulira and the other mines on the Copperbelt, attracted the attention of the administrators so that in 1937 some Government officials began asking for women to justify their presence in urban centres in the same way that the men did.¹⁸ The only women who were considered to have a genuine reason for being in the urban centres were wives of those in employment. The rest of the women seemingly had no reason for being there just as the Government saw no reason for African children to be in town. The attitude towards women was as a result of the assumption that unattached women in urban centres were generally immoral. This affronted the morals of the urban European society which therefore called for their removal in order to limit the presence of Africans in the towns to those in employment and their wives.¹⁹

In 1936, Government passed the repatriation of women Order followed by the repatriation of children from industrial areas Order in 1937. The idea of separating children from their parents did not have the support of all Government officials. A raging debate therefore ensued in which the morality of separating children from their parents was questioned. The argument was that the move would be unfair and inhuman. It was further observed that it would be difficult to stop children from accompanying their parents and guardians unless legislation was passed to prevent parents from bringing young children of school going age to towns.²⁰ Such legislation if passed would have reinforced the two repatriation ordinances passed earlier.
The ordinances, which appeared to target unmarried women and children only, in fact, affected the wives of the mine employees because the Government repatriation programme extended to their children. The programme stemmed mainly from Government paranoia over the growth of a permanent African population in urban centres, which was associated with the development of political insurgency. The opinion of Government was that ‘Detribalised’ Africans would be a source of urban crime and political protest. In this regard, there was the urgent need to repatriate from the towns, that part of the population that was not directly involved in the production of wealth for the country.

The mining industry evidently favoured the repatriation programme but it was more concerned with retention of their labour than the threat of a permanent African population in town if that population had a positive influence in their profit margins. They, therefore, avoided as much as possible being involved in the repatriation exercise. Mfulira mine management for example, had earlier expressed the desire to have Government frame a law that prohibited women without permits from coming to the industrial areas and only allowed those married by tribal custom to join their husbands. Concern for their profit margins, however, made them cautious about recommending any repressive law for the industrial area because they believed Government may not have envisaged that by keeping the women in the villages, the men would eventually return there, and consequently, defeat their plans to stabilise their African labour force.

The Mine management at Mfulira, together with the other mining companies on the Copperbelt, were willing to co-operate with the Government in identifying undesirable women and those children who did not belong to anyone and appeared to be
in town without their parents. However a suggestion to repatriate even the employees’ children of the ages twelve to sixteen was rejected by mine management because, contrary to the doubts expressed by some District Government officials about the ability of the children to grow into responsible future workers when they became a nuisance as early as the age of six or seven, they saw the children as a source of future labour supply. Moreover, the Mine managers, especially at Mufulira mine, had no desire to disrupt the family life that they had encouraged in the compound to foster the stabilisation of labour. The mining companies therefore, only agreed to help on condition that Government took full responsibility for announcing to the Africans that children between the ages of twelve and sixteen would be prevented from leaving the Native Reserves while those already in the industrial areas without parents would be repatriated by Government.

Although the mines would have benefited from this programme because it would have reduced the number of people to feed and subsequently their ration bills, the mines made little effort to assist in the removal of the children. Deporting Children from urban to rural areas contradicted the policy of labour stabilisation strategy that encouraged family life in the mine compound. It would have also meant losing future labour which, in some cases, they had already groomed in the discipline of mine work by engaging them to sweep the compound grounds as was discussed in the previous chapter. More important was the fear of losing their popularity among the workers. They therefore resolved to disassociate themselves from the enforcement of the repatriation programme.

The attitude of the mining companies was very instrumental in the outcome of this policy. Evidently, very little success was recorded because the mining companies,
which attracted the highest number of unattached women and children refused to co-operate, as doing so would have compromised the policies of investing in and developing human resources (human capital) which the mines had started through labour stabilisation.

The Government however, had the support of the Native Authorities whose main interest was to maintain control over women. By controlling women, they probably expected to preserve the traditions of the tribes and as a result, maintain tribal identity. It should be noted that tribal divisions were desirable to the colonial Government’s system of indirect rule, in which chiefs were used to administer their own people on behalf of the colonial Government in order to reduce costs. Moreover, emphasising tribal identity prevented tribes from uniting which also removed the threat of nationalist agitation against the colonial Government. Therefore, when Government prevailed upon them, the Native Authorities passed by-laws that prohibited the movement of women who were also forbidden to take their children when they did go to the urban centres. In Petauke, for example, an ordinance passed in 1936 prohibited children from leaving the Native Authority from 1941 in an attempt to discourage the departure of women from the area while, some Native Authorities such as Kawambwa, went further and prepared a list which included at least 1000 names of unattached women for repatriation from the urban centres. Some traditional rulers who made periodical visits to the mines to visit their male subjects, utilised this opportunity to try and round up unattached women and take them back. Their efforts to round up the women failed because they disappeared into the location until the chiefs had left. In the few cases where some women were taken back to the villages, they only stayed long enough to serve their punishment awaiting the
opportunity to run away back to town. For these reasons, the repatriation programme failed. It also failed because mine management refused to co-operate with the chiefs because the mine stood to lose if all unattached women were removed from the industrial areas.

The programme to repatriate children, like the one aimed at repatriating women, also failed mainly because the mining companies were not ready to disturb their workers' family lives and also because some of these children went to towns on their own accord. The laws passed by many Native Authorities to prohibit women from taking children to the industrial areas were largely ineffective because, as the superintendent of African Education observed, applying such legislation to what he termed "adventurous spirits" would be very difficult because, as he pointed out, a number of young children at a very tender age drifted into the town. Despite Government's efforts to set aside funds to carry out the repatriation, by May 1942 not many had been repatriated from the Copperbelt. The result of the failure of the repatriation programme was that both the unattached women and the children continued to live in the compounds. This was probably to the advantage of the mine companies because it ensured that there was no disruption of the family life they had encouraged in order to stabilise labour while the single employees continued to enjoy the services offered by unattached women.

**Changing Attitude towards Women: 1930-1964**

During the 1930s management at Mufulira pursued the policy of labour stabilisation which allowed the wives of African miners to live in the compound. During the same period, they also followed a policy which allowed unmarried women to come in
and render certain domestic and sexual services to the single men. Throughout this period the importance of wives, *bampoto* and *bakapenta* continued to be recognised by the company as they contributed to the well being of the men and mining capital.

In the 1940s, however, there was some hostility towards unmarried women in towns. Initially, the married African employees who were offended by what they saw as increasing immorality displayed their hostility. They therefore, supported a scheme aimed at prohibiting women from being on the Copperbelt unless they had passes from their Native Authorities. This attitude was contrary to management’s policy of allowing unmarried women into the compound. To avoid antagonising their more valuable married employees and at the same time continue having unattached women, management reached a compromise with the married employees which also kept the single employees happy. In 1943, while insisting on continuing with the policy of allowing unmarried women in the compound, they agreed to take action against those of bad character and asked the employees to assist management by reporting such women.28 This worked to the satisfaction of everyone.

In 1944 changes were made in the regulations on African marriages which had a positive effect on women. In that year the Urban Native Courts were given the authority to issue marriage certificates. Initially, the process was long as it involved sending the particulars of the couple to be married to the Native Authorities for approval. Later, all that was needed was a relative to stand for the couple for the Urban Native Court to issue a marriage certificate. This condition was often abused by couples in a hurry to get married who did not have a relative to stand for them. Such couples were known to pick any elderly person whom they paid to stand in as a relative and they obtained marriage
certificates. African marriages in towns were, therefore, not only localised but became easier to contract. With this change, the mining companies began to insist on the production of marriage certificates as a condition for the allocation of married quarters in the compounds. The implication of this condition was that companies with employees in ‘temporary marriages’ were no longer obliged to accommodate such workers in married quarters. It meant that they could be accommodated in the single quarters with or without their ‘wives’ with the result that companies saved substantial amounts of money on housing.

While other mining companies insisted on the presentation of marriage certificates, Mufulira mine management remained less strict and in 1946 still accepted notes equivalent to marriage certificates issued by District Commissioners. They, however, insisted on the registration of women being conducted in the presence of the Tribal Representatives. Previously, when the mine desperately needed women to help stabilise their labour, women were ‘sometimes registered’ in the absence of their Tribal Representatives. Moreover, in the year that Africans could obtain marriage certificates within the urban centres and as Mufulira achieved a higher degree of stabilisation and a lesser need for women, especially unmarried women, the company changed its policy of allowing women unrestricted access to the compounds and made it compulsory for all those visiting to obtain passes. The passes were issued from the Compound Office every day. Although it was easy for women who went to the single quarters to render sexual services, those in prolonged relationships with single employees had problems because there was no provision for permanent passes. The passes that were issued were valid for
14 days. When a pass expired it could be extended for another 14 days\textsuperscript{33}. After that it became difficult to renew.

Despite these regulations, women continued to stay in the compounds undetected. For example it was observed that during the day, no illegal women were seen in the single quarters but after dark, every house had a cooking fire in front of it. This was the period when Mufulira mine management no longer tolerated illegal visitors, whether men or women. From the mid 1940s up to the early 1960s, the company devised a policy in which company police conducted regular inspections for illegal visitors in the compound.\textsuperscript{34}

Searching of the compound for illegal visitors was done by mine Police-men accompanied by civil police, in the early hours of the morning after the expiry date of the pass. Civil police were involved in the search because being in the compound without a pass or after the pass expired was considered a criminal offence. Those found were arrested and charged. And depending on the length of their illegal stay charges ranged from 5 shillings for a few days to between 1 pound to 3 pounds for a one to two months’ stay. Some of the culprits were taken to court while multiple offenders were jailed for between one and two months.\textsuperscript{35}

Although these searches were generally conducted to rid the compounds of loafers, women were usually caught in the dragnet and were charged in the same way as the men. The women, however, could easily afford to pay the fine as they usually made money when they stayed in the compound illegally. In cases where the visitor was a relative, who neglected to obtain a pass, the onus was on the host to pay the fines. But usually police went to houses where they believed there were people staying illegally.
Apart from the expired passes of which they had copies, information was also obtained from neighbours, who reported seeing women at certain single quarters. The police then made their search at dawn. Initially the inspection was done at 4.30 am, later at 5.30 am and then moved to 6.00 am. These were the times when women staying in the Mufulira mine compound illegally were usually seen running from the single quarters to hide mumakonde, banana groves, within the compound or the nearby bushes outside the compound.\textsuperscript{36}

As the single women were harassed in this manner the company made an extra effort to take care of the married women especially in the 1950s. This, as we saw in chapter two, was when the mining industry on the Copperbelt began to stabilise their labour more fervently. They therefore, began to build better houses for their African workforce.

**The Housing Policy: 1929-1943**

The importance of housing to labour stabilisation cannot be over-emphasised. In fact, housing was the one area in which the company readily invested huge sums of money in order to put up married quarters. This was in order to attract voluntary married labour that enabled the men to have their families with them and to lead normal lives which meant so much happiness and contentment.\textsuperscript{37} It is significant, therefore, that Mufulira mine which encouraged longer work periods from their African employees had comparatively better houses than those mines which were reluctant to encourage stabilisation. For example, housing at Nkana mine remained consistently poor from the mine’s inception and beyond the period of this study.\textsuperscript{38} While the type of housing seemed
to have little effect on the availability of labour, the availability of houses had a bearing on the type of labour that was attracted. Mufulira mine, which encouraged the presence of women from its early years, evidently tried to improve housing as it was considered a very important device for attracting married labour, but progress was very slow. Although the 1930s saw some improved houses made of Kimberley bricks, most of them were one-roomed while the initial rondavels put up in 1928 and 1929 remained in use up to the 1950s when the last of them were pulled down to give way to two roomed burnt brick houses. Rheinalt Jones and H.C. Anderson, representatives of the R.S.T. from South Africa, also observed that the quality of labour attracted to the copper mines was low largely because provision of housing lagged behind the demand. Evidently, the more married quarters the mine built the better the quality of workers attracted and subsequently the higher the production levels and therefore, the profits.

The period 1943 to 1952 signified a formal transition to the policy of stabilization through women and housing. Although housing improved very little in the 1930s, the 1940s showed a marked improvement. This was probably because the 1940s were characterised by increased Government involvement in the issue of African housing in the territory. In July 1943, for instance, the Labour Department insisted on the provision of houses of not less than two rooms and each being not less than 90 sq. ft. (27m) which had reluctantly been reduced from the previously set standard of 100 sq. ft. (30m) for married couples. The Chamber of Mines, (an association in which managers of the two mining companies in Northern Rhodesia represented their companies and which made major decisions affecting the mining industry in the country) which had previously agreed to provide more and better houses to Africans, decried the department’s
regulations on the grounds that there was a war on and the period was most inopportune. This however, was indicative of the Chamber’s reluctance to incur costs on African housing. Instead, it maintained that one-roomed houses for those married but without children and two-roomed houses for married couples with children were comfortable and satisfactory. As a result there was no new large-scale programme of housing on any of the Copper mines by the mid 1940s.41

The insistence by Government through the Labour Department on a minimum of two rooms for married couples was probably Government’s strategy to make housing very expensive and so discourage the mining companies from building so many married quarters and consequently curb wholesale stabilisation and urbanisation. The Chamber of Mines, however, in conflict with Government policy, and ever conscious of expenditure on Africans, informed its members that it was not necessary to erect elaborate houses for Africans, not even for Boss Boys (African miners who had attained supervisory positions). The provision of larger houses for employees with many children was to be avoided for as long as possible while construction of married quarters was limited to 60 percent of the total housing stock at any mine.42

At Mufulira, the limitations imposed by both the war and the Chamber of Mines had a significant bearing on the provision of housing although the company tried to provide accommodation as far as possible. In April 1942, for example, out of 4,662 married employees, 3,342 were accommodated but there was a shortage of 1,219 units. The shortage of accommodation for single employees was only 98 units (based on four men to a hut) as 2,804 out of 3,196 were accommodated. In August, out of 4,636 married
men there was a shortage of 893 married quarters while for the 3,442 single employees the company was short of 157 houses.\textsuperscript{43}

Apart from the shortages, it was generally observed that housing was inadequate as many houses occupied by married men with children were suitable only for single people. Moreover, the housing policy at the mine and other mines for that matter showed conclusively why the so-called better houses were constructed for married employees - to attract women to stabilise the labour force. A man's stay in the married quarters therefore, depended entirely on the presence of the wife. During her leave, company policy required the man to move to the single quarters.

The inconvenience of moving from one section of the compound to another with property and having to share quarters with single employees resulted in complaints among married employees. When these were tabled before management, the Compound Manager pointed out that the company would not agree to allow a man to have sole use of a house for as long as six months but as soon as the wife returned he would be allocated married quarters.\textsuperscript{44} The presence of the wife in Mufulira mine Compound was, therefore, the sole determinant for the provision of married quarters. Between 1952 and 1963, the urbanization of African women was acceptable policy at Mufulira mine. This was done through African Advancement and housing policies. In 1953, company policy was changed to allow the employee the use of the house in the absence of the wife who was allowed a short period of absence. Any delay, if not communicated to the Compound Official, resulted in the loss of the house.\textsuperscript{45} In fact, women determined the housing policy at the mine in terms of the type of houses built for the employees as well as the allocation
policy. In other words, the whole housing policy at Mufulira was influenced by the presence of women.

The satisfaction and contentment of the family in married quarters and single quarters for that matter stopped at having a roof over their heads, as far as housing was concerned. While it was acclaimed that the mining area had one of the best houses in the region, a closer examination of these reveals what one would call wilful neglect. Until the 1950s, although most of the African houses were constructed with burnt bricks, a large number still had mud floors, which cracked and created breeding grounds for bugs and other pests. The mine management, which prided itself in its care for the African population was strangely unaware of the discomfort emanating from such housing. It took the Tribal Representatives to point out the dangers of having such floors and request for impervious floors to be laid. Moreover, a number of huts still had grass-roofs which in the 1950s had thinned and leaked when it rained. Again it took a shortage of the right type of grass to replace the thatch for the company to consider more permanent roofing material such as asbestos.

Ablutions were another housing aspect that the company neglected up to the 1950s, as these remained communal and, worse still, without roofs. When the company decided to roof the toilets, it cut its cost by leaving out the bathrooms. While acknowledging the discomfort caused to the Africans using these conveniences, particularly during the wet season, the matter was obviously not urgent for the company. Moreover, these bathrooms were placed some metres from the houses and whereas the Africans as a whole were inconvenienced, the women were doubly
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inconvenienced because it was their duty to carry hot water to the bathrooms for their husbands’ baths, therefore running the constant risk of scalding themselves.

The Policy of African Advancement: 1942-1963

The policy of African Advancement was a labour strategy which involved the movement of Africans to more skilled job categories. The policy is significant to this study because Advancement entailed training the workers. This had two implications. Firstly, it entailed stabilisation of the trained workers because the value of their training was only realised in the long term. Secondly, training of these workers marked the successful completion of the stabilisation process began in the 1930s. Moreover, Advancement was one of the few colonial policies that had a positive impact on the women in the industrial areas of the territory.

The Colonial Government broached the subject of African advancement early in the 1940s, in the tripartite negotiations after the 1940 strike. It was in response to the feelings of the Africans that they had acquired enough experience to do skilled work which was the preserve of European workers. Very little was done in the early part of the decade until a commission of inquiry was appointed to look into what opportunities existed for advancement of Africans to more responsible jobs held by Europeans. The European Union’s colour bar clause, which was incorporated in its constitution in 1942 precluded the implementation of the commissions recommendations which outlined the jobs to which Africans could advance. The European Mine Workers’ Union refused to co-operate with the Commission as long as the issues of ‘equal pay for equal work’ and
the non-fragmentation of jobs were not addressed. This only served to delay the process of African advancement.

Despite strong opposition by the European Workers’ Union, there were intensified discussions between 1948 and 1954 among the Chamber of Mines, the Northern Rhodesia African the Mine Workers Union (NRAMU), the Mines Officials and Supervisors’ Staff Association which culminated in the appointment of a Board of inquiry in 1954. At this time, the R.S.T. mining group of companies, Roan Antelope and Mufilira indicated their determination to implement the Advancement policy as recommended by the Chamber of Mines which included transferring jobs previously held by Europeans to African job categories in fragmented form. This process had already started during the Second World War when European miners went to serve in the war and African were promoted to rugged-edge jobs To this end, Mufilira mine management went ahead and opened a surface training school in October, 1955, while the Underground school opened in the 1930s continued to provide training courses to miners, including Africans, in blasting and Boss Boy training. The decision to train Africans was followed by the recognition of the newly formed Mines African Staff Association (M.A.S.A.) and later the signing of the agreement with the NRAMU to allow members of M.A.S.A. to represent themselves in October, 1955. In effect, implementing the Advancement policy ensured the stabilisation of this class of workers. African women were a key factor in refining forms of exploiting African mine labour.

The significance of this agreement was that the Advancement policy was implemented under a fragmentation scheme and as such Africans did not receive the same wages and conditions as those given to Europeans doing the same jobs. Apart
from fragmentation, the Chamber of Mines strongly felt that it was absolutely unrealistic to suggest that the rates and conditions of service enjoyed by Europeans must be given to indigenous workers. They argued that in fact Africans were already enjoying a standard of living much higher than they had in the villages. In fact, it was not until 1962 that Advancement at Mufulira mine was fully implemented following the August agreement between the mining companies and the Northern Rhodesia African Mineworkers Trade Union (N.R.A.M.T.U) in which Africans were awarded a wage increment. Africans therefore, began to enjoy improved working and living conditions. However, the mining companies also benefited from having Africans doing jobs formerly done by European workers because they paid them less than they had paid the Europeans.\textsuperscript{52}

Although Advancement generally meant better conditions of life, many African workers led by their union leaders who continued to harass those who opted to go for advanced jobs opposed it. This was because advancement unavoidably meant dividing the African work force, therefore, reducing the strength of the union and also because it was common knowledge that advancement would not benefit the majority of the African workers.\textsuperscript{53} The feelings against M.A.S.A. were so strong that Union leaders went as far as addressing meetings for the sole purpose of discrediting those who had moved to Advanced jobs. The Union leaders were not averse to threatening violence and the demise of the Association while name-calling became very common. Apart from being called \textit{bamakobo}, after a flat, smelly fish with too many bones, Africans in Advanced jobs were also called \textit{Inde Bwanas} (Yes men), goats, dogs and baboons.\textsuperscript{54}
The intimidation and name calling was not confined to the employees. Their wives and children were also victimised by the wives and children of those men who remained union members. The women were isolated and as shown in Appendix II the children bore the brunt of cruel jokes from fellow children who sung insulting songs about them. It was during this period that the militancy of women was fully expressed. Cases were reported of men who were bullied into rejoining the Union by their wives after leaving it to join M.A.S.A. but those women who could withstand the pressure of ridicule and isolation huddled together for safety.55

In effect, the Africans had divided into classes as intended by the Federal Government. With the establishment of M.A.S.A. the Federal Government saw an opportunity to elevate Africans in advanced jobs in the mines and other industries to a class with which it would use to control radical African unionism and nationalism. In 1956, it passed a deliberate policy to create an African middle class to act as a buffer between the Government and the radical African nationalists. The significance of the policy lay in the fact that it was made in response to increased political activity by Africans.56 It was envisaged that the middle class would direct the mob below them. Both the government and the mining companies considered that the middle class could be created through M.A.S.A. and argued that such a middle class was vital to the healthy development of the Federation and the smooth running of the mines.57

As both the Federal Government and the mining companies desired a contented middle class, plans were made to achieve this end in which better conditions such as houses with electricity and other facilities were provided. To ensure that the men lived up to their new status, the companies involved their wives in home economic classes at
which the basics of budgeting, cooking, needlework and hygiene were taught. Used in implementing labour stabilisation, now women were used to create a new African Social Class. Although the classes were open to all wives of miners, the larger number were the wives of those men in advanced jobs.\textsuperscript{58}

When women gained a lot of knowledge from these classes, the mining company also benefited in that this knowledge was applied to improve the welfare of the miners. By teaching them new domestic skills, women were used to ensure the smooth movement of men into a new class without drastically affecting their work. Women were thus used to refine labour stabilisation. The onus was therefore placed on the wives to shoulder the change. This typical characteristic of capital was also observed among the copper miners of Cerru de Pasco, Peru, where women were burdened with the task of adapting to a new way of life with new facilities and new food while the men were mostly away working.\textsuperscript{59}

The women, however, coped with the demands of these changes and in the long run enjoyed the benefits of a higher status and along with it, a more leisurely life compared to those women whose husbands did not move to advanced jobs. For example, as their husbands earned more money, the necessity of engaging in strenuous money making ventures was removed as was the risk of being caught brewing and selling beer since they had a little more money to buy the garden produce as well as goods from the shops. The wives of \textit{bamakobo} could also now employ garden boys to grow vegetables. There were, however, those who continued gardening because they wanted to.\textsuperscript{60}

From these developments, the conclusion is that although the lives of the wives and families of Africans in advanced jobs improved significantly, their standard of life remained comparatively lower than that of their European counterparts. More
significantly was the fact that the houses they lived in were of a much lower standard and it was only in 1963 that a new type three-bed room house with sitting area, kitchen and inside ablutions were constructed for Africans in advanced job categories. Even in 1964, the year of Zambia’s independence, only a few Africans were allowed to move to the European townships. It was not until 1966 that a significant number of Africans were allowed to live in the European township as they took on more responsible jobs, which Europeans left at independence. Mining capital used African women to facilitate labour stabilisation. Like their husbands in advanced mining jobs, mining capital also used or co-opted African women to make a dependant social class for neo-colonial control.

Conclusion

Industrial development wherever it takes place inevitably attracts large numbers of people. The trend was true of Mufulira, which like the other mines on the Copperbelt attracted not only labourers, but also women, who come from areas within and outside the territory. In this chapter we discussed the policies introduced by the Government, which were aimed at reducing the number of women in the urban centres. We began by discussing the migration of women to the industrial area where we demonstrated their ingenuity in circumventing physical and administrative barriers placed by the colonial Government to prohibit their movement to and regulate their presence in towns. We however, showed that, as the mining companies encouraged the presence of women in the compounds, there was a conflict between them and the Government. Moreover, Government’s unrelenting desire to remove unattached women from towns through the repatriation ordinance was a further source of state-capital conflict and that repatriation
failed because the latter opposed it and also because the women themselves evaded the authorities. However, when the mine had attained a high level of stability, management made policies that regulated the presence of women in the compound and the Government acquiesced.

Finally, we looked at the state-capital alliance by discussing the policies in which both the Government and the companies played a role such as housing and African Advancement. The latter was an uneasy alliance in which the state dictated the standards for African housing and the companies complied reluctantly. We showed that the availability of married quarters had a bearing on stabilisation and that the provision of the same quarters at Mufulira Mine in particular depended on the physical presence of the wife. On the issue of the African advancement policy, we showed that it was for the mutual benefit of both State and capital and African miners. The state sanctioned the implementation of the policy in order to use those in the advanced category of jobs to create an African middle class to act as a buffer between the Government and the African population on one hand and the Mine managements and the workers on the other. Furthermore, the policy of African Advancement marked the conclusion of the labour stabilisation process which the mine began in 1930.

We, however, argued that the success of the Advancement programme depended on the women who shouldered the responsibility of making the adjustment to the way of life. As advancement entailed spending money on training, the workers needed to be stabilised in order for the company to realise the benefits of its investment. We therefore concluded that as women played a role in labour stabilisation, they indirectly contributed to the success of the advancement programme. Furthermore, rather than being inimical
to women, the policy brought about a degree of improved standard of living such as better housing. In this regard therefore, although most of the colonial policies on women were made intentionally harsh to discourage them from living in towns, they were an important factor in the success of colonial capital. The rest of the women only forced their way in and managed to exist within the system. Despite colonial capitalism using them for its own benefit, women were not unwitting victims but people who manipulated their situation and participated in the larger labour process.

END NOTES


4. NAZ BS 3/303. “Prostitution and Temporary Union” From Native Commissioner’s Office (Mumbwa), to The Magistrate, Mumbwa. 18th February, 1923.

5. Taylor and Lehmann, Christians of the Copperbelt, p. 75. See also Z.C.C.M. 17.2.5C/1. “African Welfare”. J.D. Tennant (Canteens Manager, Kitwe) to The Manager, Kitwe Management Board, 5th March, 1946.


8. NAZ SEC 1/1350:” Repatriation of Unmarried Women from Industrial Areas, 1940–1949” Correspondence. From P.C. (Fort Jameson) to D.C. (Fort Jameson), June 25, 1940. See also Parpart, “Class and Gender”, p. 149.


12. Hansen, _Distant Companions_, p. 110-113. Orde Browne also observed that prostitution, as it was known in the Western World was not common in the territory. For more details on this discussion see G.J. Orde-Browne, _Report on Labour Conditions in Northern Rhodesia_, (London, 1938), p. 24.

13. Co-habitational arrangements between men and women were a common feature in industrialising areas and were called by different names in different territories, e.g. _Mapoto_ on the Copperbelt, _Malaya_ in Nairobi, and _Chamwario_ in Zimbabwe. For details see T. Barnes, “So that a labourer could live with his family”, p. 95-113, Luise White, _The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi_ (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 16., Van Onselen, _Chibaro_, p. 180.


18. Z.C.C.M. 16.2.6E. From Compound Manager to Manager (Roan), 16th November, 1938.

19. Z.C.C.M. 16.2.6E. From Compound Manager to Manager (Roan), 16th November, 1938.

20. NAZ SEC/1349. From H.F.C. Robinson, P.C. (Western Province) to The Chief Secretary, 8th March, 1938. See also Hansen, _Distant Companions_, p. 86.


22. NAZ SEC/1349. From Labour Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 2nd January, 1946.


24. NAZ SEC/1349. From P.C. (Northern Province) to The Chief Secretary, 28th August, 1942 and Hansen, _Distant Companions_, p. 118.

25. Hansen, _Distant Companions_, p. 118


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31. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.5F/2. Memo from Compound Manager to Manager (Mufulira) 9th October, 1946.


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45. Z.C.C.M. 16.1.5F. Memo, from Compound Manager to Manager. Re: Minutes of a Tribal Representatives’ Meeting on 4th December, 1944 and Z.C.C.M.13.3.10C. Correspondence, From S. Taylor to General Manager (Roan, Nkana, Mufulira, Nchanga), 25th November, 1953.

47. Z.C.C.M. M/S 13.2.10C/1. “Housing Construction”. Memorandum, From Compound Manager to Manager on African Housing, Mufulira, 20th June, 1949.


49. Z.C.C.M. 11.2.5C/17 “Colour Bar.” Extract from The Times, January, 1953.


53. Advancement was designed for only a minority of Africans, for example not many Railway workers moved to advanced jobs. For a good discussion on African Advancement among Railway workers see F.E. Mulenga, “The Development of Worker Consciousness among Railway Workers”, (M.A. Dissertation, University of Zambia, 1989), p. 7.


57. The policy to create an African middle class was targeted not only at the mines but also other major employers of large numbers of Africans such as Rhodesia Railways. For details on African Advancement in the Railways see Mulenga, “The Development of Worker Consciousness”, p. 57.


60. Interview, Jena1a Nkonkalufu, Mufulira, 6th December, 1999 and Mufulira Star, May, 1962.

CHAPTER FIVE:
CONCLUSION

This study's aim was to examine the role that the women played in labour stabilisation at Mufulira mine. In order to do this, the whole process of labour stabilisation was examined to give us a context in which to study the role of women in it. We also set out to examine some of the laws and regulations of both the state and the mining industry which affected women in the urban areas. A number of conclusions were drawn from this discussion.

On the issue of labour stabilisation and why it was established at Mufulira Mine we arrived at three conclusions. The first was that Mufulira Mine was initially compelled to stabilise its labour force from 1930 after experiencing a severe labour shortage at the end of 1929 and later by the realisation that maintaining a stabilised labour force was cheaper than employing migrant labour. Moreover stabilised labour was more efficient and therefore, more profitable. The second was that there was no policy on labour stabilisation in the territory and that both the Government and the Chamber of Mines were not keen to have it. This was because they feared the consequences of such a policy, which they probably believed, would have conditions detrimental to the political situation in the territory and the operational costs of the mines respectively. The third was that Mufulira Mine practised stabilisation in the absence of a state policy on stabilisation and that this continued despite denials by the Chamber of Mines that any of the members followed a stabilisation programme.
In our examination of the role of women in the stabilisation of labour at Mufulira Copper Mine, we drew a number of conclusions. The first was that women did in fact play a role in the stabilisation of labour at the mine in that their presence in the compound attracted men and encouraged them to stay longer. Moreover, the provision of both domestic and sexual services to the employees created an aspect of domesticity in the compound which enabled men to increase their length of stay at the mine. Furthermore, the women supplemented both the wages and rations given by the company from the profits they made from selling beer and garden produce, which distorted the real wages and the inadequacy of the rations. Men were therefore, able to stabilise at the mine despite the low wages they were paid.

In this regard therefore, the viability of Mufulira Mine depended on the women because their presence not only ensured that the company had adequate labour supplies by influencing it to stabilise, but also ensured high profit margins by contributing to the reduction of company expenses on the rations, wages and medical services of Africans. The last was evident from the fact that as married men received constant care from their wives, fewer were reported sick compared to single men.

The second was that the role of stabilising the labour force was not the preserve of wives alone, but that unmarried women, who were also allowed into the compound, played a part in it. This was because many of those in mapoto relationships performed the same chores as married women while mahure, as Van Onselen observed, attracted men to the mines and contributed to its stabilisation. Mahure were also largely responsible for easing the rigours of underground work among single men by offering sexual services.
The third was that the growth of sex work at the mine was encouraged by the mine management which consciously allowed the presence of single women in the compound. In this, the mining companies had the reluctant support of the Government, which expressed displeasure at the incidence of sex work in urban centres, but was forced to oblige the mining industry because the economy of the country depended on profitability of the mines.

Finally, our investigation of the state and mining company policies which affected women revealed that the Government passed a number of sexist laws such as those which disregarded African marriages contracted away from the Native Authority, the Employment of Women, Youths and Young Children Ordinance which prohibited the employment of women in industry and also the Repatriation Ordinance in which single women were targeted for removal from the urban centres in response to the migration of women to urban areas. A number of conclusions have been drawn from this aspect of the study.

The first one was that although women played a role in the stabilisation of labour in the industrial centres, the colonial system had no place for them in the urban areas. It treated them as necessary burdens even when they were there to contribute to the successful production of wealth such as influencing the stabilisation of labour through daily maintenance of the labour force. Even then the women who forced their way into this system managed to live in the hostile environment and rather than allow the discriminatory laws to affect them adversely, they learned to live with them. Despite the fact that they were barred from working in industry, denied legal marriage in urban areas and faced repatriation, the women, especially the single women, responded by hiring
themselves out as domestic or sex workers, contracting temporary marriages with African miners and also by hiding from the authorities. In this regard therefore, rather than being adversely affected by the hostile colonial environment, women learned to exist in it and their stay in town was not any worse than that of the men who were not affected by these sexist regulations.

The regulation that only recognised African marriages contracted according to tribal custom within the Native Authorities, however, encouraged the incidence of many temporary marriages among Africans in the urban areas. It probably explained why Mufulira Mine management recognised some of these temporary liaisons in their quest to stabilise labour in the early years of the mine. This was a contradiction between the state and the mining companies’ policies. Furthermore, state programmes such as the repatriation programme contradicted the aspirations of the mining companies which desired the presence of women to stabilise the labour force. The refusal by the mines to participate in the programme resulted in its failure. The women however, also contributed to the failure by resisting repatriation.

The second was that from 1944, the mining companies achieved high levels of stabilisation. This resulted from the changes in Government policy which permitted Africans to contract legal marriages in urban areas from 1944. The changes removed the necessity for Mufulira Mine Company to allow unmarried women into the compound as couples could obtain marriage certificates from the urban courts. They therefore began to demand that unmarried women, who had previously been allowed free access to the compound, obtain visitors passes to be there. Moreover, the
companies also introduced early morning inspection in the compound in which illegal visitors were arrested.

The third was that the housing policy in the mining areas in general and in Mufulira in particular was largely determined by the presence of women in the compounds because the mine management realised that the availability of accommodation had a bearing on stabilisation of labour at the mine. Moreover, access to married quarters depended entirely on the physical presence of the wife because if she left for any reason, the man was removed from the married quarters and relocated to the single quarters until she returned.

Finally, the policy of African Advancement in which both the mining companies and the Government envisaged the creation of an African middle class to act as a buffer between them and the rest of the African population succeeded because, as Josh De Wind noted, women were used to shoulder the burden of making the transition to the new class while the men worked. Moreover the policy of African Advancement signified the success of the stabilisation strategy embarked on by Mufulira mine in 1930. Furthermore, African Advancement was one of the few colonial policies that had a positive effect on women because it meant an improved standard of living for those whose husbands moved into advanced jobs.
APPENDIX I: RATION SCALES ON THE MINES ON THE NORTHERN RHODESIA COPPERBELT

(a) Different scale rations at the different mines obtaining in 1935. The scales are weekly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mufulira</th>
<th>Nkana</th>
<th>Luanshya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mealie meal</td>
<td>15 lbs</td>
<td>10 1/2 lbs</td>
<td>2 1/2 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>02 lbs</td>
<td>02 3/4 lbs</td>
<td>02 3/4 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts</td>
<td>02 lbs</td>
<td>07 ozs</td>
<td>07 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>32 ozs</td>
<td>28 ozs</td>
<td>28 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Potatoes</td>
<td>76 ozs</td>
<td>35 ozs</td>
<td>44 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>05 ozs</td>
<td>04 ozs</td>
<td>04 ozs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td></td>
<td>04 ozs</td>
<td>04 ozs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Issued to: -

Women, wives of employees

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>6 lbs</td>
<td>5 lbs</td>
<td>7 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 lb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>2 lbs</td>
<td>3 lbs</td>
<td>3 lbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Soup and bread before underground shift.
Cocoa and bread coming off underground. Sour gruel and a biscuit early in the morning. Fruit when available.

Bread and cocoa to natives going underground, Cocoa to natives coming off night shift, Sour gruel twice a week and fruit when available.

The issues to the natives are above the Government scale of rations. Africans have complained that these are insufficient.

APPENDIX II

The Hymn of Hate - A song Directed at and against the Mines African Staff Association.

Chibemba: "Bana Bamakobo, bakaya sambilila ku town
Pantu bawishibo balifwatika kumataka
Nabakaye sambilila kubasungu banabo
Ifwe tulelwila - icalo cesu

English: The children of Ba Makobo they will go and learn school to town
Because their fathers have printed their buttocks; they shall go
And learn school with Europeans.
We, we are fighting for our country.

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