

6 *Nationalism and Nationalisation*

Introduction

The Central African Copperbelt was profoundly affected by the national independence of Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Here, as elsewhere in Africa, political independence created the potential for the realisation, not only of new national identities, but also the myriad material and ideational aspirations associated with them by sections of new national societies.¹ The shift from colony or protectorate to nation-state also changed the legal status of the region's mine companies, significantly diverted the flow of the Copperbelt's mine revenue and altered the significance of the border that divided it. A Copperbelt that had in many respects been autonomous to the colonial territories in which it was integrated was now governed by interventionist national authorities determined to harness its mineral wealth for new state-led development projects. Yet, as we shall see, there were powerful continuities in the experience of Copperbelt communities in their relationships to economic and political power, and in the nature of the ideas about the region's distinctive identity that continued to circulate after independence as they did before it. While these nation-states sought to increase the policing of the border and to discipline their Copperbelt citizens into new national ways of doing things, the border equally served as a basis for comparison and exclusion between the new nation and what was 'foreign'.

Frederick Cooper and others have shown that the independence period saw a flourishing of alternative projects of decolonisation in which the redrawing of colonial borders was widely envisaged.² As

¹ Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*.

² Frederick Cooper, 'The Dialectics of Decolonization: Nationalism and Labor Movements in Post-War French Africa', in Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler

I have argued with Baz Lecocq, the extent to which these projects were clearly resolved with the formal establishment and sovereignty of new nation-states has been overstated. Alternative nationalisms continued to trouble dominant recognised ones, nowhere more so than in Haut-Katanga, where the memory of the secession continued to be invoked by aspirant and opposition political forces.³ The Katangese secession and Congo's conflictual experience of decolonisation has been widely documented, as has the wider impact of its specific experience of secession on decolonisation and nationalism in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.⁴ In Zambia and, for example, Tanzania, the secession provided a warning of the dangers of multi-party democracy and the need for state control over 'traditional' authorities.⁵

The Katangese secession from Congo, eleven days after its independence on 30 June 1960, represented a profound challenge to the unitary project of Congolese nationalism advanced by its founding Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. The secession, financially underwritten by UMHK, allied the company with self-declared autochthonous leaders of Katangese societies; as the governing *Conakat* party, the latter sought to reverse the growing political influence of migrant communities in general and the Kasai Luba in particular, whose presence was in significant part the result of UMHK operations over the past forty years. The defeat of the secession in 1963 by UN and Congolese forces enabled Katanga's uneasy integration into what became President Mobutu's Zaire, and the nationalisation of UMHK and the creation of its successor *Gécamines* promised a new relationship between the country's most important strategic resource and its economic

(eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 406–35.

³ Miles Larmer and Baz Lecocq, 'Historicising Nationalism in Africa', *Nations and Nationalism*, 24, 4 (2018), pp. 893–917.

⁴ For the secession, see René Lemarchand, 'The Limits of Self-Determination: The Case of the Katanga secession', *American Political Science Review*, 56, 2 (1962), pp. 404–16; and Miles Larmer and Erik Kennes, 'Rethinking the Katangese Secession', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 42, 4 (2014), pp. 741–61. For its wider impact in southern Africa see Timothy Scarnecchia, 'The Congo Crisis, the United Nations, and Zimbabwean Nationalism, 1960–1963', *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 11, 1 (2011), pp. 63–86; and Lazlo Passemeiers, *Decolonisation and Regional Geopolitics: South Africa and the 'Congo Crisis', 1960–1965* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2019).

⁵ Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), p. 230.

development. However, the secession's legacy meant that Katanga, renamed Shaba Province, continued to be treated as an occupied region, alien to Zaire while vital to its national development.

The situation in Zambia was ostensibly very different: the violence of the Congo crisis provided for its first leader Kenneth Kaunda a warning sign of what might befall his new nation if it was not unified. The Copperbelt was, as we have seen (Chapter 4), in the forefront of Zambia's relatively peaceful anti-colonial activism and its leaders, many Bemba-speaking migrants, played a leading role in the nationalist movement and Kaunda's government. Yet the subordination of the region to UNIP's vision of national development, itself rooted in the party's uneasiness with urban modernity, clashed with the Copperbelt's labour-influenced political culture that regarded adequate economic recompense for hazardous mine labour as one of the aims of self-rule. In the late 1960s the Zambian labour movement and Bemba political leaders became the vanguard of opposition to UNIP, combining class and ethno-regional grievances against what they regarded as the illegitimate distribution of Copperbelt wealth and authority towards the capital Lusaka. Unlike the Katangese secessionists, however, they imagined themselves the defenders of the Zambian national project at the moment of its betrayal. While mine nationalisation, as in Zaire, sought state control over the country's globally strategic mineral assets, it was in its timing an essentially political project that sought to outflank this opposition movement and should be understood as of a piece with the introduction of the Zambian one-party state in December 1972.

Alongside nationalisation of these strategic resources, both nation-states sought to achieve the nationalisation of knowledge production about their countries and the Copperbelt region in particular, to underwrite the process of making new national subjects that were fixed in place and living moral lives according to national beliefs. Following decades of Western intellectual analysis of social change that was shaped by its colonial origins, it seemed necessary and desirable to study the region in new 'decolonised' ways that would create an authentic Africanist knowledge of the Copperbelt. In Zaire this was embodied by the new University of Zaire (UNAZA), integrating the country's institutions of higher learning but reserving for its Lubumbashi campus the study of human society. This would briefly flourish as a centre of Africanist research, analysing the realities of Katanga's urban modernity and creating an important legacy for later

researchers, while engaging uneasily with Mobutuist *authenticité*. In Zambia, post-colonial knowledge production initially focussed on the new University of Zambia (UNZA), briefly a bastion of student opposition to UNIP. State intellectuals such as Henry Meebelo, linked to both the ruling party and UNZA's Institute of African Studies – the successor to the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (RLI) – produced historical works reflective of UNIP's nationalist narrative. This body of work promoted Humanism as a national ideology and took as a central subject the dangers of urban materialism and the alleged political failure of the labour movement that the Copperbelt had generated.

Neither legal nationalisation of the mines nor the ideational nationalisation of the Copperbelt region were, however, effective in achieving the goals of post-colonial nationalists. The mining industry's dependence on fluctuating global markets was not meaningfully altered by nationalisation and the ability of Zambia and Zaire's leaders to impose their national visions on the region was limited by Copperbelt society's existing sense of identity generated in part by the ongoing interaction of knowledge production with its ever-unfolding social history.

Making Nations in a Cross-Border Mining Region⁶

The flourishing study of African borderlands has demonstrated that, notwithstanding the conversion of problematic colonial divisions into sovereign nation-state borders, the continent's border regions have proven a particularly fertile space for the imposition, contestation and remaking of individual and collective identities.⁷ Going beyond older questions of whether African borders unhelpfully divide existing African societies or are so weak and/or artificial as to offer no effective

⁶ This section of the chapter draws on my article, 'Nation-Making at the Border: Zambian Diplomacy in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 61, 1 (2019), pp. 145–75. I am grateful to the editors for approving the reproduction of material here.

⁷ For the history of Africa's colonial and national borders see Simon Katzenellenbogen, 'It Didn't Happen at Berlin: Politics, Economics and Ignorance in the Setting of Africa's Colonial Boundaries', in Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju (eds.), *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 21–34; and Geert Castryck (ed.) 'The Bounds of Berlin's Africa: Space-Making and Multiple Territorialities in East and Central Africa', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 52, 1 (2019), special issue, in particular the articles by David Maxwell on Katanga and Achim van Oppen on Barotseland.

constraint on societal interaction, borderland studies have demonstrated, among other things, the unequal nature of frontier flows and blockages, the ways in which borders themselves constitute resources that enable new forms of belonging and the growth of cross-border urban conglomerations that are, in Africa as elsewhere, both mutually constitutive and profoundly unequal.⁸

The Copperbelt was, we have seen, a region closely linked across colonial borders by economic, demographic and cultural flows. Its peoples and its neighbouring regions had been tied by trade in copper and other commodities for centuries, and by shared cultures and societal identities that were, however, affected by radical political change and conflict.⁹ In the colonial era the border was traversed by labour migrants, capital flows, mineral ore, soldiers and weapons and intelligence and ideas about all these things expressed in various forms. Separating out and bringing a statist order to these linked regions did not begin with nationalism: as noted in Chapter 1, reform of the Congolese industry from the 1920s sought to radically reduce employment of 'foreign' African (and European) workers and replace them with Congolese and Belgian ones. We will never know how many Copperbelt residents continued to live, work and make families and communities on both sides of the border, since the effective evasion of such controls is by definition impossible to measure.

The Katangese secession depended for its survival on the links of its leaders not only to global capital – including British investors in

⁸ For an overview of literature see the African Borderlands Network Bibliography: www.aborne.net/bibliography (accessed 21 September 2020). The approach adopted in this study has been influenced by, among other works: Gregor Dobler, 'The Green, the Grey and the Blue: A Typology of Cross-Border Trade in Africa', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 54, 1 (2016), pp. 145–69; Paul Nugent, Sara Dorman and Daniel Hammett (eds.), *Citizenship in Africa: Creating Nations, Making Strangers* (Leiden: Brill 2007); Paul Nugent, *Boundaries, Communities and State-Making in West Africa: The Centrality of the Margins*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Karen Büscher and Gillian Mathys, 'Navigating the Urban "In-Between Space": Local Livelihood and Identity Strategies in Exploiting the Goma/Gisenyi Border', in Benedikt Korf and Timothy Raeymaekers (eds.), *Violence on the Margins: States, Conflicts and Borderlands* (New York: Palgrave, 2013), pp. 119–42; and Francis Musoni, *Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020).

⁹ David M. Gordon, 'Kingdoms and Associations: Copper's Changing Political Economy During the Nineteenth Century', in Larmer et al., *Across the Copperbelt*, pp. 155–78.

UMHK – but also political and military support from conservative Anglophone actors in the region. The Welensky government of the Central African Federation facilitated the flow of mercenaries and weaponry across the Copperbelt border that helped keep the Katangese state in power.¹⁰ Katanga's 'national' army recruited soldiers from among Northern Rhodesian Lundas who felt a stronger affiliation to Moïse Tshombe and the Lunda king, the Mwaant Yaav, than to either their colonial state or its anti-colonial opponents. As Macola demonstrates, the Northern Rhodesian ANC (NRANC) had significant links with Tshombe's Katanga government, with party officials regularly visiting Elisabethville and receiving financial and logistical aid.¹¹ The United National Independence Party and its supporters denounced these links that, the *African Mail* alleged, involved the recruitment and training of 'ANC soldiers' for the Katangese armed forces.¹² Katanga thus presented a threat to the unitary nationalism promoted by the leaders of both Congo and soon-to-be independent Zambia: Tshombe indeed stressed the pre-colonial unity of colonially divided African societies, for example in his July 1962 claim that 'before the Europeans came Katanga and Rhodesia formed one vast territory'.¹³ Following the ending of the secession in January 1963, UNIP established a party office in Elisabethville to mobilise electorally the tens of thousands of Katangese residents of 'Zambian' origin in the run-up to Zambian independence.¹⁴

This experience of conflictual decolonisation shaped Kaunda's vision of Zambian nationalism. 'Balkanisation' was considered a major threat by UNIP. As the party emerged victorious from its occasionally violent struggle with the NRANC to take power at independence (Chapter 4), it outlined its new nation-in-the-making with reference to the tenets of Kaunda's proto-national philosophy of Humanism and in regard to its neighbours. In January 1965, for example, a mass rally heard Kaunda declare 'that our society in Zambia shall be non-tribal, non-racial, and

¹⁰ Matthew Hughes, 'Fighting for White Rule in Africa: The Central African Federation, Katanga, and the Congo Crisis, 1958–1965', *International History Review* 25, 3 (2003), pp. 596–615.

¹¹ Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa*, pp. 84–7.

¹² 'ANC "Soldiers" in Katanga?', *African Mail*, 8 May 1962. See also 'ANC Soldiers in Katanga', *African Mail*, 31 July 1962.

¹³ 'ANC Soldiers in Katanga', *African Mail*, 31 July 1962.

¹⁴ Larmer, 'Nation-Making at the Border', pp. 157–62.

that our society in Zambia shall judge each and every individual according to his behaviour'.¹⁵ Kaunda went on:

The Congo is a very bad example, because people refused to respect God's creation ... Look what is happening there – innocent men and women and children of all tribes, of all races, are dying every minute. ... We don't rejoice that such things happen in the Congo ... The task of building a nation cannot be and is not an easy one. ... This is how we intend to go forward as one nation in Zambia. There are no two ways about it. ... There must be one nation only in this big country of Zambia.¹⁶

Local party officials on the Copperbelt drew the same comparison: in September 1961 one C. G. Makelo told a party meeting in Itimpe, north of Kitwe: 'We do not want troubles as they were in Congo. That is not the way of getting self government'.¹⁷

A key tenet of Humanism was an emphasis on rurality as a norm of African and Zambian identity. Although UNIP's most active support was in the Copperbelt, Kaunda romanticised a mythic rural pre-colonial Africa, warned that urbanisation would encourage materialism and class divisions and promoted a 'back to the land' policy for Zambian youths. In this he drew on and articulated in nationalist form the historical concerns of missionaries and colonial officials regarding the dangers of urbanisation and rural decline (Chapter 1). In September 1963, for example, Kaunda addressed an Industrial Relations course on social security:

People in agriculture, for instance, are not usually in fear of starvation – even a bad crop will often give them enough to provide substance for themselves and their families. But when a man and his family are dependent on a weekly wage which may suddenly be curtailed by sickness or age, then they need a system to protect them against the worst evils. In our villages or tribal systems we have always had a system of social security with relatives looking after their own in time of need.¹⁸

Kaunda's Humanism was tested in the run-up to independence by Alice Lenshina's Lumpa church: UNIP saw the church's villages, which

¹⁵ Kenneth Kaunda, 'Mobilizing a Nation' in *Zambia: Independence and Beyond* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1966), p. 204.

¹⁶ Kaunda, 'Mobilizing a Nation', p. 205.

¹⁷ NAZ, WP 1/1/104, UNIP Meetings, 1960–1, 'Itimpe Compound', 15 September 1961.

¹⁸ Kaunda, 'People Rather than Plans', in *Zambia: Independence and Beyond*, p. 21.

refused to recognise either the state or the party, as a threat to its authority. Two thousand Northern Rhodesian troops were deployed to destroy Lumpa communities in 1964, operations in which about 650 church members were killed.¹⁹ Despite Lenshina's detention, her church still presented such a challenge to the new Zambian nation that it had to remove itself, settling – at the invitation of then Congolese Prime Minister Tshombe – across the border in Mokambo, forming new Congo-based Lumpa communities that, by the mid-1960s, had grown to fifteen to twenty thousand people. Underlying the ostensibly tolerant tenets of Zambian Humanism, then, was a distinctly authoritarian morality that demanded unswerving loyalty from the country's diverse and mobile communities.

Increased post-independence efforts to police the Copperbelt border meanwhile revealed the extent of the continuing cross-border lives of its residents, many of whom maintained strong economic and familial connections in both regions. Thompson Sichula, for example, who was raised in Chingola, pursued his trade as a trained car mechanic in Elisabethville in the early 1960s. He maintained connections with Congolese musicians who would regularly travel to Zambia to perform:

you would find Zambians everywhere in Congo [such] that there is no proper Congolese and you would not differentiate a Congolese and a Zambian . . . I have a brother-in-law and a sister in Congo. So it is difficult to know a real Congolese because you may find that one is a Zambian but likes staying in Congo and gets the papers to stay in Congo and vice versa.²⁰

By the mid-1960s, however, the enforcement of customs and immigration controls began to tell. One day in 1966, Peter Fwalanga crossed from Zambia into the DR Congo. A veteran worker at Kitwe's Rhokana mine, Fwalanga had retired to Congo shortly before independence. Resident in Lubumbashi, he visited Zambia each month to collect his pension of £45, which he converted into Congolese Francs in Mufulira before returning home. On this occasion, however, his money was seized by customs officials, who explained that he had been contravening regulations for many years, since the export of currency

¹⁹ For a detailed analysis of the Lumpa church see David M. Gordon, *Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), pp. 145–67.

²⁰ Interview, Thompson Sichula, Mufulira, 28 July 2018.

was illegal in both countries.²¹ Terese Tshilema, aged 57, was a Congolese national settled in Kitwe for 27 years. On returning to Congo with her property converted into cash and watches, Tshilema had her assets seized by Zambian customs officials.²²

Government officials also concerned themselves with what they regarded as cross-border moral irregularities. In 1966, Zambia's Consul in Elisabethville approached the District Secretary in the Zambian mining town of Bancroft about Lubumbashi resident Samuel Musotolwa, whose wife of twenty-five years had left him caring for ten children while she went on 'leave'. Musotolwa believed his wife had become 'illegally married' to one Mwape Kalusa, formerly of Lubumbashi but now resident in Bancroft. The Consul, W. K. C. Kamwana, sought prompt but unspecified action against the export of Congolese immorality: 'As it is not our wish to encourage people to make Zambia as [a] hiding place for such mischievous immoral[sic] which are Part and Parcel of their lives here, we shall . . . be praised if such kind of behaviour could be stamped out completely'.²³ Kamwana subsequently reported a second similar case of spousal abandonment, declared himself troubled by the increasing mobility of Zambian women since independence and reflected nostalgically on the colonial way of handling such problems:

When the British looked after the interests of the now Zambians the system used to be that of sending those involved in [the] dispute to their home areas when the relatives of both parties were consulted before a decision was reached . . . But since we became independent Zambians are finding it hard to maintain their homes, in most cases, women . . . [are] . . . being induced by other men . . . against their husbands and . . . corrupting those in authority in order to gain a favour . . . most of the women get away with it.²⁴

Kamwana bemoaned the inability of Congolese courts to resolve such cases and sought guidance on Zambian marriage law. A year earlier, his predecessor Wilson Chakulya had likewise noted that the British colonial Consul had practised a system of 'tribal' representation for Zambians in Katanga; older men, regarded as custodians of custom,

²¹ NAZ, MFA 1/1/24, Zambia Missions Congo, 1964–8, PS MoFA to Controller of Customs and Excise, 6 September 1966.

²² NAZ, MFA 1/1/24, Zambia Missions Congo, 1964–8, DRC Embassy Lusaka to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 31 March 1967.

²³ NAZ, MFA 1/1/24, Zambia Missions Congo, 1964–8, W. K. C. Kamwana to DS Bancroft, 6 April 1966.

²⁴ Ibid.

were employed to guide their 'tribesmen' in instances of social conflict.²⁵ Such tribally based representation had been abolished in Northern Rhodesian mines in 1953 (Chapter 4). More than a decade later, the Consul concluded that the reintroduction of such 'traditions' would help Zambia regain the support of its Katangese residents whose loyalties, he regretfully noted, had been extended to Tshombe.²⁶ Chakulya was, however, faced with the disconnection between potential diaspora tribal representatives and their 'home' chiefs in what had, since their departure, become Zambia. Neither could officials look to the Congolese courts for adjudication since there was in them an 'absence of the knowledge of Zambian Customary Law'.²⁷ Zambia's ambassador to Congo Timothy Kankasa rejected recognition of customary authority and, in line with UNIP ideology, the 'tribalism' it ostensibly constituted. He nonetheless recommended

[t]hat negotiations be entered into with the Congolese Government as a matter of urgency; so as to facilitate posting of Zambian Court assessors to Katanga to deal with cases of Customary Law in nature and that these assessors be attached to Katangese Law Courts. After all Bemba or Lunda Customary Law is not different in Katanga to that in Zambia.²⁸

Zambia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected both proposals and it appears no such intervention was carried out. This debate shows that political independence did not immediately resolve the tension between 'modern' and 'customary' law, generating as a result the concept of 'Zambian customary law', oxymoronic since national and 'tribal' customary laws were ostensibly separate legal spheres.

Following the defeat of the secession, the independent Congolese state imposed control over Haut-Katanga: retributive violence was carried out by the Congolese National Army (ANC) against civilians believed to have supported the secession.²⁹ Following Mobutu's

²⁵ NAZ, MFA 1/1/24, Zambia Missions Congo, 1964–8, Zam CG Chakulya to PS MoFA, 28 June 1965.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ NAZ, MFA 1/1/24, Zambia Missions Congo, 1964–8, Zam CG Chalulya, 12 July 1965.

²⁸ NAZ, MFA 1/1/24, Zambia Missions Congo, 1964–8, T. J. Kankasa to PS MoFA, 5 August 1965.

²⁹ US State Department archives, RG 84, E3363 (Foreign Service Posts), Box 1, File, 'Political Affairs and Rel., Pol 7, Visits and Meetings', 1963, Elisabethville to Secstate, 7 November 1963.

seizure of power in November 1965, Katangese politicians who had re-entered political life were either executed or otherwise marginalised, seen as representing a continued threat to the Congolese state – a genuine threat considering the continuing manoeuvring for power by Tshombe, who had in 1964 been temporarily brought into the Congolese premiership by Western powers and who continued to organise, from his exile in Spain, for a return to power until his abduction by Algerian authorities in June 1967.³⁰ The uneasy post-secession incorporation of elements of the Katangese military into the Congolese army likewise ended with internecine clashes in 1966, and an uprising by Katangese forces and its repression, alongside the detention of Katangese leaders. In 1967, Mobutu centralised all authority in Congo into the one-party system of his *Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution* (MPR) party, which remained in place until 1990. While Mobutu showed considerable political acumen in incorporating into his regime representatives of most of Congo's provinces, Shaba Province remained under effective occupation, symbolised by the appointment of a succession of loyalist MPR governors from outside the province.³¹

In 1967, coincident with his centralisation of political authority, President Mobutu announced new regulations that ostensibly clarified who was – and wasn't – a citizen. This disproportionately affected thousands of Haut-Katanga's residents, many of whom had only ever lived in Congo but who were now forced to claim Zambian citizenship. It also took openly patriarchal form: those with Congolese mothers and Zambian fathers suddenly discovered they were non-citizens. Many turned to the Zambian Consulate in Elisabethville (Lubumbashi) for help. In April 1967, the Zambian Consul E. M. Mwamba was approached by

a number of teachers who are Zambian nationals, but [who] have been living in the Congo some for many years and most know no English but only French and Bemba, etc. They expressed to me their anxiety on the future, because of the present Congolese Central Government trend to dismiss thousands of Katangese Civil Servants and those Zambian Nationals who have been

³⁰ Lise Namikas, *Battleground Africa: The Cold War and the Congo Crisis, 1960–1965* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 194–204.

³¹ Young and Turner, *Rise and Decline*, pp. 54–63; Kennes and Larmer, *Katangese Gendarmes*, pp. 74–9.

working as policemen. Already 6,000 civil servants who were employed after 1960 independence have been dismissed, while about over 600 Zambians who have been working even before independence have been dismissed.³²

Mwamba claimed there were *c.*250,000 Zambians in Congo and asked what Zambia might do for them. Zambian officials identified the political sensitivity of the crisis given its origins in the mutiny of 'Katangese' soldiers (see above), of whom 'about 1,000 are Zambians or can claim Zambian citizenship by descent'.³³ The dismissal of secession-era civil servants was now extended to all those classified as Zambian under the new citizenship laws:

[T]he Central Government's wrath against the Zambian residents stems from tribal connections between Zambians and the majority of the tribes in Katanga, and also from the fact that Katangese Zambians were staunch supporters of Mr. Moise Tshombe, and many of them saw active service or lost their brothers and sons in the Katanga secession wars.³⁴

Zambia thus faced the challenge of these 'destitutes' – unable to bring Congolese savings with them – crossing into the economically strategic Copperbelt, with implications for national security.³⁵ Strikingly, no effort was made to challenge or reject the new Congolese citizenship laws and Zambia accepted the potential burden of these new nationals without complaint. Most were long-term urban residents, but the policy response, reflecting Kaunda's idealised notion of rurally defined identity, directed them away from Zambia's own Copperbelt towns and towards a 'return' to their supposed rural areas of origin. In July 1967, the Ministry of Labour's J. B. Nyirongo argued against special treatment for 'repatriates':

Zambian citizens who are being repatriated from the Congo should, where possible, be persuaded to go straight to their villages where they will be able

³² NAZ, MFA 1/1/144, Zambian Nationals in the Congo 1966–7, E. M. Mwamba, CG Lub to Mwanakatwe, MoEd, 20 April 1967.

³³ NAZ, MFA 1/1/144, Zambian Nationals in the Congo 1966–7, S. K. Bwalya, Asst Labour Commissioner, n.d. but *c.*7 June 1967, 'Dismissal of Zambians working in Katanga of the Congo Republic'.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ NAZ, MFA 1/1/144, Zambian Nationals in the Congo 1966–7, S. K. Bwalya, Asst Labour Commissioner, n.d. but *c.*7 June 1967, 'Dismissal of Zambians Working in Katanga of the Congo Republic'; NAZ, MFA 1/1/24, Zambia Missions Congo, 1964–8, Acting Regional Secretary Western Province R. S. Thompson to PS MoFA, 13 November 1967.

to leave their wives and children, and if they desire to get employment they could apply for it through their District Secretaries. In this way, only those persons who receive offers of employment would be expected to come to the line of rail.³⁶

It should be emphasised that most such ‘citizens’ had never visited the villages to which they were now to be ‘returned’. Such policies, however, reflected UNIP’s general attempts to discourage rural-to-urban migration and to promote rural villagers as quintessential Zambians.

In the Zambian Copperbelt too, this was a period in which the national identity of Copperbelt residents needed to be resolved. Zambianisation, a political initiative that ostensibly involved the replacement of senior white mineworkers with ‘Africans’, was reimagined to equally involve the replacement of ‘foreign’ Africans with ‘Zambians’. While removing skilled European workers and replacing them with newly trained Zambians proved a difficult, controversial and slow process, the actors involved – the government, mine companies and trade unions – could agree on the desirability of removing African foreigners. Identifying who was and who was not a Zambian in such circumstances was, however, deeply problematic, given that many lacked birth certificates. Parallel to the situation in Congo/Zaire, new citizenship laws excluded those born in colonial Zambia to Zambian mothers and non-Zambian fathers and were used to remove from employment thousands of Copperbelt mineworkers now deemed to be Malawian or Tanzanian.³⁷ Duncan Money reveals that between 1964 and 1971 the number of non-Zambian Africans employed by the Zambian mines fell from 9,276 in 1964 to 5,824 in 1971, a period when the overall African workforce rose substantially.³⁸ Thus, while Zambia positioned itself in opposition to Zaire as a more welcoming and multi-ethnic society, it engaged in its own exclusionary project of nation-making that equally focussed on the Copperbelt’s mobile and mixed population and sought to impose on it a new national identity.

³⁶ NAZ, MFA 1/1/24, Zambia Missions Congo, 1964–8, Perm Secretary Ministry of Labour J. B. Nyirongo to Assistant Labour Commissioner, Ndola, n.d. but July 1967.

³⁷ Duncan Money, “‘Aliens’ on the Copperbelt: Zambianisation, Nationalism and Non-Zambian Africans in the Mining Industry”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 45, 5 (2019), pp. 859–75, pp. 868–9.

³⁸ Money, “‘Aliens’ on the Copperbelt”, pp. 867–8.

The Labour Politics of the Post-Colonial Copperbelt

The Copperbelt mining region had for decades experienced the extraction of its wealth to Western mining companies and exchequers. It was, partly for this reason, central to the contrasting dynamics of both Zambia and Congo's anti-colonial movements (Chapter 4). Now their new independent governments sought to legitimate a not dissimilar extraction to other areas of the economy within a new framework of 'national development'.

In Zambia the importance of state control over the mining industry, responsible for nearly half of GDP, 53 per cent of government revenue and 92 per cent of export earnings in 1964, was symbolised by eve-of-independence negotiations that redirected royalties hitherto paid to the British South Africa Company to the Zambian state.³⁹ In channeling copper revenue to its new national development plans, the Kaunda government relied on a cohort of Western development advisors, funded by international organisations, whose production of knowledge was central to government plans and policies. Diversification of the economy away from mineral dependency was seen as crucial in the medium term, but funding that diversification depended on the continued short-term maximisation of mine revenue. This necessitated both expansion of production and close co-operation with the mining companies AAC and RST. The main barrier to economic development was, for government advisors, not foreign control of the mining industry but rather the wages of urban workers. The 1964 UN 'Seers' Report, which provided the basis for Zambia's first development plan, stated: 'The wage and salary question is perhaps the most serious problem facing the Government'.⁴⁰ The wage demands of Copperbelt mineworkers not only drained income that might otherwise accrue to the state but also provided 'wage leadership' to other urban workers – an increasing number employed by the growing state – who demanded similar increases.

Like many other newly independent countries, Zambia quickly passed laws designed to drastically curtail the autonomy of labour movements. The Trade Unions and Trades Disputes (Amendment) Act, passed three months after independence, gave the government

³⁹ Marcia Burdette, 'Nationalization in Zambia: A Critique of Bargaining Theory', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 11, 3 (1977), pp. 471–96.

⁴⁰ United Nations, *Economic Survey Mission*, p. 33.

sweeping powers over a newly constituted Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). AMWU, first renamed the Zambia Mineworkers' Union (ZMU) and later the Mineworkers' Union of Zambia (MUZ), criticised these controls and, when it reluctantly joined the ZCTU in 1965, requested that its leaders be elected by members rather than appointed by the government. A new Industrial Relations Act in 1967 further increased government and ZCTU control over unions: it decreed that there would only be one union in any industry, leading to the abolition of the staff association and forcing white-collar mine employees into MUZ. This attempt to ensure more effective control over MUZ had the unintended result of forcibly uniting mineworkers with ostensibly different interests: the minority of 'advanced' employees whose primary aspiration was parity with whites earning three times their salary for the same job and the majority of mineworkers with little prospect of real-terms improvements in either wages or conditions, except those that could be won by industrial action.

The MUZ, financed by its members and with a strong administration and independent ethos, was able to partly resist direct state control. Its leaders, while still composed largely of more skilled and white-collar workers, defended their members' right to take locally organised strike and protest action to challenge racial discrimination on the ground.⁴¹ While companies and government agreed that racist practices and pay inequalities needed to end, the state insisted that this should be achieved by statute and negotiations. Mineworkers and local UNIP activists, however, launched wildcat strikes to defend MUZ members provoked into violence by racist European supervisors.⁴² The government, while pressing for rapid Zambianisation of senior posts, accepted that the industry would need to continue to employ thousands of expatriates for the foreseeable future and pay them higher wages than Zambians promoted to do the same job. While the companies argued that foreign workers hired in a global job market needed to be paid a higher wage than Zambians hired locally, union representatives

⁴¹ Larmer, *Mineworkers in Zambia*, pp. 66–7.

⁴² ZCCM-IH, 17.1.6C, MJIC-ZMTU, 1964–5, CISB to Companies, Record of 1st MJIC meeting, 11 January 1965. Peter Harries-Jones captures the rivalry between local UNIP and union activists for political control of Luanshya's mine townships in the mid-1960s: "Home-Boy" Ties and Political Organisation in a Copperbelt Township', in James Clyde Mitchell (ed.), *Social Networks in Urban Situations: Analyses of Personal Relationships in Central African Towns* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1969), pp. 297–347.

argued that all workers doing the same job should receive the same pay. Speakers at public meetings referred to the mineworkers' role in the anti-colonial movement to justify their advancement: 'We fought for the liberation of the country, now we want to enjoy the benefits and for this reason we are demanding higher wages'.⁴³ National independence was, for Copperbelt mineworkers, bound up with racial equality and material improvements at the workplace.

A wave of wildcat strikes came to a head in 1966 when a major dispute arose over the first post-independence pay claim: when the ZMU accepted the companies' offer under government pressure, a series of unofficial strikes marked by heavy picketing spread across the Copperbelt. The government responded with the Brown Commission of Inquiry, which – as with such inquiries in the late colonial period – provided an opportunity not only to review wages but for actors to articulate their understanding of Copperbelt society. Many Commission witnesses identified the unruly nature of 'union' meetings held in mine townships and participated in by the entire community as a major problem, and characterised the union movement as in need of reform.

The answer, for company and government officials and their international advisors, was the expansion of industrial relations training and the modernisation by such means of 'responsible' shop stewards and branch officials.⁴⁴ The International Labour Organisation (ILO) provided further evidence to aid the government's case: its 1969 report argued that rises in urban wages were partly responsible for rural stagnation and that labour productivity had fallen since independence because 'the colonial system of labour discipline has broken down and nothing has yet developed to take its place'.⁴⁵ This was then in many respects continuous with colonial state and company attempts to use technical means to bring about a disciplined, modern labour movement (Chapter 4).

In Haut-Katanga, the effective incorporation of the labour movement in newly independent Congo was hardly a problem. The weak

⁴³ ZCCM-IH, 17.2.3B, ZMU Local Disputes NCR, 1964–7, NCR Manager N. G. Wright to CISB, 18 October 1965.

⁴⁴ NAZ, LSS1/15/279, Annual Report Assistant Labour Commissioner, Kitwe, 1962–9, Report for 1965.

⁴⁵ International Labour Office Report to the Government of Zambia on Incomes, Wages and Prices in Zambia, 1969, quoted in Michael Burawoy, *The Colour of Class on the Copper Mines* (Lusaka: UNZA Institute of African Studies), p. 56.

existent unions in UMHK, which had played little or no meaningful role during the secession, were in 1967 incorporated into a new *Union Nationale des Travailleurs du Zaïre* (UNTZA), a wing of Mobutu's ruling MPR. While UNTZA's local branches played a formal role in the negotiations of pay and conditions, these were decided in a more or less unilateral way by UMHK and government officials, albeit sometimes in response to local demands. While there is some evidence of locally organised strike actions that secured pay rises, the formal Zairian labour movement did not play the prominent role in post-independence industrial relations that its counterpart in Zambia did.

Nationalising the Copperbelt Mines

The prominent role of UMHK in the Katangese secession meant that it was an early target for Mobutu's incorporative state. During the secession, copper production had surprisingly been maintained at 300,000 metric tonnes per annum, generating vital revenue that underwrote the Conakat government. In early 1963, UMHK had quickly redirected tax and royalties payments to the Congolese state, amounting to 50 per cent of government revenue and 70 per cent of foreign exchange earnings.⁴⁶ Negotiations now began regarding the ownership of the country's strategic mineral resources, leading in May 1965 to a revised ownership structure in which the Congolese state held just under 18 per cent of UMHK.⁴⁷ Under Mobutu, who came to power in November 1965, UMHK was pressurised to increase mine output. This was despite international market fears that such expansion would cause over-production and that rising prices would prompt copper's replacement with alternative conductive metals such as aluminium. In Congo/Zaire as in Zambia, the diversification paradox made itself felt: it was imperative that these national economies diversify away from copper dependency, but doing so would require the careful investment of increased copper revenue.

In Zambia, where copper production rose from 632,000 tonnes in 1964 to 747,000 tonnes in 1969, relations with the two mine companies RST and AAC were comparatively amicable.⁴⁸ In Zaire, however,

⁴⁶ Young and Turner, *Rise and Decline*, p. 289.

⁴⁷ Jean-Jacques Saquet, *De L'Union Minière du Haut-Katanga à la Gécamines* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001), p. 134.

⁴⁸ Roberts, *History of Zambia*, p. 229.

the legacy of the secession poisoned relations between the government and UMHK. Following a series of tax hikes on the company in 1966, Mobutu suddenly announced the rapid nationalisation of the mines with the creation of a new company, the *Société Générale Congolaise des Minerais*, sparking a diplomatic dispute with the Belgian government.⁴⁹ However, Zaire's inability to implement a truly 'national' policy was exposed by its continued dependence on UMHK's 1,600 expatriate employees and an inability to attract alternative minority investment partners. Agreement was ultimately reached with UMHK's owners via the creation of a new Belgian company, the *Société Générale des Minerais* (SGM), a subsidiary of the vast Belgian *Société Générale*, to market Zairian copper.⁵⁰ The SGM received 6.5 per cent of mineral sales for the next two decades in what amounted to a compensation payment to UMHK's former shareholders: they continued by these means to make considerable profits from Zairian minerals well into the 1970s.⁵¹

Although this public confrontation undermined the confidence of some of Mobutu's Western backers, it enabled the President to present himself as a radical nationalist. Zaire's 1967 economic plan involved relatively orthodox economic policies, but the subsequent use of mining revenue as a 'cash cow' to fund socio-economic projects across Zaire deprived the industry of necessary reinvestment. As Young and Turner argue, state ownership of the new state-owned mine company *Gécamines* not only enabled Mobutu to increase production but also implement his wider project of state-based development.⁵² In practice, however, by the late 1970s, 'development' projects increasingly accrued benefits solely to a tiny ruling clique at the head of the MPR and its president in particular.

In Zambia, UNIP's initiatives in economic nationalisation initially focussed on non-mine companies, so Kaunda's August 1969 speech

⁴⁹ A detailed account of the negotiations can be found in Saquet, *De L'Union Minière du Haut-Katanga*, pp. 133–53. See also Jules Gérard-Libois, 'L'Affaire UMHK', *Centre de Recherche et D'Information Socio-Politiques-INEP, Congo 1967* (Brussels/Kinshasa: CRISP, 1969), pp. 471–85; and Young and Turner, *Rise and Decline*, pp. 288–96.

⁵⁰ Saquet, *De L'Union Minière du Haut-Katanga*, pp. 155–208; 'Union Minière Wins Case – in All but Name', *The Times*, 18 February 1967. *Gécamines* was initially known as *Gécomin*, or the *Générale Congolaise des Minerais*, until 1971.

⁵¹ Young and Turner, *Rise and Decline*, p. 293.

⁵² Young and Turner, *Rise and Decline*, pp. 293–6.

'requesting' the sale by AAC and RST of 51 per cent of their assets to the government was something of a surprise. Nonetheless, subsequent negotiations secured a comparatively favourable deal for their owners, with full compensation via bond redemptions, guarantees over profit externalisation and specific rights over the appointment of directors. The nationalisation of Zambia's copper mines – its timing, the financial arrangements involved and its causes – have been the subject of extensive analysis, both contemporaneous and retrospective.⁵³ While it is clear that mine nationalisation in both countries should be understood as an essentially political project, most observers failed to appreciate the extent to which it was an internally driven nationalist initiative designed to give state leaders in Lusaka and Kinshasa effective control over the mineral-rich Copperbelt region. In his speech announcing the 51 per cent nationalisation of the copper mining industry, Kaunda claimed it would create a 'classless society' that would allow ordinary Zambians to control their economy.⁵⁴ This had important consequences for industrial relations:

The State . . . holds industrial investments, not for its own good, not merely for the good of those directly employed in the State enterprises, but for the benefit of Zambians everywhere. Thus, for a union to push a claim against the State is to push a claim against the people.⁵⁵

In this new system, workers could no longer pursue narrow economic interests at the supposed expense of their rural cousins. Kaunda condemned wildcat strikes and, in the same speech, declared an immediate wage freeze and a temporary ban on all strikes.⁵⁶ The AAC and RST received a '[c]ategorical statement that takeover of mines was between Government and shareholders only, and would not affect employees, management and running of mines at all'.⁵⁷ The mine companies did

⁵³ Michael Bostock and Charles Harvey, *Economic Nationalism and Zambian Copper: A Case Study of Foreign Investment* (New York: Praeger, 1972); Michael L. O. Faber and James G. Potter, *Towards Economic Independence: Papers on the Nationalization of the Copper Industry in Zambia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Burdette, 'Nationalization in Zambia'; Sardanis, *Africa, Another Side of the Coin*, pp. 229–39.

⁵⁴ Zambia, *Towards Complete Independence* (Lusaka: Government Printers, 1969).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44. Emphasis in original. ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁵⁷ ZCCM-IH, 15.2.1C, 'Government Takeover, 1969–1971', McCourt, Mufulira to CISB Kitwe, 4 September 1969.

indeed continue to be run with little or no political interference and according to the strictures of global markets throughout the 1970s. Kaunda's rhetoric regarding nationalisation replicated in a post-independence form many of the assumptions underlying the late colonial orthodoxy discussed in Chapter 1. He counterposed normative ideas of rural and urban societies, characterising the former in a romanticised form as communal and productive and associating the latter with materialist consumerism and Westernisation. The Copperbelt's distinct urban culture, having first been deemed 'unAfrican' by social scientists, was now reconstructed by its national leader as unpatriotic, rendering invisible the continued dynamic social and economic links between village and town.

This perspective had significant support among the development experts who were the dominant producers of Western knowledge about Zambia in the early post-colonial period. Such experts reconstituted these ideas as 'urban bias', the notion that urban residents benefited disproportionately from African state decisions because of their supposed advantageous capacity to influence policy at the expense of rural communities.⁵⁸ Zambia, with its relatively urbanised population and copper-dependent economy, provided a key case for academic advocates of this idea, such as the political scientist Robert Bates. In this they proved curious intellectual bedfellows with Marxist analysts who saw Zambian mineworkers as a primary example of a 'labour aristocracy', with interests more closely aligned to their employers than to the majority of Zambian peasants.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Michael Lipton, *Why Poor People Stay Poor: Urban Bias in World Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977); Robert H. Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). For a critique see Vali Jamal and John Weeks, *Africa Misunderstood: Or Whatever Happened to the Rural-Urban Gap?* (London: Macmillan, 1993). See also Ashutosh Varshney (ed.), 'Beyond Urban Bias', a special issue of *Journal of Development Studies*, 29, 4 (1993). For a critique of its application to the Zambian Copperbelt, see Deborah Potts, 'Counter-Urbanisation on the Zambian Copperbelt? Interpretations and Implications', *Urban Studies*, 42, 4 (2005), pp. 583–609.

⁵⁹ For the labour aristocracy debate in general see: Arrighi and Saul (eds.), *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa*; Sandbrook and Cohen (eds.), *Development of an African Working-Class*; and Peter Waterman, 'The "Labour Aristocracy" in Africa: Introduction to an Unfinished Controversy', in Dennis L. Cohen and John Daniel (eds.), *Political Economy of Africa* (London: Longman, 1981). For its application to Zambia, see Parpart, 'The Labour Aristocracy in Africa'; and Mijere, 'The mineworkers' resistance to governmental decentralisation'.

Government policy explained continued migration from rural to urban areas in precisely these terms: Zambia's Second National Development Plan, published in 1971, stated: 'The estimates of the rural-urban breakdown of the country's population bring out the fact that the dimensions of the drift of the rural population to urban areas has assumed such proportions as to dictate urgent attention to reducing this movement'.⁶⁰ The Plan declared the need for a strict cap on wage rises and a link between wage rises and productivity with the objective of 'narrowing the gap between urban and rural living standards'.⁶¹ In this context, Bates noted approvingly that mine nationalisation 'clarified the link between the conduct of labor and the success of development efforts, and strengthened the government's resolve to curtail the militancy of labor'.⁶² Unlike Bates, whose research was based largely on interviews with political and union leaders, the sociologist Michael Burawoy's 1972 study 'The Colour of Class on the Copper Mines' drew directly on the ethnographic techniques of his RLI predecessors. Burawoy's embedded research revealed that rank-and-file mineworkers regarded their pay and conditions as little improved from the colonial period and he argued that 'the proposed nationalisation . . . cemented [the companies'] co-operation and identification with the Zambian government, giving them much greater security if faced with opposition from . . . their black labour force'.⁶³

In this context the Copperbelt's unionised workers and its political leaders constituted a continued threat to UNIP authority. While post-Brown measures had brought the MUZ under a degree of government control, grassroots mine union leaders consistently challenged the pace and degree of post-independence reforms. A new job evaluation initiative, resembling the technocratic systems in place in Haut-Katanga since the 1950s, prompted anger among more skilled workers awarded lower salaries than whites doing the same job.⁶⁴ They organised a boycott of 1971's May Day celebrations, a cornerstone of public unity between the state and labour. Fifteen dissident MUZ leaders and one hundred striking workers were detained.⁶⁵ Copperbelt union

⁶⁰ Government of Zambia, Ministry of Development Planning and National Guidance, *Second National Development Plan, January 1972–December 1976* (Lusaka: Government of Zambia, 1971), p. 50.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11. ⁶² Bates, *Unions, Parties, and Political Development*, p. 213.

⁶³ Burawoy, *The Colour of Class*, p. 90.

⁶⁴ *Daily Mail (Zambia)*, 31 March 1970. ⁶⁵ *ToZ*, 26 May 1971.

activists linked such grievances to the unresolved post-independence transformation of the mining industry and the perceived marginalisation of UNIP's Copperbelt Bemba-speaking leaders. The latter grievance had been growing since the resignation of UNIP/Zambia Vice President Simon Kapwepwe in August 1969 and found expression in opposition to changes to UNIP provincial representation in 1970. These effectively neutralised the numerical advantage of Copperbelt and Northern Province membership, arising from the party's history of mass activism in these areas (Chapter 4).⁶⁶ Prominent Copperbelt party leaders, including former ZMU president John Chisata, pressed Kapwepwe to break from UNIP, which he did in August 1971 with the establishment of his new United Progressive Party (UPP). The Copperbelt became the locus of inter-party conflict: hundreds of local UNIP officials defected to the new party, attracted by Kapwepwe's criticisms of UNIP's undemocratic structures and failure to bring prosperity to the masses. Physical violence and intimidation by UNIP activists were combined with state repression, involving the arrest and detention of hundreds of known UPP supporters. Mufulira, long a centre of conflict between UNIP and the ANC, was equally a focus of this power struggle. In December 1971, Kapwepwe, despite extensive intimidation, won a parliamentary by-election in Mufulira West against the UNIP candidate, MUZ Vice President Alexander Kamalondo. The UPP, meanwhile, attracted the active support of MUZ dissidents who campaigned against Kamalondo on the basis of the unpopular job evaluation agreement.⁶⁷ Samson Chama, a prominent local UNIP figure, recalls this as a time of tension that continued in Mufulira until Kapwepwe's death in 1980.⁶⁸

For this brief period, the Copperbelt's mineworkers and political activists, expressing discontent at the perceived maldistribution of mining revenue and the failure to resolve grievances that were, for

⁶⁶ Cherry Gertzel (ed.), Carolyn Baylies and Morris Szeftel, *The Dynamics of the One-Party State in Zambia* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 14; this conflict is explored at greater length in Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics*, pp. 62–90.

⁶⁷ NAZ, HM77/UNIP/1/4, Papers of Peter Matoka, MUZ Head Office (Confidential), 'Summary of circumstances which led to the loss of the Mufulira West constituency seat in the Parliamentary by-elections by a UNIP candidate – Comrade Alexander Kamalondo', 17 January 1972.

⁶⁸ Interview, Samson Chama, Mufulira, 6 July 2018.

them, at the heart of Zambia's anti-colonial movement, presented a significant challenge to UNIP's hold on national political power in a way that their counterparts in Haut-Katanga (and indeed organised workers across Africa) did not generally do to post-independence ruling parties.⁶⁹ The repression of this movement necessitated state and party violence and intimidation, culminating in the declaration of a one-party state in December 1972. It did not, however, enable the ruling party to establish effective control of a region that, both because of its strategic mineral wealth and local ideas about its equitable distribution, continued to challenge UNIP hegemony over the next two decades.

The Limits of Nationalisation

The early 1970s saw further efforts to gain effective state control of the post-colonial economies of both Copperbelts, in a context in which 'Third World' governments realised the limits of political independence and sought more effective ways to challenge their countries' global economic marginalisation. A new Intergovernmental Council of Copper-Exporting Countries (CIPEC) was established in 1967, bringing together Zambia and Zaire with Peru and Chile, producers of 40 per cent of world copper output and 75 per cent of copper exports. But it was only following the 1973 oil crisis that its members sought to influence the international market for copper. An agreement reached in Lusaka to co-ordinate reductions in copper exports by 10 per cent and later 15 per cent failed to increase prices, partly because CIPEC members in general and Zaire in particular failed to abide by an agreement at odds with Mobutu's strategy of maximising Katangese production.⁷⁰ In 1973 a second phase of Zambian mine nationalisation, involving the redemption of £90 million of bonds held by foreign mining companies, enabled the state to take a greater stake in the industry and more direct control of mine management and copper

⁶⁹ For a useful overview of Africa-wide post-independence state-union relations, see Akua O. Britwum and Leyla Dakhli, 'Labour and the State', in Stefano Bellucci and Andreas Eckert (eds.), *General Labour History of Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2019), pp. 495–522, pp. 508–16.

⁷⁰ Kenji Takeuchi, 'CIPEC and the Copper Export Earnings of Member Countries', *The Developing Economies*, 10, 1 (1972), pp. 3–29; World Bank online archives (hitherto WB), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), 'The Economy of Zaire', July 1975, p. 58.

sales. It is today widely recognised that this was a significant financial error, involving as it did risky and in retrospect ruinously expensive borrowing on international markets.⁷¹ A new phase of Zairianisation in 1973 meanwhile sought to place non-mining businesses into local ownership, but in practice most ended up in the hands of political office holders, alienating investors.⁷² This was followed in 1975 by an incoherent radicalisation programme that threatened longstanding Belgian-owned businesses with government takeover; when these measures threatened national bankruptcy they were reversed with compensation costs of c.US\$700m.⁷³ The mineral economy of both countries was also adversely affected by the national liberation wars raging in neighbouring Angola and Rhodesia, leading to the closure of railways that were vital for mineral exports.

Mineral price fluctuations in the mid-1970s led to contrasting efforts to manage the situation: Zaire continued to maximise production, receiving warnings when prices were falling but short-term benefits when prices rose: copper production increased from 365,000 tonnes in 1969 to 460,000 tonnes in 1974.⁷⁴ Zambia, where production costs were continually rising and ore grade qualities were falling, could not do the same. The country also struggled with the aftermath of the September 1970 Mufulira mine disaster: 89 mineworkers were killed when a tailings dam collapsed and one million tonnes of waste flooded their underground workspace. Production at Mufulira, then the single largest generator of Zambian tax revenue, was substantially disrupted for a number of years.

Nationalising Knowledge Production

Just as nation-state leaders believed it was vital to bring the Copperbelt's mineral production under their control, so the production of knowledge about Copperbelt history, society and political economy – hitherto

⁷¹ William A. Stoeber, 'A Business Analysis of the Partial Nationalization of Zambia's Copper Industry, 1969–1981', *Journal of International Business Studies*, 16, 1 (1985), pp. 137–63; Sardanis, *Africa, Another Side of the Coin*, pp. 268–75.

⁷² Young and Turner, *Rise and Decline*, pp. 326–50.

⁷³ Young and Turner, *Rise and Decline*, pp. 350–62.

⁷⁴ WB, IBRD, 'Report and Recommendation of the President to the Executive Directors on a Proposed Loan to La Générale des Carrières et des Mines with the Guarantee of the Republic of Zaire for a Mining Expansion Project', 2 January 1975, p. 8.

dominated by Western scholars – needed to be wrested from foreign domination and brought under national purview. This process was characterised by questions and contradictions that paralleled the indigenisation of strategic mineral resources. What would indigenous control of a global phenomenon historically dominated by the West look like? How would the assertion of a new national context and consciousness change the way that the Copperbelt was understood? How could a nation-state stimulate African intellectuals to discover new ways of understanding the region that would produce original knowledge that was also of value to the nation-state? In the same way that academic research had provided powerful legitimising effect to the modernising dynamics of the Copperbelt mining industry, academic history provided a powerful accompanying role for African leaders' nation-building projects.

The establishment of 'national' universities in the decolonising period provided important lessons as to how knowledge production was to be indigenised: this has been the subject of important recent studies. Toyin Falola shows how universities in post-colonial Africa were shaped by debates over the Africanisation of knowledge and the role of higher education in furthering independence and national development.⁷⁵ Tim Livsey has demonstrated how Nigeria's Ibadan University was shaped by the interplay of political independence and the contested Africanisation of university space, power and ideas.⁷⁶ For African academics, training in Western universities or by Western scholars in African ones promised both intellectual enlightenment and advancement but also involved tacit acceptance of the superiority and hegemony of Western systems of knowledge production. Meanwhile, African leaders, like their Western counterparts, saw national universities as a tool for development, generating local manpower to overcome their dependence on foreign personnel and, in some cases, to provide intellectual endorsement of their new national ideologies. Student activism has been shown to be an important space for the expression in this period of debates on how to decolonise the university.⁷⁷ Dan Hodgkinson has investigated the social and personal

⁷⁵ Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004), esp. chapters 5 and 6.

⁷⁶ Tim Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

⁷⁷ See the volume edited by Dan Hodgkinson and Luke Melchiorre on 'Student Activism in an Era of Decolonization', special issue of *Africa*, 89, S1 (2019), in

histories of generations of student activists in Zimbabwe. For Congo, Pedro Monaville reveals the ways in which the country's student movement engaged with Mobutu's Africanist turn and the wider 'global 1968' moment, before its murderous repression.⁷⁸

These dilemmas were particularly pronounced in the production of knowledge about the Copperbelt region. Its characterisation as a 'modern' urban space defined by its relationship with global capital had, as we have seen, led to it being understood in Western social science as distinct from and/or opposed to a norm of African rural society in a problematic intellectual context that conflated historical progress with Westernisation. The indigenous study of the Copperbelt regions in a post-colonial context created an opportunity for research that better reflected and took seriously local notions of knowledge and understanding in shaping Copperbelt society. The extent to which intellectual space would be provided that could enable 'decolonised' knowledge production was of course debatable. Congo's universities were established before independence while those of Zambia were established afterwards, but in both countries they continued to be dominated by Western scholars and approaches in the immediate post-colonial period.

The history of Congo's universities began in the late 1940s with planning for what became the Jesuit-run Lovanium University, which opened in 1954 on the outskirts of Léopoldville (later Kinshasa). Monaville highlights the contrast between Lovanium's deliberately secluded rural setting and Elisabethville's urban university, which opened its doors to an exclusively white student body in 1956. Renamed the *Université d'Etat* during the Katangese secession, it was closely linked to UMHK and the Katangese government, which saw its role as producing indigenous graduates with the technical skills needed by the new nation.⁷⁹ After the secession it became, in turn, the official

particular Hodgkinson's article in that issue: 'Nationalists With no Nation: Oral History, ZANU(PF) and the Meanings of Rhodesian Student Activism in Zimbabwe', *Africa*, 89, S1 (2019), pp. S40–S64.

⁷⁸ Pedro Monaville, 'Decolonizing the university: postal politics, the student movement, and global 1968 in the Congo', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Michigan (2013).

⁷⁹ Monaville, 'Decolonizing the university', p. 174; Donatien Dibwe dia Mwemba, 'Le Rôle Social de L'Université de Lubumbashi', in Bogumil Jewsiewicki and Véronique Klauber (eds.), *Université de Lubumbashi 1990–2002: Société en Détresse, Pari sur L'Avenir* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), pp. 1–120, p. 11.

state university of the Congo but in August 1971 – following the violent repression of student uprisings at Lovanium – it was, with Lovanium and the Free University in Kisangani, integrated into a single University of Zaire (UNAZA). Each campus would lead in a specific subject area and Lubumbashi was given the focus on humanities and social sciences, building on but equally challenging the earlier work of European researchers through continued links with Belgian universities such as the University of Liège and the *Université Libre de Bruxelles*.

The creation of UNAZA was bound up with President Mobutu's project of *authenticité*, a broad challenge to Western domination of Africa that encompassed the indigenisation of people's names and place names, the adoption of non-Western clothing styles and the promotion of specific forms of culture and history as the building blocks of Zairian national identity. Mobutu's *authenticité* initiative challenged the notions of European academic practice and, Benoit Henriët suggests, briefly provided a space for real experimentation in Africanist knowledge production.⁸⁰ *Authenticité* was, at face value, a project enabling African intellectuals to reject the Western colonial and academic construction of the continent as 'other', exotic and inherently inferior to a modern West, and enable them to develop modes of knowledge production that could root the continent's contemporary development in its culture, traditions and history. Historians at UNAZA, for example, removed 'ethnohistory' from the curriculum in 1974 as a way of challenging the earlier construction by Western historians of African society as inherently tribal and drew on social history techniques to study the urban culture of Lubumbashi (see also Chapter 7). The construction of class identities in Haut-Katanga's mining towns was equally a subject of investigation, though here the arguments of Augustin Malela, in identifying a lack of class consciousness among workers, strikingly resemble the political economy school that saw such workers as an aristocracy of labour.⁸¹

Meanwhile, Valentin Mudimbe, one of Africa's most important post-colonialist thinkers, born in Likasi and initially based at

⁸⁰ Benoît Henriët, 'Making the Post-Colonial University: Authenticité, Decolonality and Knowledge Production in Lubumbashi, 1971–1981', article under review, 2021.

⁸¹ Henriët, 'Making the Post-Colonial University'; Augustin Mwabila Malela, *Travail et Travailleurs au Zaïre. Essai sur la Conscience Ouvrière du Proletariat Urbain de Lubumbashi* (Kinshasa: Presses Universitaires du Zaïre, 1979).

Lovanium, identified the construction of ‘Africa’ in Western knowledge production and sought in his writings to reveal the process of its construction.⁸² In works published while at UNAZA, Mudimbe argued that Africans needed to move away from the Western systems of thought hitherto internalised by African scholars. Mudimbe’s ideas resonated with *authenticité* concepts even while he avoided endorsement of the MPR’s more rigid Zairianisation initiatives and the nationalisation of identity and culture that Mobutu advocated.⁸³ Henriet details the ambiguities in UNAZA scholars’ engagement with *authenticité* in their efforts to break from colonial/Eurocentric epistemologies and their ultimate inability to avoid the imposition of MPR structures and strictures on campus. Ultimately, Zairianisation required the creation of an authentic pre-colonial national history, free from external imposition or engagement, in which distinct ‘tribes’ supposedly co-existed peacefully. In so doing it ironically perpetuated colonial categories of tribal identity that social historians were then in the process of dismantling.⁸⁴

At the same time, UNAZA continued to play a more practical role in indigenisation, training geologists, chemists and metallurgists for *Gécamines* and thereby enabling the Africanisation of the company’s professional ranks.⁸⁵ In 1981 UNAZA was abolished – just one aspect of the wider failed experiment of *authenticité* – and the University of Lubumbashi achieved a new independent existence. From this time on Mobutu’s embrace of intellectual space declined and, in the following decade, the MPR sought to extend its ideational control of Haut-Katanga and its university via the steadily increasing authority of its youth wing.

As in the Belgian Congo, proposals for a Northern Rhodesian institute of higher education first developed in the 1940s, but the Central African Federation focussed attention on the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in Salisbury (Harare). The University of Zambia (UNZA) opened only in 1965; it was partly funded by local

⁸² Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*.

⁸³ Valentin Y. Mudimbe, *Autour de la ‘Nation’*. *Leçons de Civisme. Introduction* (Lubumbashi: Éditions du Mont Noir, 1972); Pierre-Philippe Fraiture, ‘VY Mudimbe: From the “Nation” to the “Global” – Who is the Master?’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 27, 3 (2014), pp. 324–42.

⁸⁴ Henriet, ‘Making the Post Colonial University’.

⁸⁵ Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu, ‘Le Rôle Social’, p. 12.

voluntary subscriptions by ordinary Zambians and was an unmistakably nationalist project, with President Kaunda its first Chancellor. The first students at UNZA, however, criticised and protested against government policies on southern African liberation and clashed with state forces and UNIP-organised youth activists.⁸⁶ In the 1970s UNZA provided a stimulating intellectual environment in which foreign and Zambian academics rubbed shoulders with liberation movement activists as they debated the relationship between African nationalism, socialism and Pan-Africanism. As the detention and deportation of British Marxist political economist Lionel Cliffe in 1976 showed, academic free speech was heavily restricted in Zambia when it came to criticism of UNIP.⁸⁷ On the Copperbelt meanwhile, higher education was restricted to the technical sphere: the Zambia Institute of Technology (ZIT) was established in Kitwe under UNZA auspices to meet the skills shortage in the mining industry and the wider economy. The Zambia Institute of Technology subsequently became the Copperbelt University (CBU) but it was only in the twenty-first century that it developed a fully-fledged social science programme. Meanwhile, the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute was incorporated into UNZA from 1971 as the Institute for African Studies (IAS).⁸⁸ It initially turned towards pure research but was then funded to conduct applied projects in, for example, the study of languages in Zambian education.⁸⁹ While the IAS continued to attract expatriate scholars such as Burawoy, Mwelwa Musambachime notes its relative failure 'to address itself to the economic, political, and social realities of post-independence Zambia. It was very clear that the Institute lacked a strategy to enhance and indigenize science research in Zambia'.⁹⁰

Meanwhile, UNIP sought to promote Kaunda's theory of 'Humanism' as a national ideology that could underpin understanding of Zambian

⁸⁶ Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics*, pp. 68–9.

⁸⁷ Peter Lawrence and Morris Szeftel, 'Obituary: Lionel Cliffe, 1936–2013', *Review of African Political Economy*, 41, 104 (2014), pp. 288–91.

⁸⁸ It was renamed the Institute of Social and Economic Research (INESOR) in 1996.

⁸⁹ Sirarpi Ohannessian and Mubanga E. Kashoki (eds.), *Language in Zambia* (London: International African Institute, 1978); Mwelwa C. Musambachime, 'The University of Zambia's Institute for African Studies and Social Science Research in Central Africa, 1938–1988', *History in Africa*, 20 (1993), pp. 237–48.

⁹⁰ Musambachime, 'University of Zambia's Institute for African Studies', p. 244.

society and guide its progress. Kaunda's international reputation as a thinker rested on his status as a liberation movement and 'Third World' leader and his championing by Westerners such as Colin Morris.⁹¹ Unlike in Zaire, however, little sustained effort was made to establish Humanism in Zambia's universities. It was rather promoted in the country's school curriculum and by the Ministry of National Guidance via the country's media and in political speeches. One notable exception to this rule was the work of Henry Meebelo who, as well as curating Kaunda's own writings, sought to strengthen Humanism's intellectual cutting edge, as the ruling party came under renewed pressure in the context of economic stagnation and political opposition in the 1970s. Meebelo, Director of UNIP's Research Bureau (and a government minister in the early 1980s), wrote a series of works on Humanism and history, each an important intervention into the nationalisation of knowledge production. In *Reaction to Colonialism* (1971) Meebelo provided a clear and accessible history of colonial-era Zambia typical of the nationalist historiography of its time. He characterised anti-colonial injustice and exploitation as stimulating the coming together of diverse peoples into the 'modern' social and political movements that would inexorably become the basis of a united Zambian nation.⁹²

Meebelo's *Main Currents of Zambian Humanist Thought* (1973), published when its author was Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Guidance, was the only important work on Humanism not written by Kaunda and Morris. Seeking to present the ideology as more than the ideas of a single leader, Meebelo characteristically counterposed 'African traditional thought' to European Humanist thinking and sought to root Zambian Humanism in a common African experience that was now threatened by capitalism and Western urbanisation.⁹³ As Sholto Cross argued in a thoughtful 1974 review article:

If this were the case, then one would have expected an upward flow of ideas behind Zambian humanism, a grassroots consciousness or populism

⁹¹ For example, in Kenneth D. Kaunda, *A Humanist in Africa: Letters to Colin M. Morris from Kenneth D. Kaunda* (London: Longmans, 1966).

⁹² Henry S. Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism: A Prelude to the Politics of Independence in Northern Zambia 1893–1939* (Manchester, UK: University of Manchester Press/Institute of African Studies, University of Zambia, 1971).

⁹³ Henry S. Meebelo, *Main Currents of Humanist Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

articulated through the middle level ranks of political spokesmen. But Zambian humanism has all the hallmarks of an ideology announced from the top and imposed downwards, succeeding only in providing the language of debate and not its substance, and never really penetrating the grassroots.⁹⁴

Indeed, Humanism had much in common with the social scientific and missionary knowledge production that informed its anti-materialism and its conflation of urbanisation with Westernisation. While it was not a popular movement, it certainly represented an important strand of indigenous elite thought in the post-independence era.

Meebelo's third major work, *African Proletarians and Colonial Capitalism*, published in 1986 by another state body, the Kenneth Kaunda Foundation, provides a key example of the nationalisation of intellectual thought and, not coincidentally, focusses on the history of the Zambian Copperbelt.⁹⁵ It provides an impressive analysis of colonial-era mining and the development of trade unionism and anti-colonial nationalism in the region, but its main objective is to critically analyse AMWU's disagreements with the nationalist parties over strategy and tactics (see Chapter 4). Nationalist politics is presented as normative and alternative political ideas to it, particularly those of AMWU President Lawrence Katilungu, are dismissively characterised as apolitical or anti-political. Meebelo concludes: 'the AM[W]U, the wealthiest, the best organised and the most powerful African trade union in the country was, for all its might and its strategic position . . . apparently too inward-looking to play the rightful political role against colonial exploitation and oppression'.⁹⁶ In a period of continuing conflict between the post-independence trade union movement and the government, Meebelo sought to delegitimise the former through the ostensibly disinterested realm of historical knowledge production.

⁹⁴ Sholto Cross, 'Politics and Criticism in Zambia: A Review Article', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 1 (1974), pp. 109–15.

⁹⁵ The Kenneth Kaunda Foundation had in the late 1960s been funded by the Peace with Freedom organisation run by Robert Gabor, which was covertly backed by the CIA. See Anon, 'East African Shadows', *Africa Confidential*, 16 February 1968, pp. 3–4; and Editors, 'AMSAC's Afros', *Ramparts* magazine, June 1969 (Menlo Park CA), pp. 26–33. I am grateful to Daniel Branch for drawing my attention to this information.

⁹⁶ Meebelo, *African Proletarians and Colonial Capitalism*, p. 419.

Conclusion

In the 1980s, the indigenisation of knowledge production experienced a period of decline, consistent with the region's political conflicts and economic crisis. Funding to universities in both countries was reduced, and some of their most brilliant minds – for example Valentin Mudimbe and Mwelwa Musambachime – took up positions in Western universities. The flow of international scholars to the region also reduced. The University of Lubumbashi, however, remained a bastion of important and influential social scientific research in the face of political repression, economic decline and social conflict. As Chapter 8 will explain, the dominant story of the Copperbelt, once one of modernisation and rapid development, was becoming one of decline, crisis and how to stem it.

Meanwhile, the effective incorporation of the Copperbelt region into its respective nation-states continued to prove problematic, as will be examined in Chapter 8. The Shaba wars of 1977 and especially 1978 provided an existential challenge to Mobutu's hold on power: the brief seizure by former Katangese gendarmes of Kolwezi threatened the mining industry and brought about both economic and political reforms that indirectly gave voice to a new internal political opposition.⁹⁷ The threat posed by the Mobutu regime of a revival of Katangese opposition meant that Shaba Province continued to be closely policed, which in the 1980s involved a further penetration by party structures into the running of mine communities. In Zambia, underground political opposition, mainly focussed in the Copperbelt, meanwhile found expression in the 1980–1 conflict over local government of mine areas and a sustained period of conflict between the union movement and the one-party state that ultimately led to the labour movements' prominent position in the multi-party democracy movement of 1990–1. In different ways, the 1990s would see the reversal of the Copperbelt's marginalisation and subjugation by nationalism and the emergence of the region as a centre of political power, albeit in a context of economic crisis and – in Zaire/DRC – a resurgent ethnic and political violence.

⁹⁷ Miles Larmer, 'Local Conflicts in a Transnational War: The Katangese Gendarmes and the Shaba Wars of 1977–78', *Cold War History*, 13, 1 (2013), pp. 89–108.