

1982

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W.P. No. 53

African Studies Center

1982

**WORKING PAPERS
NO. 53
AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER**

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CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG THE ZAMBIAN COPPER MINERS 1950-1966

By Jane Parpart

This paper seeks to evaluate the degree of class consciousness and class action among the black copper miners of Zambia during the 1950s and early 1960s. These miners were clearly the most organized work force in Zambia during this period. Since the establishment of the copper industry in 1924, the black miners had gradually evolved collective forms of labor protest. During the 1940s, the growing number of more stabilized skilled black miners¹ fought for worker representation, first for themselves, and later for the entire work force. After the establishment of the African Mineworkers' Union in 1948, these miners successfully campaigned for union support among the work force. By the early 1950s, most miners had recognized the advantage of organized collective action against management and joined the union.² Since then, the African miners have generally supported the union. This indicates that most copper miners during this period had at least a "worker consciousness" -- that is, an awareness of their identity of opposition to management within the copper industry, and a commitment to organized collective action to protect worker interests.

The question at issue in this paper is the degree to which the miners had, or did not have, a broader consciousness, one which included a perception of the emerging class structure of Zambia as a whole, and an understanding of the need to join with other workers, both in trade unions and political parties, in pursuit of class goals. We are not speaking here of revolutionary class consciousness, which aims at a fundamental reorganization of society, but rather of a commitment to collective action designed to improve the position of the working class, or a segment of that class within the existing, or a similar, social structure. This paper also seeks to understand the interaction between the emerging class consciousness of the miners and nationalist politics.

In this paper, the term class consciousness is not used in the old-fashioned Marxist sense -- namely, to indicate an awareness of the unity of interests of all workers and the need for revolutionary political action to pursue these worker interests. In contrast, class consciousness is seen as a process which has a number of different stages. These stages are outlined as follows:

1. Workers must be aware of their position in a class hierarchy and accept the relative permanence of this status (class identity).
2. At the level of consumption, workers must recognize that they are exploited by management through the wage relationship and are not receiving a fair share of the socially produced surplus in the form of wages (worker opposition).

3. Workers must recognize that their collective class interest is antagonistic to that of management and must be willing to engage in class conflict, e.g., striking, in order to secure their class interest (worker consciousness).
4. Workers must be willing to form organizations to pursue class interests, regardless of prior status or social origin of fellow workers (trade union consciousness).
5. At a societal level, workers must recognize the need to engage in political activity in order to create the conditions that will secure their class interests (political class consciousness).
6. Workers recognize the need to join with all other workers in political action in order to revolutionize society (revolutionary class consciousness)

Progression through these stages is not linear; it varies with specific historical circumstances.

The behavior of the copper miners during this period has led most scholars writing on the Copperbelt to question the degree of working class consciousness among the Zambian miners. Throughout this period, the African Mineworkers' Union frequently refused to cooperate both with other workers in the Congress of Trade Unions (TUC) and with the African nationalist political parties. The union focused on industrial disputes within the copper industry instead. The mine townships increasingly turned into labor enclaves, cut off from much of the ferment of the period. In an effort to explain this behavior, most studies have accepted Epstein's conclusion that the special nature of work and life on the mines created an industrial parochialism which obscured a wider consciousness of class and the need for class-based political action.⁴

In contrast, this study argues that a reexamination of the evidence in the light of class analysis indicates considerable class consciousness among the black miners during this period, despite limitations placed on class action by external circumstances. By distinguishing between attitudes and behavior, a very different picture emerges, one in which the miners reveal a well-developed class consciousness and a commitment to effective class action both in trade unions and political parties.

Cooperation with the White Miners

Where, then, is the evidence for a more developed consciousness among the Zambian copper miners? One factor which has been largely overlooked by scholars is the history of periodic cooperation between white and black miners on the Copperbelt. In 1940 the black mineworkers struck for higher wages at the very mines where the European union had just concluded successful strikes. Both the organization and the rhetoric of the black strike leaders was closely based on the European strike.⁵ During the war years, the stabilized miners, particularly the boss boys, pressed management for worker representation, first for themselves and later for the work force as a whole. The European union was an important catalyst in this process. As the labor department (established in 1940) reported in 1946, "there can be little doubt

that it is due to an awareness that Europeans have formed trade unions for the purpose of collective bargaining that ... the more advanced and intelligent Africans ... feel it is only by this means that they can be given an opportunity of improving their wages and working conditions."⁶

In their efforts to establish African worker representation, some of the higher grade black miners also began to recognize the identity of interests among white and black mineworkers, and the potential power of multi-racial labor action. These miners were gloomy about prospects for an African trade union in the near future, knowing full well that "anyone who mentioned union in the African context before Mr. Comrie came was aiming for to get into trouble."⁷ The supervisory level African miners associated on a daily basis with European miners, and their relations were often quite good.⁸ Many of them agreed with the European union's policy of equal pay for equal work. While never willing to accept the European leaders' promises, and always somewhat suspicious of European miners' good intentions, some of the higher grade miners could see they would be better off fighting management as part of a monolithic multi-racial union than fighting alone. They had seen the European union win victories without bloodshed.⁹ As Labor Officer William Stubbs admitted, "the African mistrusted the Europeans ... but they were no fools. They were prepared to learn from anybody who would teach them."¹⁰

Consequently, when the European union voted in 1946 to allow Africans to establish junior branches of their union, many of the more ardent advocates of trade unionism among the black miners decided to join the Europeans. In 1946 branches in Luanshya and Nkana were "ticking away quite nicely," and prospects for branches at the other mines looked good.¹¹

Although government and company officials prevented the establishment of a multi-racial union, the two unions joined forces against management at various points throughout the next 14 years. Despite resentment over the European union's efforts to protect the privileged position of its workers, in 1950 the two unions informally agreed to an advancement plan acceptable to both parties.¹² In 1953, the European union brought Ronald Williams, the legal advisor to the British National Union of Mineworkers, to the Copperbelt in order to help the African union obtain a favorable settlement to a strike. Williams came out again in 1955 to foil management and government's plan to dismember the union. Williams threatened to publicize the companies' use of scab labor to break the strike, and thus to incur the wrath of organized labor around the world. After initially considering trying to bluff Williams, management relented, and the union reluctantly agreed to reengage strikers at their previous rates of pay, and to leave the union intact.¹³

In 1958, the European union and the African Mine workers' Union jointly rallied opposition to proposed legislation against unofficial strikes. This legislation was based on the Honeyman Commission's investigation of a strike by the European rock-breakers, and its recommendation that members of a trade union with a closed shop should exhaust all negotiation procedures before calling a strike. The companies hoped that this legislation would halt the spate of strikes which had plagued the industry since 1954. The legislature, which was increasingly hostile to both white and black miners due to reduced copper revenues as a result of strike actions, eagerly supported the companies. Despite differences over advancement, the leaders of both unions realized their common interest in stopping these proposals. The two unions solicited the British Trade Union Congress, the National Union of Mineworkers,

and the Miners' International Federation to intervene at the Colonial Office in their behalf.¹⁴ Jack Purvis, general-secretary of the European union, and Katilungu even flew to London in March to further their joint case. These efforts failed to stop the Legislative Council from passing the hated Trade Unions and Trade Disputes Ordinance,¹⁵ but they increased the solidarity between the unions.

One can be cynical and interpret the cooperation between the African and European unions as mere transient self-interest. Tension between the two unions cannot be dismissed. The European union wanted to protect the privileged position of European miners on the Copperbelt, and that goal inevitably conflicted with black miner aspirations as long as job categories were defined by color. If the European miners on the Copperbelt had been able to protect themselves from management's advancement plans, the European union probably would have followed the pattern of European workers in the rest of southern Africa. The growing vulnerability of white labor on the Copperbelt undoubtedly pushed the two unions together. But, after all, common exploitation has been one of the pivotal factors in the development of workers' identity and solidarity all over the world. The congruence of occupational and racial divisions facilitated division within the mine work force. Certainly suspicion between the two groups, and outright racialism, continued. However, the leaders of the two unions, and many members, clearly understood the common interests binding black and white mine workers, and the potential power of multi-racial worker action against management. Thus, within the copper industry many workers recognized that class divisions transcended racial divisions, and that class action did not have to follow racial lines.

Political consciousness on the mines before Federation

Even acknowledging the existence of a worker consciousness which transcended racial divisions within the copper industry, can we legitimately claim that the African miners understood the emerging class structure of Northern Rhodesia, particularly their identity with other workers and the link between management and the state? And further, were they willing to engage in political activity at a societal level in order to create conditions which would secure their class interests?

For an answer to these questions we must look at the role the African copper miners and the union played in early nationalist politics. The evidence indicates that the miners formed the backbone of the Copperbelt wing of the African National Congress (ANC) -- the African political party established in 1951 to fight against the proposed Federation of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland.¹⁶ A number of union leaders held office in Congress as well. For example, in 1952, when Congress set up a Supreme Action Council to plan, and, if necessary, to order, a total withdrawal of labor in order to cripple the colonial government, both President Lawrence Katilungu and Secretary Simon Kaluwa of the African Mineworkers' Union held seats on this council and endorsed its aims.¹⁷

Some of the leaders of the African Mineworkers' Union organized closer cooperation between workers and Congress through the Trade Union Congress. Formed in 1951 under William Comrie's guidance, the Congress had fallen into disuse under Katilungu's leadership. Capitalizing on this neglect, the

Putu/Chapoloko faction of the Mineworkers' Union turned the TUC into a forum for anti-Federation propaganda. Both Robinson Puta and Jameson Chapoloko¹⁹ opposed the separation of political and industrial issues. They called for African worker unity against the colonial state, claiming that only national liberation would bring a better life for African workers. The TUC maintained a political subcommittee which included a number of prominent branch leaders from the African Mineworkers' Union. This committee formulated plans for supporting political action by labor, insisting that the cause of the mineworkers' union and the nationalist movement were one.²⁰

Table I . . . Executive Officers and Political Action Subcommittees, 1952

Executive Officers, Trade Union Congress, August 1952		
Office	Name	Union
President	Dixon Konkola	Railway Workers
Vice-President	Robinson Puta	Mineworkers' Union
General Secretary	Matthew Nkoloma	Mineworkers' Union
Executive Member	Jameson Chapoloko	Mineworkers' Union
Executive Member	Justin Chimba	Unknown
=====		
Political Action Subcommittee, 1952		
Chairman	Dixon Konkola	Railway Workers
Secretary	Matthew Nkoloma	Mineworkers' Union
Member	Paul Kalichini	Industrial Workers
Member	Jonathan Mubanga	Municipal Workers
Member	Chanda	Railway Workers
Member	Matthew Mwendapole	Mineworkers' Union
Member	Jameson Kamitengo	Mineworkers' Union
Member	Jameson Chapoloko	Mineworkers' Union
Member	Gordon Chindele	Mineworkers' Union

Source: Bates, Unions, 127.

Despite the structural and ideological congruence between the African Mineworkers' Union and Congress, the union leaders disagreed about the degree of political involvement appropriate to the union. More militant union leaders wanted close cooperation between the union and Congress, while Katilungu worried about the consequences of such action. Katilungu stopped the Supreme Action Council's call for a political strike in February 1952 because it would interfere with an industrial dispute on the mines. He refused to cooperate with Puta and Chapoloko in their decision to call a strike at Nkana protesting the deportation of Simon Zukas, a European involved in the ANC and an active supporter of worker involvement in politics. When management dismissed Chapoloko and others involved in the strike, Katilungu did not protest. Later in March 1953, Katilungu withdrew the union's support for two days of national prayer organized by Congress to protest Britain's support for Federation. Katilungu claimed participation in the strike would bring massive dismissals, and therefore threatened the position of the union. Since he believed the union's job was to fight for a better position for African miners, he refused to countenance political actions which might endanger worker interests.²¹

As we have seen, the union's refusal to cooperate whole-heartedly with Congress' efforts to stop Federation has led scholars to question the existence of either a populist or a class based political consciousness among the miners at this time. However, a closer look at the evidence suggests a different interpretation. Most importantly, Katilungu's behavior as president of the union takes on a different character when placed in the historical context of the political-economy of Northern Rhodesia. The capacity of management and the state to limit union actions was still very great, despite conciliatory efforts surrounding the Federation campaign. Government officials might refuse to interfere in industrial disputes, but they had no qualms about stopping an alliance between the union and Congress. Labor officers and company officials might refuse to interfere in industrial disputes, but they had no qualms about stopping an alliance between the union and Congress. Labor officers and company officials insisted that the union must remain outside politics, threatening dire consequences to worker advancement if this advice was not followed. Comrie made this one of his basic trade union principles. Katilungu's involvement in the ANC, and his participation in the planning of Congress's two days of national prayer indicate considerable commitment on his part to political action by the union. According to an informant, his last minute withdrawal from the two-day protest only occurred after management informed him that protesters would be dismissed. The companies had already fired workers at Nkana for a political strike over the Zukas affair. Consequently, Katilungu realized this was not an idle threat.²² When faced with a choice between massive disruption on the mines and possible loss of employment for miners in an economy which offered only limited alternative economic opportunities of equal value, Katilungu's behavior is understandable, not as proof of lack of political consciousness, but as the actions of a man with limited options. In this light, Katilungu's decision to keep the union outside politics emerges as a pragmatic solution in an oppressive colonial context, rather than proof of the absence of political consciousness either on his part or on the part of the miners as a whole.

The evidence from oral interviews and other sources reveals considerable commitment to the nationalist cause among individual miners. Informants recalled widespread support for Congress among the miners during this period.²³ As we have seen, many of the trade union leaders were active in both ANC and the Trade Union Congress. One informant, who was both chairman of the trade union and Congress at Chibuluma, even reported that "the trade union in 1951 was more a political party than a trade union. That is why the government did not like it."²⁴ Leading trade unionists used methods pioneered by the union to build up the party. The union had "made people like the importance of meetings. We called big meetings. This was before the Congress came into being. People got used to meetings so when these things about the government were talked over, they went too."²⁵ As one informant stated, the trade union "was the mother of the political parties. She had only to guide it as children."²⁶

Most miners supported the nationalist movement for the same reasons other Africans did, namely the belief that popular self-rule would bring a better life for all Africans in Northern Rhodesia. Like most Africans in Northern Rhodesia, the miners worried that Southern Rhodesia would be the dominant power in the Federation. Knowing Southern Rhodesia well, they had no desire to see its institutions adopted in their own country, particularly Southern Rhodesian labor legislation.²⁷ Thus, most miners who supported ANC simply wanted a better deal for Africans, although they undoubtedly expected a black

government to favor their interests against those of white dominated capital.

Consciousness of the need for worker political action to pursue class interests was probably limited by the still ambiguous connection between management and the state. Since the establishment of the African Mineworkers' Union in 1948, the government, or at least the labor department, had appeared to be impartial, if not openly favorable, to the cause of the miners. In 1953, for example, a government tribunal (the Guillebaud Tribunal) settled a strike in favor of the miners, largely to mollify African discontent over the Federation issue. While outright coercion by government officials, such as the governor's reprimand to the Roan union leader, Alfred Mwalwanda,²⁸ emphasized the special relationship between government and the companies, and informants recalled growing suspicions of government among the miners as they saw how little the labor officers were able to do to force more generous concessions from management,²⁹ the alliance between government and management was still far from clear.

Even those miners who agreed with Simon Zukas that "a trade union must act politically in defense of its members,"³⁰ did not recognize the potential contradictions between the economic goals of the African union and those of the nationalist movement. Congress promised to improve the relative position of Africans and white men, and to stop the color bar, both fundamental tenets of the union.³¹ The militants had no more revolutionary vision of society in mind at this point.³² As a result, they advocated using the union's organizational powers in support of political causes in the belief that the African miners would gain from African political advancement. Thus, while the militants recognized the need for workers to organize politically, they did not yet differentiate between nationalist and class based political action.

Consciousness and the class struggle

After the successful establishment of Federation in 1953, the copper companies no longer had to conciliate either their black workers or the British government. As a result, in 1954 they launched a long cherished scheme to reduce labor costs by advancing some experienced black miners. Management expected this strategy to reduce labor costs while creating an African middle class loyal to the status quo. The companies also planned to divide the black work force by establishing a separate worker association for these advancees. This would remove the most articulate miners from the union, and, from management's point of view, would hopefully have "the effect of balancing the extremists in the present union."³³

While refusing to openly support attacks on white miners privileges, the Federal government needed copper revenues too desperately to oppose corporate policies against white miners. The Federal government was, however, more than willing to reduce the power of the African Mineworkers' Union.

The companies hoped they could implement this new strategy without a violent confrontation with their black labor force. Management counted on a lack of commitment to the African union, as well as a willingness to compromise for material gains. They also hoped to persuade the more moderate union leaders, notably Katikungu, to accept the legitimacy of a separate staff association. However, the companies were quite ready to use stronger methods to enforce change as well.

As events turned out, more forceful methods were necessary. For the next 3 years the union fought to maintain its control over all black mineworkers. During this period, worker commitment to the union grew steadily, as did willingness to use political action to protect worker interests.

The union leaders reacted strongly to the threatened secession of the supervisory level miners. Meetings were called in which friends and families were asked to convince association members to return to the fold. Union leaders repeatedly called for unity, accusing the breakaways of trying to destroy the union. Staff association members were compared to makopa, or dead fish, a name which soon spread throughout the Copperbelt. Those who refused to join the union were denigrated as "fools because even they will also be discharged one day. They are blind because they cannot realize that the Union is here to safeguard the freedom of future generations." Anyone not entirely with the union was declared an enemy.³⁴

In the ensuing struggle between the African Mineworkers' Union and management, most of the miners rallied to support the union. Songs ridiculing staff members spread throughout the township. Wherever MASA members and their

families went, hostile compound inhabitants followed, jeering and singing insulting songs. One informant recalled getting stoned occasionally, and seeing children shouting insults at the children of staff members.³⁵ Feelings ran so high that when three union men were sent to jail for intimidating staff miners, 400-500 miners went to the Boma and insisted that they wanted to go to jail also. A riot squad had to disperse them. As one informant recalled, "hostility reached a point where it was only a very bold man who could go up and greet a man on monthly contract."³⁶

Indeed, many potential staff members refused to accept staff status because of their loyalty to the union, and their recognition of the need for worker solidarity in opposition to management. A few staff members returned to the union because of social pressures. By May 1954, only 279 miners out of a potential membership of 4160 belonged to MASA, and by March 1955, only 469 out of 3535 eligible miners had joined the association.³⁷

This crisis caused a change in union leadership as well. Less skilled miners began to fear that union leaders in line for advancement would refuse to risk industrial conflict for their own job security. Some miners dropped out of the union.³⁸ However, most reacted by voting for more militant union leaders in the 1954 branch elections. Many of the union leaders in line for advancement lost their offices in the election. Men like Robinson Puta at Nchanga and Sylvester Nkoma at Roan won the election -- both men with records of political activism and involvement in the TUC.³⁹

This victory suggests that the struggle against management was politicizing some of the black miners. Epstein discovered that the new branch leaders were partially elected for their reputation as ruthless negotiators.⁴⁰ However, they were known to favor political action by the union as well. It seems reasonable to assume that their victories expressed some support for this philosophy. This hypothesis is further strengthened by Katilungu's support for a 10s8d per shift across-the-board wage increase. While this demand was primarily designed to strengthen the appeal of the union, it had a political aspect as well since the 10s8d increase would qualify many African miners for the vote under current Northern Rhodesian franchise laws.⁴¹ The architects of the increase, Puta and Chapoloko, realized that this was a political as well as an industrial statement. The fact that Katilungu agreed to this demand, knowing full well it would be unacceptable to the companies, reveals a growing unity of purpose among the union leaders. Katilungu even agreed with the militants that a long strike might be necessary for the defense of the union.⁴²

During the next two years, miner support for the militant leaders of the union grew steadily. When the companies rejected union demands, the workers almost unanimously voted for a strike action. In January 1955, all but 4,115 of the 34,000 African miners stopped work,⁴³ and a bitter two-month long strike began. In late January, management threatened to dismiss all strikers. The companies hired 2,000 "scab workers" in an attempt to break the strike. They also tried to intimidate workers through loudspeakers operating from vans in the townships. These efforts failed. Many of the "scabs" joined the strike.⁴⁴ The unity and determination of the work force held fast.

By February, both government and company officials were thoroughly exasperated with the union. The companies wanted to dismantle the union, and suggested a return to wage councils or some other form of worker

representation. As far as management was concerned, "trade unionism for Africans has been tried, and has failed. It was artificially created and is rotten to the core... The leaders are at best, lacking in intelligence and experience, and the mass of the workers is but little removed from primitive savagery."⁴⁵ While not endorsing quite such a negative view, the labor department and other government officials agreed with the companies that "the power of the Union must be broken, new leaders found and a new means of negotiating with the Africans set up."⁴⁶

Only the timely intervention of Ronald Williams, mentioned above, saved the union. However, this settlement did not alter management's hostility to the union, nor its determination to strengthen the staff association. The companies made no effort to compromise with the union. They denied the union a right to discuss dismissals even in cases of alleged victimization. African Township Committees were set up to undercut union authority in the mine townships.⁴⁷ Management inaugurated a labor rationalization scheme which impeded the absorption of men in the labor pool. As a result, a number of union activists remained in the pool doing manual labor for extended periods.⁴⁸ Some workers were not reinstated. In June of 1955, the companies offered all supervisory and staff category miners options to transfer over to monthly pay at an increase of 14 percent per year. And that fall, the companies announced that MASA members held 62 of the 75 new advanced jobs, with another two for the Mines African Police Association.⁴⁹

In response to these threats, the union renewed its campaign against MASA. It cancelled the October 1955 agreement to recognize the association. At meetings throughout the Copperbelt, the union leaders stepped up their attack on staff miners. They accused the staff association of being "the child of the mining companies." Union leaders reiterated their warnings that the companies were trying to destroy the union, and called for workers to join forces in defense of the union.⁵⁰

Once again, the miners supported the union. Most higher grade miners continued to reject the staff association. Indeed, one informant claimed that the staff association was not really functioning at this time and that many of the miners who joined refused to participate because of loyalty to the union.⁵¹ Thus, rather than destroying the union, the struggle to protect the union appeared to be strengthening the collective identity and commitment to trade unionism among the black miners. Except for a small number of advancees, the black miners stood firmly on the side of the union.

The struggle to save the union increased political consciousness among the miners as well. As Chisata recalled, "People (the miners) began to realize that no matter how much we fight for our rights we cannot succeed entirely if we don't change the government set up."⁵² Until the 1954 strike, government officials had appeared reasonably impartial in industrial disputes. Indeed, in the early years union leaders had looked to government labor officers for aid and assistance against the companies. The 1954 strike destroyed that illusion. The police protection for companies vans as they toured the compounds spreading propaganda during the strike, government support for the staff association, as well as the realization that only Ronald Williams's intervention prevented a government attempt to weaken the union, all served to clarify the alliance between the state and the companies. Indignities suffered by miners in the labor pools after the strike further exacerbated feelings of resentment among the miners against both company and government

officials. More and more miners began to understand that industrial action was not enough, that they needed to engage in political activity in order to create conditions that would secure their class interests. One informant recalled that "some miners even began to feel more anti-government than anti-mine, believing the biggest enemy was the government."⁵³

In 1955, militant union leaders further consolidated their hold on the Trade Union Congress. Dixon Konkola, President of the Northern Rhodesian Railway African Worker's Trade Union and an active African National Congress organizer in 1952-1953, wrested the presidency of the Trade Union Congress away from Katilungu. He created a sub-committee of nine, headed by himself and Nkoloma, to deal with political matters. These leaders maintained connections with the World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.). They publicly announced their support for a united effort by Congress and all African trade unions to gain economic and political advancement for Africans in Northern Rhodesia. Konkola openly condemned the staff association, and called for political and industrial action against the association.⁵⁴

Congress became increasingly involved in the union's fight against MASA. The leadership of both organizations continued to overlap. By 1956, 20 out of a total of 59 branch officials of the African union were officers in Congress and 32 were full members. African National Congress leaders occasionally made political speeches at union meetings. Union leaders did the same at Congress meetings.⁵⁵ Congress saw the staff association as part of the hated Federal plan for an African middle class. Consequently, attacking the staff association fit in with the general nationalist rhetoric. At this point, the economic objectives of the union and the goals of ANC coincided. Consequently, union and party leaders could readily join forces in their condemnation of Federation. Katilungu even began speaking of Nkumbula as Northern Rhodesia's national leaders.⁵⁶ On 11 June 1956 Katilungu attended an African National Congress meeting in Lusaka where Nkumbula accused the companies of trying to break the union. And on June 23, African National Congress and the African Mineworkers' Union held a public meeting to discuss trade union issues, and Congress publicly supported the union's stance on both the leg guard issue and the staff association.⁵⁷

The rolling strikes and the state of emergency

The growing tension between the union and the companies came to a head in the summer of 1956 when the Chamber of Mines announced in June that all employees eligible for the staff association must go on monthly pay and leave the union by July 1, or face demotion or discharge.⁵⁸ The union reacted swiftly, organizing a series of strikes culminating in the infamous "rolling strikes". These strikes began on July 30. Each mine shut down for three days, first at a big mine, then followed by a small mine, and so forth. The series began at Roan on August 2, followed by Broken Hill on August 9. Throughout this period, the union continued to demand the termination of the 1955 agreement and the dissolution of MASA.⁵⁹

The strikes were well organized and solidly supported by the work force. Strikers stopped going to the welfare centers to express their hostility to staff miners. Small groups of friends pooled their savings to help one another, garden produce was bartered to obtain necessities, and union leaders drew up plans to feed everyone if rations were withdrawn.⁶⁰

As with the 1954 strike, the rolling strikes were clearly organized by the African union to win an industrial dispute. That fact, the Branigan Commission's rejection of Congress's control over the union, and later apolitical behavior of the miners have led scholars to play down the political aspect of the rolling strikes.⁶¹ This study contends, however, that the issue is not the degree of control over the union by Congress, but the degree to which the miners had come to accept the use of political action to pursue their class interests. The evidence indicates a growing willingness by the union to use political action in the struggle against management. As we have seen, the nationalist leaders publicly supported the strike effort. Congress and union leaders maintained close contact throughout the strike. The union framed accusations against the staff association in national as well as industrial terms, calling for an end to MASA and the Federation.⁶²

Company and government officials interpreted the strikes as a political attack on Federation as well as an industrial dispute. They believed "the rolling strikes were the first stirrings against the Federal solution of a black middle class... and a rejection of the class of blacks who wanted Federation."⁶³ Corporate and government attitudes towards the strikes reflected this view.

After repeatedly failing to stop the strike by negotiation, the companies turned to the Northern Rhodesian government for assistance. By August, both company and government officials were ready to purge the union of its militant leaders, on the assumption that these men were responsible for the union's behavior, particularly its political connections. On September 10 1956, a state of emergency was declared. Ignoring opportunities for compromise, officials arrested 32 union leaders, declared martial law, and sent large numbers of Northern Rhodesian police into the townships. Within a few more days, police arrested 55 miners, 45 of whom were union officials.⁶⁴ Arrested leaders were "rusticated" with their families to the rural areas, not to be allowed to enter the Copperbelt, let alone return to their jobs.⁶⁵ The companies and the government hoped this would bring the union under control.

A commission under the chairmanship of Patrick Branigan was set up to investigate the strike. Unlike the Guillebaud Tribunal, this commission did not worry about conciliating African opinion over Federation. The commission ignored African National Congress testimony that "negotiations have failed mostly due to the uncompromising attitude of the employer and the I am-not-concerned reaction of the Government." Although the commission rejected the companies' claim that African National Congress was directly involved in the strike, and chastized the companies for misjudging African feelings about MASA, it still agreed with the companies that certain changes were needed in union structure and negotiating procedures in order to minimize future disturbances.⁶⁶

Buttressed by these recommendations, government officials moved to change the structure of the union. The companies and Deputy Labor Commissioner Philpott wanted to dismantle the union and return to earlier forms of worker representation.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, Katilungu, who had been out of the country during most of August and early September, returned to Northern Rhodesia to try to save the union. With threats of total dismantlement in the air, Katilungu had no choice but to cooperate with government and company demands. He agreed, and the union was left standing. There were fewer full-time paid

officials and supreme council members. Katilungu became both President and General-Secretary. He agreed to put the wage demand to arbitration, not to ask for weekly pay or for collection of union dues through the payroll, and to have branch offices manned primarily by volunteers. Katilungu even advised branch committees to cooperate with township advisory committees, agreed to abandon the request for shop stewards, and directed members "to stop calling monthly paid employees such names as 'informers' or 'makobo'." He advised miners that "the union has no enmity against the staff association." He also agreed to pause on wage claims, and to turn his attention to improving the general work and living conditions of the work force, at the same time assuring the companies that "the union would also campaign among its own members to improve their manner of living and to keep their houses and gardens clean and in good order.⁶⁸

The union also promised to stay out of politics. In 1957, some of the younger more politicized union leaders tried to maintain both political and union offices,⁶⁹ but management and the labor department opposed this. In 1958 the companies offered to collect union subscriptions in return for a promise that the union would use neither its funds nor its organizational structure for political purposes. In an effort to strengthen the union, Katilungu agreed. As a result, union leaders could no longer hold political office. Katilungu resigned from the Constitution Party, and the one Congress official elected to a union post promptly resigned his political position.⁷⁰ In 1959, the companies imposed even more stringent conditions against political activism in the mine townships.⁷¹

The creation of a labor enclave

Thus, after the rolling strikes, the black mineworkers appear to have accepted the futility of both violent trade union and political action against management. They turned inward and concentrated on maintaining and enjoying their privileged economic status. As we have seen, most studies of the copper miners in this period have accepted this behavior at face value, taking it as proof of an absence of both trade union and political consciousness. This study suggests a different interpretation.

In the first place, the behavior of the miners and the union must be examined in the context of both the industrial environment and the larger political economy of the period. After the rolling strikes, the union was like a "weak kitten."⁷² Katilungu had promised the miners that "when production comes back to normal and general life is decently maintained, then we are going to find new ways to approach on all problems and grievances as a whole."⁷³ However, little came of these promises. The union could neither stop company dismissals, nor could it even secure a small wage increase to restore confidence in union leadership. Membership dropped precipitously for awhile. After the state of emergency, many workers refused leadership positions in the union.⁷⁴ This situation put the union in a very poor bargaining position, one which allowed the companies to negotiate at an advantage.

Furthermore, the events of 1955 and 1956 had destroyed any illusions miners might have had about obtaining government support against management. The lesson was clear -- management could and would ally with the state in order to maintain industrial peace on their terms. The labor department's

acceptance of continuing dismissals of strike activists on the mines only served to emphasize this fact. The government had come down clearly on the side of the companies, and the miners knew it. Clearly, overt conflict with the companies was a quick way to lose one's job, a fact which dampened whatever enthusiasm for labor protest existed after the rolling strikes.⁷⁵

The nature of the mine compounds also increased vulnerability to managerial discipline. The very factors which facilitated the development of worker solidarity and collective action also permitted management to discover and get rid of "trouble-makers" in the compounds. The visibility of the workers, and the presence of all black miners within the compounds, enabled management to keep a close watch over its work force. Compound officials and their aids, the mine police, circulated through the compounds at all hours. Company spies reported on all meetings and other possible "irregularities" in the compounds.⁷⁶ As a result, in this period of rising political tensions and increased support for management from the Federal government, the visibility of the miners facilitated industrial discipline in the compounds. Direct confrontation with management became correspondingly more difficult.

This was no where more evident than in the political sphere. The companies discouraged political meetings in the mine compounds. Rhokana even banned the Congress district secretary from the mine township. District level ANC meetings and Congressional youth leagues were forbidden. People who transgressed this edict were fired. For example, Nkana's (Rhokana) leading Congress supporter, Chiyendi, was discharged in February 1958 for seditious statements about the Queen and propaganda against the missionaries. A number of Congress leaders at Rhokana were deliberately allowed to become redundant.⁷⁷ Miners had to get permits for political meetings, and when meetings were held, people spoke guardedly, wary of the inevitable informers in the audience. As one informant recalled, with careless words, "you could find yourself in an awkward position, you could land yourself in trouble." Caution became necessary for survival.⁷⁸

At the same time, rewards for cooperation increased. The companies offered to help build up union membership if the union relinquished any role in the nationalist political parties. They also offered workers the best living conditions in the Federation. Compound welfare programs were expanded during the Federal period. In response to the growing stabilization of the black work force, welfare and recreational services tried to contribute to Africans' "induction into urban life." Case work expanded in the compounds. Case workers counseled miners and their dependents with their personal problems. Classes for women and children continued to stress skills which helped adjustment to urban life. Self-improvement programs expanded as well, particularly the libraries and reading rooms.⁷⁹ Special schools prepared sons of mine employees for future employment on the mines. They served the double purpose of occupying youth in the mine townships and indoctrinating future recruits into the values and behavior patterns of industrial labor. These schools attracted miners, who welcomed the opportunity to guarantee their childrens' future employment.⁸⁰ Carefully orchestrated propaganda repeatedly reminded the mineworkers and their families how lucky they were to have such a high standard of living, and warned that this prosperity depended upon cooperation and productivity by the miners.⁸¹

The companies also tried to divert worker energies into the mine communities, rather than national politics or union activities. Area

committees were set up in the mine townships to "harness the political social aspirations of the African community to community development projects." They were designed "to give people a greater interest and pride in the running of Township affairs as well as fostering the idea of voluntary welfare work in the community."⁸² The reorganization and expansion of welfare services on the mines begun in 1953 continued to provide more activities for the compound inhabitants in an effort to divert them from less controversial organizations.⁸³ Activities which developed an interest in political matters were discontinued. Leadership training in clubs and other group activities encouraged moderate thinking, in an effort to discourage political extremism. The clubs aimed to "develop and train leaders...(to) be moderate in outlook, i.e., see the other man's point of view."⁸⁴

To further reinforce loyalty, as well as isolate the miners from undesirable political influences, the companies deliberately limited mine compound facilities to legal residents and their registered guests. The mines feared improved compound conditions would attract "hangers on", lowering the standard of living of the mine workers, and possible bringing in subversive political ideas. They appealed to the government to regulate the flow of Africans into the Copperbelt. Government officials sympathized with the companies on this matter, being just as concerned as the companies to separate the black miners from nationalist political influences. Although unable to do much, the government agreed to step up prosecutions of loafers. As a result, prosecutions rose dramatically after 1953. Regular raids by mine police, as well as an elaborate registration system at each mine discouraged illegal visitors.⁸⁵ These efforts not only isolated the miners from other Africans, they also emphasizing the special privileges of being a mine employee.

Special privileges for staff miners and mine police reinforced divisions within the work force. Living in staff housing sections became a badge of supervisory status. Elite clubs sheltered staff members from the mockery of union miners. Special classes for wives of advancing Africans taught these women more "middle class" living habits,⁸⁶ again reinforcing divisions in the work force. All these programs isolated supervisory miners, reinforced their dependence upon management, and therefore their need to cooperate with management.

These changes took place in a period of increasing rationalization of the mine work force, and of unemployment in the economy at large. The mines found it difficult to maintain profits with the fall in copper prices in 1957. The high cost of both black and white labor on the mines forced management to further rationalize production. Wherever possible, mechanization replaced manpower. From February 1957 to September 1958, Nkana's labor force was reduced by 25 percent, Roan's by 16.5 percent, Mufulira's by 20 percent, and Nchanga's by 11 percent. Turnover on the mines decreased correspondingly, falling to 20 percent in 1958. Competition for employment on the mines grew. The practice of hiring employees' children only aggravated matters. By 1960, Nchanga reported over 1000 job applicants per week for only 20-30 positions. Similar figures were reported at the other mines.⁸⁷ These conditions reinforced corporate propaganda about the lucky mine employee. Once again market factors favored the employers.

It was in this environment of decreasing economic opportunities, increasing dependence upon wage labor, and more stringent corporate discipline, that the behavior of the black miners must be examined. By the

late 1950s, most miners were fully proletarianized, depending on wages and pensions for their long-term security. Many had lost, or severely loosened, the ties with their rural homelands. Consequently, the loss of employment threatened these workers severely. Underground miners could not find comparable work outside the mines, making them even more vulnerable to the threat of dismissal. As in the Depression years, the miners responded to job insecurity by increasing their cooperation with the employers, only this time the companies offered the miners the opportunity to become permanent industrial workers. The mining companies were willing to pay for a smaller more skilled and stable work force, and that is what they achieved.⁸⁸ Absenteeism, always a good indicator of employee commitment, continued to fall throughout the 1950's, reaching levels below those of British coal workers and the U.K. as a whole. For most miners, the rewards for cooperation simply outweighed the possible gains of violent labor action at this time. The rewards of mine employment were tangible. In a constricting wage labor market, these rewards overrode larger considerations for most workers. Harry Franklin sensed this when investigating African absenteeism in 1960. He concluded that the widening gap in living standards of mine employees and other Africans, and the difficulties securing mine employment, made the mine workers "value their job very considerably."⁸⁹

This refusal to jeopardize employment security limited the behavior of both staff and union mine workers, forcing a conservative isolationism and economistic strategy on the work force. The mines were too powerful, and the rewards for cooperation too great, to allow any other course of action. Consequently, both union and staff members accepted small but steady improvements negotiated within the industrial structure, rather than the dramatic protests of the past. The mine work force became increasingly absorbed in maintaining the "good life" in the mine townships. The union was expected to protect miner living standards. Political activity in the mine compound lessened. Local events such as films, football games, and other sports and dances drew large crowds. Men and women jammed the beer halls, consuming large quantities of beer. Elite miners socialized together in their clubs. Both staff and daily paid miners concentrated on maximizing the material advantages of mine employment. Some leading miners even asked government and the mines to "take action against loafers in the mine townships."

Class Consciousness in a Labor Enclave

The question arises whether this economistic behavior reflected a change in class consciousness among the black miners as well. Certainly in the case of the supervisory miners, management did everything it could to encourage a feeling of being "separate and superior from the rest of the workers." Some of these miners did align themselves with the Federation, even joining the multi-racial United Federal Party and running for political office. This behavior alienated the rest of the miners, bringing all supervisory workers into question as "informers." Sandford chiwila recalled "alot of strong feeling about this." He claimed that "some of the elite were still concerned about the average worker, but found it difficult being accepted by the workers."⁹⁰ This hostility isolated the staff miners, increasing their dependence upon managerial favor,⁹¹ and their need to cooperate with management. Thus, a cyclical situation was created which pushed staff miners to behave as a "labor aristocracy."

However, the evidence indicates that for most miners the class consciousness developed before 1957 remained intact. Clearly most miners rejected the staff association's alliance with management. After an initial setback in 1957, union membership revived. By 1958, about 15,000 miners belonged to the union, and by 1963 membership had risen to over 30,000.⁹² Kambafwile, who helped revive the Mufulira branch after 1957, reported that the willingness to limit worker demands did not diminish worker solidarity and commitment to collective labor action.⁹³

The union also continued to transcend racial and occupational divisions in the mine work force in its pursuit of worker interests during this period. The African and European unions combined against the Honeyman proposals. In 1961 the European union supported the African demand for a unitary wagescale.⁹⁴ The staff and daily paid black miners even joined together to fight for the proposed wage scale. Both groups resented the gap between European and African wages, and in 1961 they formed a Liason Committee to pressure the companies. Only strong opposition from management, and a 10 per cent salary increase convinced MASA to settle separately with the companies. In the subsequent strike, the union demanded MASA's abolition, not because of feelings of irrevocable differences, but because staff members could not be relied on as allies in industrial disputes due to their vulnerable position vis-a-vis management. The union wanted advancement for all rather than the few, a unitary wage scale, and reincorporation of the advances into the union.⁹⁵ These demands revealed a continuing desire to unify the work force, and a perception of the common interests of staff and daily paid miners despite hostility generated between them by corporate policies.

Within the constraints set by management, most miners and their dependents also continued to support the nationalist political parties. In 1958 miners flocked to the more radical Zambian African National Congress (ZANC), and later, to its successor, the United National Independence Party (UNIP) ⁹⁶ As the tempo of political conflict increased, so did political activity in the mine townships. Mine inhabitants obtained permission to hold political meetings. The meetings drew large crowds, despite competition from corporate welfare activities.⁹⁷ The ever present company spies forced participants to watch their language, and the threat of dismissal limited political action in the townships.⁹⁸ However, outright rebellion surfaced occasionally. For example, one informant reported sneaking an African nationalist leader into the opening ceremony of a mine welfare hall, where he stood up and shouted ZANC, much to the consternation of government and mine officials.⁹⁹ In the turbulent years before independence, competition between ANC and UNIP created havoc in the townships. Women and youths joined political brigades which pressured people to join their party. The high correlation between ANC and the staff miners only aggravated matters. In 1963, for example, seven employees and fifteen other people died in the mine townships of Nchanga and Bancroft,¹⁰⁰ and at Mufulira, a club manager only escaped serious injury from an ANC youth group by locking himself in the pantry until rescued.¹⁰¹ Unrest reached such a point that a commission (The Whelan Commission) was set up to investigate the situation.

Miner commitment to UNIP was a major factor in Katilungu's dismissal from the union presidency in 1960. Katilungu's growing involvement in ANC during 1959 displeased the miners. The hostility increased when Katilungu accepted the Federal government's invitation to serve on the Monckton Commission.¹⁰² The miners accused Katilungu of neglecting the union for politics. This has

been cited as proof of the miners' industrial parochialism and lack of interest in nationalist politics. However, the nature of Katilungu's political behavior was an equally important factor. Several informants claimed this was the primary reason for Katilungu's downfall. Mwendapole believed "Katilungu had become unpopular because of his views about politics. The views he expressed made him unpopular, especially his part in the Monckton Commission. He took part in the Monckton Commission totally against the opinion of the people of the country."¹⁰³ Also, after Katilungu's dismissal, most union leaders with ANC sympathies were purged from the union. The next union president, John Chisata, was a well known UNIP supporter. He brought the union back into the TUC, and in 1962 even agreed, although reluctantly, to an unsatisfactory settlement with the mines in order to facilitate UNIP's chances in the upcoming election.¹⁰⁴

Despite this commitment to the nationalist cause, we still have to explain the persistent strains between the African Mineworkers' Union and UNIP. Chisata clearly disliked calling off the 1962 strike for political reasons, and he warned Kaunda that UNIP would not be tolerated meddling in the union's internal affairs. Despite his cooperation with the pro UNIP faction of the TUC, Chisata continued to stress the independence of the African Mineworkers' Union from political direction, either directly from the party, or through the Trade Union Congress (UTUC).¹⁰⁵ This refusal to cooperate with UNIP angered party officials, who accused union leaders of being "opportunists with no national interests at heart."¹⁰⁶ Accusations of this kind only aggravated the situation.

In 1963 relations between UNIP and the union deteriorated further when UNIP openly supported a staff association plan to establish a single new union for the black miners, the United Mineworkers' Union (UMU). This was sparked by the realization that the staff miners could no longer count on protection as the "middle class buffer group" of the Federal government. A number of the staff association leaders had long cherished the hope of establishing a single union. These men convinced the membership to establish the UMU in close alliance with UNIP and the United Trade Union Congress. UNIP leaders decided to support the new union in the hope that it would be more amenable to party direction than the present union. As a result, UNIP allowed the United Mineworkers' Union to use UNIP speaking platforms throughout the Copperbelt. The new union leaders adopted the party's method of door to door canvassing as well. At rallies the leaders called for worker unity, claiming that "we are not like the African Mineworkers' Union. We want those underground to join with the educated levels so that we can fight together. It is practically impossible today to challenge the companies and win alone."¹⁰⁷ Some miners joined the fold, attracted by the possibility of UNIP's support against management after independence.¹⁰⁸

The African Mineworkers' Union broke with the UTUC once again, and launched a vitriolic campaign against the United Mineworkers' Union. The African Mineworkers' Union fought against the new union not because it opposed a single union, which it did not, but because it opposed a union which could be controlled by politicians. The AMWU leaders held meetings all over the Copperbelt urging their members to boycott the UMU. "Only fools," they claimed, "could now support leaders who had proved so treacherous in the past." To prove their dedication to the entire work force, the AMWU agreed to a new manning structure and local wage scale in return for a general wage increase.¹⁰⁹ The companies helped the AMWU also, for despite growing

cooperation with UNIP, management did not want a union which would be directly controlled by the party. As a result, they agreed to make membership transfers from the African Mineworkers' Union to the United Mineworkers' Union a complicated and very public procedure. Each dissident had to wait in highly visible queues, and publicly declare his desire for cancellation. The companies also refused to recognize the UMU as a legitimate employee organization. Gradually these efforts paid off, and in June of 1964, the UMU disbanded, and a new Mines Local Staff Association was formed.¹¹⁰

Relations between the African union and UNIP continued to deteriorate after independence. Both staff and daily paid miners resented the local wage structure which the mines had pushed through during the 1964 crisis over the UMU. This structure tied wages of local employees (Zambians) to the local economy, rather than the European wage scale, thus destroying the unitary wage scale so painfully worked out in 1961. It limited the wage ceiling for black miners, and even lowered the wages of some higher grade miners. In 1966 miner dissatisfaction finally exploded into a strike. Staff and daily paid miners joined forces, demanding a return to the unitary wage scale. Undaunted by nationalist rhetoric, the strikers accused the Zambian government of colluding with management in order to oppress the workers.¹¹¹ Once again the miners were able to transcend racial divisions, and to identify themselves and their opposition in class terms

How can we explain this discord? We have established the commitment of the black miners to the nationalist cause despite corporate restrictions on political behavior. Consequently we cannot blame the hostility between union and UNIP leaders on the absence of populist political consciousness among the miners. This study argues that the answer lies in the nature of the political consciousness of the miners. Participation in industrial labor created a sense of identity among the copper miners, an awareness of the alliance between the state and management, and a recognition of the need to engage in political activity in order to protect worker interests.

The union leaders and the mineworkers expected political action to create conditions that would secure their class interests. The miners believed they played a critical role in the economy, and that they should be rewarded for that fact. As Mwalwanda recalled, "The miners looked forward to when this would be their own government. The government are the people, especially working people are the government, because when you don't have working men you cannot have a government."¹¹² When UNIP leaders tried to use the union for national goals, they were sharply rebuffed. From the point of view of the nationalists, union leaders were simply being selfish and uncooperative. UNIP leaders accused the miners of being "a committed bunch who, if left alone would cripple the economy of the country to nothingness."¹¹³ The contradiction between the class based political goals of the union and the national concerns of UNIP deepened after 1962, when the newly elected nationalist ministers faced the problem of establishing a black government. The demands of the African miners conflicted with the new government's need for copper revenues and its commitment to rural development. To promote these policies, government opposed wage increases, and the UNIP dominated TUC pressured the miners not to strike. This aggravated the miners, who increasingly felt they had lost out since independence and that UNIP had decided to abandon them in favor of the companies.¹¹⁴ The political alliance which had originally offered a better life for African workers along with that of all Africans now appeared little better than the colonial

regime. It was this commitment to political action for the benefit of workers that caused the rift between UNIP and the union, and it is the possibility of a resurgence of this behavior which perpetuates the tension between the union and the party to this day.

Conclusion

We have seen that during the 1950s and early 1960s, most black miners on the Copperbelt understood the class structure of the copper industry; they recognized their common interests and the need to protect those interests through organized collective action against management. Many of these miners, particularly the more stabilized workers, also recognized and acted upon, the fundamental identity of interests among the black and white workers in the copper industry. The African miners also condemned those blacks who allied themselves with management. Thus, throughout this period the black miners increasingly recognized and acted upon economic rather than racially defined categories within the industrial sphere.

We have suggested, here and elsewhere,¹¹⁵ that the nature of living and working on the copper mines, the early stabilization of a section of the work force, and the struggle to improve working conditions, facilitated the development of worker consciousness among the black miners. The central concern of this paper has been the degree to which these same factors, and others, also clarified the emerging class structure of Northern Rhodesia, and as a result, the need for workers to engage in political activity in pursuit of their class goals.

The evidence presented in this paper indicates that the struggles to protect the African union during the mid-1950s further exposed the alliance between management and the state, and consequently the need for workers to organize on a societal level against the state. Miner solidarity and commitment to the union grew steadily throughout this period, as did willingness to carry the struggle against management into the political arena. Between 1954 and 1957, Congress and the union joined forces in opposition to the staff association and the Federation. Many miners joined the party, and a number of leading trade unionists also held high posts in Congress. This commitment to the nationalist cause continued after the state of emergency in 1957, although involvement in political action lessened due to corporate pressures. The withdrawal of the union from politics at this time reflected the vulnerability of the union to corporate pressures after the state of emergency, and the willingness of management to apply these pressures, rather than a change in commitment to political action.

However, we still have to explain the intermittent lack of cooperation, and the eventual outright hostility between UNIP and the union. As we have seen, most scholars blame this lack of cooperation on the limited consciousness of the black mineworkers. In contrast, this paper has argued that the union and UNIP came into conflict because of the high degree of class consciousness among the black miners and their commitment to using political action in pursuit of class goals. In their struggles against management before 1957, the union leaders had increasingly recognized the need to engage in political action against the state in order to further worker interests. Most miners saw no conflict between union and nationalist goals at this time. They expected any nationalist government to favor black workers, particularly

with the number of trade union leaders highly placed in ANC. When the union pulled out of politics in 1957, expectations that an independent black government would protect black worker interests did not cease. Within the constraints set by management, most miners continued to support the nationalist cause. The rift between UNIP and the union only widened as it became obvious that the nationalist leaders planned to sacrifice worker interests for larger national goals. One could argue that this behavior proves the narrow trade union consciousness of the mineworkers, and their lack of commitment to the Zambian nation. This argument, however, ignores the history of political involvement among the miners.. Union leaders who spoke to the author uniformly recognized that the union's decision to abandon politics in 1957 cost them the opportunity to shape the government along lines acceptable to themselves. As one informant ruefully recalled, "if these clauses were not put into operation, and if this force was not put on the union side, surely the union would have the government today."¹¹⁶ Another informant admitted that "if we had worked better with the politicians possibly we would be the government ourselves. ... We stuck with the union and we lost completely. If we hadn't ... we would be making the laws ... in other countries the leaders are ex-union men."¹¹⁷ This is not to say that the union leaders were ready to organize a worker party to challenge UNIP. There simply weren't enough workers in Zambia for a viable labor party at that time. The important point is that union leaders believed the national government could have been shaped along lines more acceptable to workers if they had remained active in politics. The union leaders had plenty of experience organizing people in both trade union and political action. They understood the potential of mass organization, and many of them could see themselves as political leaders.¹¹⁸ Thus, when the miners, particularly the union leaders, sensed a growing alliance between the black government and the companies, they refused to cooperate with UNIP. Indeed, in 1966 the union called a strike in defiance of government orders, and openly accused the government and the companies of collusion. The new government ruthlessly crushed the strike, and stepped up its campaign to control the union leadership afterwards. This paper contends that the severity of this response was not only due to governmental determination to maintain high copper profits, but also signalled an awareness by government officials that the mineworkers had the organizational potential and political class consciousness necessary to create a serious resistance movement against the government, perhaps even an opposition party. It was this reality that created the tension between UNIP and the union, and indeed, this dilemma remains a source of tension in Zambia today.

Footnotes

1. The copper companies introduced a policy of stabilizing some of its more skilled workers in the late 1920s as a means of ensuring a stable, reliable, and experienced work force. In 1944 the proportion of employees who had worked over two and a half years was 25 percent at Rhokana, 26.6 percent at Nchanga, 37 percent at Roan and 34.9 percent at Mufulira. These were the four major mines on the Copperbelt in the colonial period. Roan and Mufulira belonged to Rhodesian Selection Trust, while Nchanga and Rhokana belonged to Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa. SEC/LAB/KMA 17, Northern Rhodesian Chamber of Mines (NRCM), Memo on Native Labor Policy, September 1944. By 1962, the labor turnover for black miners on the Copperbelt was a mere 9.3 percent; not much higher than the rate for European labor. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Mining Industry (Lusaka, 1966). [The Brown Report].

2. By 1952 the union had over 25,000 members, or about 80 percent of the work force. Department of African Affairs, Annual Report, 1952.

3. Paul Lubeck, "Class Formation at the Periphery: Class Consciousness and Islamic Nationalism Among the Nigerian Workers," in Richard L. Simpson and Ida Harper Simpson, eds., Research in the Sociology of Work, vol. I (Greenwich, Connecticut, 1981), 52-53; Ralph Miliband, Marxism and Politics (Oxford, 1977), 50-57.

4. This is not to underrate the importance of previous work on the Copperbelt. Given Epstein and Mitchell's use of the traditional Marxist definition for class consciousness, their conclusion about the consciousness of the Zambian copperminers is substantially correct. This paper suggests that a processual approach to class consciousness reveals important developments which a more traditional definition ignores. Elena Berger, Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule: The Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence (Oxford, 1974); A.L. Epstein, Politics in an Urban African Community (Manchester, 1958); S. Zelniker, "Changing Trade Unionism: The Zambian Case 1948-64" (Ph.D. thesis, UCLA, 1970); Ian Henderson, "Wage-Earners and Political Protest in Colonial Africa: The Case of the Copperbelt," African Affairs, 72, 288 (July, 1973).

5. Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the disturbances in the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia (Lusaka, 1941). [The Forster Report].

6. Brian Goodwin, interview in Lusaka, 26 June 1976; The National Archives of Zambia (ZA)/Acc. 52/17, Department of Labor, Draft: Development of Machinery for African Workers in the Copper Mines, 13 May 1946.

7. Pascale Sokota, interview at Kitwe, 28 August 1976. William Comrie was the labor officer sent out to start trade unions in 1947.

8. Law observed that "in some ways, some of the boss boys were very close to the European contract miners in their own gangs. Some of these European miners took a tremendous interest in their own gang. Often relationships between boss boys and Europeans right over them were very good." P.J. Law, interview cited. See also Northern Rhodesia, African Representative Council, The Proceedings of the First Session of the Council (November 1946), 145;

Kabalika informed me that he supported equal pay for equal work. He got the idea from a newspaper article by Brian Goodwin, whom he described as "a good person, [he] wanted Africans to get better pay and houses." Ashton Kabalika, interview in Kitwe, 29 August 1976.

9. A. Kabalika, interview at Kitwe, 29 August 1976; Matthew Mwendapole, interview at Ndola, 3 August 1976; P. Sokota, interview cited.

10. William Stubbs, interview at Oxford, England, 25 October 1976.

11. B. Goodwin, interview cited.

12. Copper Industry Services Bureau (CISB), 100.15, vol.ii, P.H. Truscott to Secretary, Mufulira Copper Mines Ltd. (MCM) London, 14 October 1950. Advancement meant advancement into previously white-dominated jobs by black miners.

13. CISB, 10:20, vol.x, Record of decisions of the Executive Committee, NRCM, 22 February 1955 and 25 February 1955; Berger, Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule, 120, 144-145.

14. Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the Stoppage in the Mining Industry in Northern Rhodesia in July, 1957, and to make Recommendations for the Avoidance and Quick Settlement of Disputes in the Industry. (Chairman, G.G. Honeyman). Lusaka, 1957, 32-33; Trades Union Congress, Trade Union News for Overseas, 20 August 1958.

15. Berger, Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule, 178-183; Legislative Council Debates, 94, 14 May 1958, 816.

16. Harry Nkumbula studied at Makerere College and London. He was a school teacher on the Copperbelt. He joined the Western Province Regional Council and later became the leader of the African National Congress. David Mulford, Zambia, the Politics of Independence (London, 1967), ch. 1.

17. Bates, Unions, 126.

18. William Comrie was the trade union advisor of the Northern Rhodesian Labor Department. He came out to Northern Rhodesia in 1947 to help set up African unions.

19. Robinson Puta was branch chairman at Nchanga. Chapoloko was a branch secretary. Bates, Unions, 130.

20. Legislative Council Debates, 25 November 1949, 385-386; Rhokana A.9, W. Scrivener to O.B. Bennett, 31 July 1951; Matthew Mwendapole, interview cited.

21. Katilungu rebuked the Broken Hill branch of the union for its preoccupation with political matters. "His opinion was that the African people had most to gain from economic advancement and the Trade Union was the body which could best achieve this." ZA/Ha/43, vol. 4, Department of Labor, Monthly Report, July 1953; Mwendapole, History, ch. 2.

22. Mwendapole, interview cited.

23. Lameck Chisanga, interviewed by Dr. Carolyn Baylies, Zambia, 11 January 1973. All of my informants supported this opinion.

24. Chembe Phiri, interview in Luanshya, 3 September 1976.
25. A. Mwalwanda, interview in Luanshya, 13 September 1976.
26. P. Kambafwile, interview in Mufulira, 9 September 1976.
27. Mwendapole, interview cited.
28. The governor even came to Roan Antelope to personally reprimand the local branch chairman, Alfred Mwalwanda, for "rude behavior." Mwalwanda, interview cited.
29. Mwalwanda, Mwendapole, and Sokota, interviews cited.
30. Rhodesia Study Club, Newsletter, 1, 13 (October, 1949).
31. David Mulford, personal communication to Robert Bates, 17 June 1968. Cited in Bates, Unions, 128.
32. Mwendapole, interview cited.
33. The archives of Rhodesian Consolidated Mines (RCM)/CSD/202.17, no. 1, NRCM to all general managers, 5 May 1953; Rhokana (R)-W.9, Welfare officer, Nchanga, to African Personnel Manager (APM), Nchanga, 5 December 1952.
34. Gabriel Musumbuwa, interview at Luanshya, 30 August 1976; C.I.S.B., 40.4, vol. 1, African Personnel Managers' Committee, NRCM, 8 October 1953; RCM/CSD/202.17, no.1, Executive Committee Meeting, NRCM, 12 May 1953; (R)-A.10, African Personnel Manager, Confidential Report, Rhokana, 30 May 1956.
35. Fanny Musumbulwa, interview in Luanshya, 1 September 1976.
36. Mwendapole, interview cited.
37. Epstein, Politics, 112; RCM/CSD/202.17, no.1.1, Secretary, MASA to NRCM, 31 May 1954; RCM/CSD/202.17, no.2, NRCM to RST and AA, Salisbury, 16 March 1955; Lameck Chisanga, interviewed in Lusaka by Carolyn Baylies, 11 January 1973.
38. By May 1954, union membership was down to one-third of the labor force. Northern News, 7 May 1954.
39. S. Nkoma, interview cited; RCM/CSD/202.5, no.4, Note on African union meeting at Mufulira, 30 March 1954.
40. Epstein, Politics, 142-147.
41. Mwendapole, interview cited; Mulford, Zambia, 43; (R)-A.9, Native Affairs Advisor, Anglo-American, "Note," 21 January 1954.
42. C.I.S.B., 100:20:5, vol.1, Record of a meeting of the Roan Branch of the AMWU, 30 December 1954.
43. C.I.S.B., 100.20.5, vol.1, Record of telephone conversation between F.B. Canning-Cooke and C.E. Cousins, labor commissioner, 4 January 1955.

44. Matthew Mwendapole, A History of the Trade Union Movement in Zambia up to 1968, edited, with an introduction by Robin Palmer and Ian Phimister, (Lusaka, 1977), 20-22.
45. RCM/CSD/202.7, no.5, Record of decisions of the Executive Committee, NRCM, 19 February 1955; RCM/CSD/202.5, no. 5, Record of decisions of the Executive Committee, NRCM, 16 April 1955.
46. RCM/CSD/202.5, no.4, NRCM, 1955 Strike Diary.
47. Stanislaw Y. Kacelo, evidence to The Commission of Inquiry into the Mining Industry, 1966 (Lusaka, 1966). [The Brown Commission]; C.I.S.B., 100.20, Minutes of a meeting between the African Personnel Managers and the African Mineworkers' Union, 5 December 1955.
48. Patson Kambafwile, interview at Mufulira, 9 September 1976; C.I.S.B., 10:27, vol.x, Minutes of meeting of the African Personnel Managers and Mine Secretaries, 2 March 1955; The Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Unrest in the Mining Industry in Northern Rhodesia in Recent Months (Lusaka, 1956), 30. [The Branigan Report].
49. The Branigan Report, 18-22, 44.
50. Mwendapole, interview cited.
51. Epstein, Politics, 112; Lameck Chisanga, interview cited.
52. John Chisata, interview in Mufulira, 14 September 1976.
53. Chembe Phiri, interview at Luanshya, 3 September 1976; Mwendapole, History, 21-22.
54. Northern News, 24 October 1955; The Branigan Report, 40.
55. The Branigan Report, 35; C.I.S.B., Evidence to the Branigan Commission: Companies' Statement of Case, Appendix 29 and 30, 220-227.
56. Philip Mason, The Birth of a Dilemma: The Conquest and Settlement of Rhodesia (London, 1958), 116.
57. The Branigan Report, 21. The union opposed African miners wearing leg guards underground when the European miners didn't have to, ZA/N/2709/4, R. Philpott, Acting Labor Commissioner, Report, 24 June 1956.
58. The Branigan Report, 17, 20-22, 25
59. The Branigan Report, 25-26; Mwendapole, History, 27-28.
60. Rhokana had about a 75 percent drop in attendance to welfare programs. RCM/CSD/203.5, no.2, NRCM, Report on African Labor boycotts, 30 August 1956; Nchanga welfare stopped during the strike. C.I.S.B., 100.60.1, no.2; Nchanga Replies to the Department of Welfare and Probation Services, 1956.
61. Henderson, "Wage-Earners," 297; Bates, Unions, 272-276, 484-485.

62. Mwendapole, interview cited.
63. N.R.K. Davis, interview in Kitwe, 15 September 1976.
64. C.I.S.B., 100:20:20, vol. ii, Note on T. MacDonnel Stewart v. the Chief Secretary of Northern Rhodesia, 1956; Legislative Council Debates, 30 November 1956, 177.
65. C.I.S.B., 100:20:25, Record of decisions of the Executive Committee, NRCM, 27 June 1957.
66. The Branigan Commission. The African National Congress memorandum to the Commission of Inquiry, 29 October 1956. The Branigan Report, 38, 53-55.
67. C.I.S.B., 100:20:20, vol.i, NRCM to RST and AA, Salisbury, 14 September and 20 September 1956.
68. RCM/CSD/202.5, no.8, NRCM and AMWU, informal discussion, 14 March 1957. Telegram, NRCM to RST and AA, Salisbury, 15 March 1957; (R)-A.10, AMWU meeting, Rhokana, 10 June 1957.
69. "Congress leaders now appeared to be taking the lead in Union affairs." (at Roan). RCM/CSD/202.5, no.9, Extract from executive Committee meeting, NRCM, 30 April 1957.
70. Simon Siwale, interviewed by Dorothea Lehmann at Nchanga, 1958, The Central African Examiner, 8 November and 1 March 1958.
71. C.I.S.B., Evidence to the Morison Commission, 1962. Companies' statement of case, appendix I: Agreement of the companies and the AMWU, 12 March 1958, and agreement of 29 September 1959.
72. M. Mwendapole, interview cited.
73. R. Philpott, evidence to the Branigan Commission, 24 November 1956; (RA) file 33/1, L.C. Katilungu to AMWU members, 5 September 1956.
74. In 1957, union membership dropped to 6560 members. Berger, Labour, Race, and Colonial Rule, 161; RCM/CSD/202.5 no.8, Meeting of the Executive Committee, NRCM, 20 September 1956; P. Kambafwile, interview cited.
75. M. Mwendapole, S. Nkoma, and J. Chisata, interviews cited.
76. B. Jane L. Parpart, "Labor and Capital on the Copperbelt: African Labor Strategy and Corporate Labor Strategy in the Northern Rhodesian Copper Mines 1924-1964" (Ph.D. thesis, Boston University, 1981), ch. II.
77. C.I.S.B., 40;4, vol, 3, APMs Committee Meeting, NRCM, 21 December 1956 and 28 November 1958; (R)-A.11, APM, Rhokana, Monthly Report, February 1958 and June 1958; (R)-A.8, APM committee meeting, Rhokana, 19 August 1957; (R)-W.11, APM, Rhokana, Monthly report, October 1957 and November 1957.
78. Langford Chibambo, interview at Luanshya, 12 September 1976.
79. C.I.S.B., 100:60:7, Native Affairs Dept., Johannesburg, to Phillemore, 13

March 1953; Sandford Chiwila, interview in Kitwe, 27 November 1975; C.I.S.B., 100:60:1, no. 2, Department of Welfare and Probation Services: Welfare Activities of Statutory Authorities in Northern Rhodesia, 1954.

80. The first of these youth training schemes was begun at Rhokana in 1953 by David Greig. The Luansiba Training Scheme, as it was called, concentrated on "reclaiming and educating potential 'dead-end kids'." It was so successful that similar schemes were set up at each of the other mines. Horizon, 1, 3, March 1959; RCM/CSD/2103.5, no. 1, Welfare Report ending August 1954.

81. Department of Labor, Annual Reports, 1958, 1959. Each mine started a newsheet to present information, both about the mine and the world from the companies' perspective. Both papers tried to counter trade union and political propaganda against the companies. They encouraged miners to see the companies as their friends. ZA/NR3/66, Minutes of a meeting of the Senior Labor Officer and the Labor Officers, 18 March 1953; Powdermaker, Copper Town, 281-282; (R)-A.11, African personnel reports, February 1958, March 1958, May 1958, and April 1959; Dick Howie, interview in Johannesburg, 10 October 1976.

82. (R)-W.11, APM Monthly Report, October 1957; (R)-T.15, Minutes of the first meeting of the Township Area Committee, 14 January 1958.

83. S.K. Ndhlovu, interview at Mufulira, 8 September 1976; D. Howie and F. Musumbulwa, interviews cited; RCM/CSD/203.1, no. 2, APM, Mufulira, to general manager, Mufulira, 18 December 1956.

84. "A discussion group was started earlier in the year, but because it developed political leanings was discontinued." (R)-W.9, Rhokana, Report on welfare activities, 1954. Welfare Supervisor, Rhokana, to APM, Rhokana, July 1957.

85. Passmore reported 457 arrests for loafers in 1953 as opposed to 6,697 arrests in 1955. Institute for African Studies, UNZA, Passmore, "Report on the Loafer Problem on the Copperbelt," 14 March 1956, 9; "Checks on unauthorized persons were made daily except Saturday and Sunday." RCM/CSD/202.7, no. 6, African Personnel Manager, MCM, to general manager, MCM, 8 August 1955.

86. RCM.CSD.202.28, no. 1, Minutes of Inter-group Committee Meeting, Salisbury, 27 March 1957; (R)-H.8, O.B. Bennett, general manager, Rhokana, to Consulting engineer, AA, Johannesburg, 31 May 1955; RCM/CSD/203.5, no. 2, R. Howie, Roan, Report to the Department of Welfare and Probationary Services, April 1957.

87. Central African Examiner, 2, 9, 27 September 1958; Department of African Affairs, Annual Report, 1958; C.I.S.B., 100:51, vol. ii, Nchanga African Personnel Manager, R. Gabbitas, to General Manager of Nchanga, 8 March 1960, and Notes of 5th meeting of working committee on movement of labor, 9 July 1959.

88. N.R.K. Davis, interview cited. Dennis Etheredge, interview in Johannesburg, 12 October 1976; Andrew Torrance, interview in Kitwe, 23 August 1976.

89. Institute of African Studies, University of Zambia, H. Franklin, "African Absenteeism" (mimeo), 1959, 1-3.

90. Sandford Chiwila, interview at Kitwe, 27 November 1975.
91. Domeniko Chansa, youth club organizer, Nchanga, interviewed by Doreothea Lehmann, 18 February 1958; (RA), H. Franklin, "An investigation into the Social Background of the Advancees," paper prepared for the Study Department, Roan, 1958, 3.
92. Information from the Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions, Lusaka, 2 October 1967.
93. P. Kambafwile, interview cited.
94. J. Chisata, interview cite.
95. John Chisata, evidence to the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Mining Industry in Northern Rhodesia (Lusaka, 1962). [The Morison Commission]; The Morison Commission Report, 8, 17.
96. Kaunda split with Nkumbula over participation in the 1958 elections set up by the Benson Constitution. Disturbances during the election were blamed on ZANC, which was subsequently banned. In 1959, Kaunda formed a new party, UNIP, to push forward the drive for independence. Mulford, Zambia, 85, 100.
97. A public meeting at Wusikili for UNIP attracted 4,000 to 5,000 Africans. (R)-A.11, African Personnel Manager's Report, November 1960. In January to June in Kitwe, UNIP had 17 meetings with 42,350 people, while ANC had 3 meetings with 840 people. Melville J. Adams, District Commissioner, Kitwe, evidence to the Commission of Inquiry into Unrest on the Copperbelt, July-August 1963 (Lusaka, 1963), 212. [The Whelan Commission]. This statement is supported by Peter Harries-Jones, in his book Freedom and Labour, Mobilization and Political Control on the Zambian Copperbelt (Oxford, 1975), appendix A.
98. Pascale Sokota, interview in Kitwe, 28 August 1976.
99. J. Malik Chipako, interview in Kitwe, 14 September 1976.
100. Memorandum submitted on behalf of the Copper Mining Companies to the Whelan Commission, July 1963
101. S. Ndholvu, interview cited.
102. The Monckton Commission was set up to review the Federal constitution. Mulford, Zambia, 116.
103. M. Mwendapole, interview cited; John Chisata agreed that Katilungu's political behavior antagonized the miners. J. Chisata, interview cited.
104. J. Chisata, interview cited
105. J. Chisata, interview cited. In 1959 the Trade Union Congress had split into two sections, one solely dominated by AMWU and MASA, In 1961 Chisata agreed to reunify the two sections and the new organization was called the United Trade Union Congress (UTUC). Mulford, Zambia, 173-174. Bates describes the UTUC as "the labor wing of UNIP." Bates, Unions, 132.

106. Zambia Pilot (June 1963), 9.
107. Harries-Jones, Freedom, 166-167. Chisata, interview cited.
108. In 1964 there were more than 2,000 cancellations from the AMWU to join the new union. C.I.S.B., 100:47, vol,viii, N.R.K. Davis to the general managers, 30 August 1963.
109. Harries-Jones, Freedom, 168; J. Chisata, interview cited.
110. N.R.K. Davis, interview cited; Northern Star, 1, 14, 31 May 1963; The Brown Commission Report, 25-27
111. On the eve of Independence, the companies decided to base their plans for Zambianization on a dual wage scale of separate rates for Africans and Europeans. Brown Commission Report, 21-22, 33-35, 45-46.
112. A. Mwalwanda, interview cited.
113. Zambian Pilot (June, 1963), 9.
114. Most of my informants agreed with this. Several mentioned that the trade union leaders should be running the country if they had been more cooperative with the party. They implied if that had happened, the treatment of workers on the mines after independence would have been better.
115. Parpart, "Labor and Capital."
116. P. Kambafwile, interview cited.
117. A. Mwalwanda, interview cited.
118. All union leaders interviewed agreed on this point.