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MINING INDUSTRY, 1930-1960

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LABOR CONDITIONS IN THE TANZANIAN  
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By F. J. Kaijage

In the historiography of colonialism one occasionally comes across characterization, direct or oblique, of political and even labor relations as paternalist. The behavior of the colonial state in enacting protective legislation, exhorting employers to take an active interest in their workmen's welfare, and expressing the desire to protect the 'native' from the peril of 'detrimentalisation' constitute a case in point.

R.C. Jerrard, a European entrepreneur of 25 years' standing in Tanganyika, wrote a twenty-five page treatise in 1937 on the "care and management of African labor" which would appear to lend substance to the paternalist model of colonial labor relations. The African worker, he cautioned, had to be approached with patience in order to win his confidence. But once this was done, the European employer would more likely than not find the African worker as pleasant and as hard working as any worker in Europe. Yet the African, in the nature of things, was to be treated like a different breed of workman. Like a child, his handling demanded a delicate balance between firmness and affection.

The African worker, Mr. Jerrard advised, needed firm supervision for "there is very little that the native can be left to do without proper supervision." He took his time to do things, and yet he did not take kindly to being driven. The employer should not hesitate to give a reprimand to his worker when necessary, but he must always keep his temper under control. If he must ridicule him, only "judicious ridicule" would produce good results. The African loved humour and if this could be brought to punctuate interaction between the European employer and his African workers, so much the better. Like a naughty child who was likely to play with fire, the African laborer needed to be carefully watched and protected, especially where dangerous or valuable articles were concerned. He was daredevil enough to tamper with dangerous machinery. Money or explosives should not be left lying about when an African is around, for "boys will be boys all the world over and these African lads are just as bad as our own children. If you must have these things, keep them locked up."

The ideal labor relations in a colonial African situation should, according to Jerrard, be adorned with personal contact, affection and trust. The European employer was well advised to cultivate acquaintance with his African worker, but he must set judicious limits, for "too much familiarity breeds contempt." His conduct must be exemplary, "avoiding any behaviour in front of him (the African worker) which might tend to damage his respect for you." The European employer should do all he can to promote his African laborers' welfare and happiness. He must educate the natives into habits of cleanliness, feed them well and provide them with proper and adequate medical care when it was needed.<sup>1</sup>

Like John Stuart Mill almost a century before him, Jerrard was articulating a "traditional conception of authority" appropriate to a feudal setting. It is probably instructive to recall Mill's words on the contemporary

perception of relations between the higher classes and the common people in pre-industrial England:

The relation between rich and poor should be only partially authoritative; it should be amiable, moral and sentimental; affectionate tutelage on the one side, respectful and grateful deference on the other. The rich should be in loco parentis to the poor guiding and restraining them like children.<sup>2</sup>

The colonial world, like pre-industrial England which Mill was commenting upon, was noted for its lack of fully-fledged capitalist relations of production. One might therefore expect to find paternalism in colonial enterprises.

There were aspects of colonial enterprise which could be referred to as external manifestations of paternalism: provision to labor of "free" accommodation, food rations, cooking facilities, medical care, recreational amenities, and, in the case of contract labor, clothing and bedding. The mine compound, organized on the basis of workers' ethnic groups, with company-sponsored tribal headmen, 'traditional courts' and so on might also be viewed in this light. The crucial question, however, is: to what extent did these external manifestations reflect the concrete reality of paternalism in colonial labor relations?

Mr. Jerrard's model might have been appropriate for a domestic employment situation where the European employer could afford to play patrician vis-a-vis his African 'plebs'. But the situation in capitalist agriculture and industry was not conducive to the realization of such a model of employment, at least not the substance of it. Here the inexorable laws of capitalism came into full play. They were tainted by pre-capitalist elements, to be sure, but entrepreneurial ideology, underpinned by the urge to maximize profits, had the upper hand. The African worker was hardly an object of his employer's paternal love and affection. Labour in colonial enterprise, as much as in any other capitalist undertaking, was a crucial factor of production whose cost determined, to a large degree, the success or failure of any enterprise. Its cost needed to be minimized as much as was humanly possible in pursuit of profit maximization. Such 'paternalist' features as there were simply reflected the contradictions of a precapitalist milieu in which capitalist enterprise operated. The cash nexus in this environment was not firmly entrenched. What may have appeared as perquisites or acts of protection simply served a 'social control' function. These were practical solutions designed to deal with such problems as high labor turnovers, absenteeism, lack of motivation, and the ever-present threat of labor rebellion.

The main argument of this paper on the life and labor of the African mineworkers in Tanganyika between the early years of the Great Depression and the end of colonial rule is that the quest for profit maximization rather than an imaginary paternal benevolence on the part of the employers was central in determining labor conditions. Entrepreneurial cost-consciousness which in this respect entailed the urge not only to minimize labor costs but also to maximize labor output constituted the most important feature of profit maximization. The laws of capitalism, however, do operate within the frameworks of concrete historical situations. Our analysis must therefore pay due attention to the factors which mediated the Tanganyika mine owners' quest for profit maximization with regard to their treatment of their workers. In this regard, three factors are of particular importance. First is the notable diversity of the Tanganyika mining industry; second is what we may refer to as

the racial factor of labor relations on the mines; and third is the intervention of the state.

I have given an historical outline of the development of mining in Tanganyika elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> but it might be of assistance to our analysis to point out its salient features. By the Depression period most of the mining properties formerly owned by German firms had been brought back into production and additional mineral deposits of significant potential had been located and some of them were already being exploited. In the period covered by this study eight different mineral products were produced in different parts of the country. The Lake Victoria Zone, to the north, itself an area of considerable geographical diversity, produced gold, diamonds, wolfram or tungsten, and tin (from reef and alluvial deposits). The southern zone produced reef and alluvial gold, and carried within its depths proven coal deposits whose exploitation awaited (and still awaits) the development of a transport infrastructure. Central Tanganyika produced gold at the Sekenke mine which, it is said, contributed significantly to the German local financing of the First World War. The western zone was fairly rich in gold, lead, mica and salt. The Morogoro region in the east has been producing mica since the German days. Operations in the industry ranged from sizeable companies with an international connection to individual owner operators who maintained a precarious existence.

The diversity of the industry and how it affected the condition of labor should now be apparent. The geographical location of a mine is an important factor, for example, where transportation facilities, ecological conditions and the nature of the surrounding economy and society was likely to have affected availability of food and other supplies, as well as the social life of labor. No less important is the nature of the mineral deposit in question and its method of recovery which largely determined the working conditions. It will be shown, for example that working conditions in alluvial mining were radically different from those in reef or lode mining. The type of mineral product and its price movements on the world market determined to a large degree the wage rates and the levels of other types of expenditure on labor. The size of an enterprise, with the extent to which it could command financial resources, was another important element of diversity. The large international mining firms, able to draw on experiences in the southern part of the continent and elsewhere, managed their labor in styles which the small owner-operators, most of whose horizons "never went beyond the day after tomorrow," could hardly ever emulate. The time-scale of an operation was also important in determining the conditions experienced by its labor force. Different mining claims were discovered, developed, and went into production at different points in time. Many firms in their early stages of development or production, before they were on a sound financial footing, tended to reduce outlays on labor to their lowest possible levels. However, there were differences: between, for example, on the one hand, a resource-endowed international mining firm which perceived its prospects in an operation, however early, to be good and, on the other hand, a self-financing operation whose 'bread and butter' solely depended on the proceeds of that operation. These diverse forces produced diverse experiences.

The employers' profit motive and cost consciousness were embellished by a racist ideology and general beliefs about the inherent inferiority of the African. This factor impinged upon the manner in which they sought to minimize their labor costs. Convinced as they were about the primitive nature of living conditions in the African traditional environment, they had no problem in rationalizing the poor wages, rations, housing and other conditions which

their African laborers endured. European foremen, brought up within an industrial work culture characterized by supervised time thrift and synchronized labor were impatient with African pre-industrial notions of work based on self-supervised 'task-orientation'. They were wont to conjuring up the figure of the 'lazy native'. Their treatment of labor under their control tended to be highly authoritarian, patently crude, and often violent.

In a significant contribution to the debate on the colonial state, B.J. Berman and J.M. Lonsdale argue that as well as being the ultimate institutional apparatus for ensuring the reproduction and accumulation of capital, the state is, at the same time, the ultimate agency of political reproduction, "maintaining the pattern of class domination and subordination." The latter function imposes upon the state the logic of having to assume the appearance of an impartial arbiter between contending interests.<sup>4</sup> The intervention of the Tanganyika colonial state in attempting to regulate labor conditions in the mining industry could correctly be viewed in this light.

The colonial state, needless to say, is not a monolithic phenomenon. In non-settler colonies, as was Tanganyika, colonial regimes, unencumbered by settler capitalist political power, were often at pains in claiming the pursuit of the interests of the 'native' vis-a-vis those of his employer. In reality, however, the need to attract investment by promoting the profitability of capital was central to their behaviour. In this respect, state intervention in economic management was transparently partial. In the case of the Tanganyika mining industry such protective legislation as there was on behalf of the workers was often inadequate or of a token nature, and the state relied on moral suasion rather than compulsion for its implementation. The obverse side of the same coin is that the state invariably employed coercion to force the African workers in the industry to fulfil their part of the 'bargain'.

### The Labor Process

Experience regarding conditions of work was extremely diverse. It ranged, on one end, from the large mines where labor intensity was carefully measured, work categories elaborately defined, and labor closely and effectively supervised to, on the other end, the alluvial mine fields where labor gangs were undifferentiated, and self-supervision was the order of the day. A second important observation is that in general Tanganyikan mineworkers before World War II were largely confined to unskilled jobs, except for certain categories of underground work. Skilled labor was supplied by Europeans and Asians or non-Tanganyikan Africans, especially those from Central Africa. After World War II, especially during the 1950s, a significant number of Tanganyikans began to perform certain categories of skilled jobs. This development was partly a function of increasing mechanization at some of the larger mines and partly an index of increasing differentiation among the Tanganyikan wage-earners, itself a reflection of the fairly advanced state of wage labor as a system.

Interesting work has already been done on the nature of work in the mining industries of a number of African countries.<sup>5</sup> Conditions here were not dissimilar to those at most of the Tanganyika mines. In this section I shall seek to delineate the major forms of labor control and exploitation within a work situation. Secondly, I hope to make some original contribution regarding work in alluvial mining where little work has been done.

In the settled mines, as opposed to the ever-shifting alluvial mine claims, both the size and gradation of the labor force depended on the scale of operation. The smaller reef gold properties of Musoma and the Lupa or the

Karagwe tin field and most of the Morogoro mica mines, carrying out mining with hardly any mechanized operations, employed small labor gangs who worked largely under the supervision of African nyamparas. Some of these could afford to employ one or two skilled Europeans or Asians to superintend operations in the crucial mining and ore treatment departments. Otherwise, the owners superintended the operations themselves. Since they ran small labor camps, providing therefore minimal services, owners of these small mines employed little labor outside the production department: a few sanitary workers, a handful of general laborers, usually on a casual basis, and probably a junior clerk and a storekeeper.

Starved of capital resources, these mines employed an assortment of primitive, usually manual, equipment and engaged large proportions of unskilled labor, or at best labor with only rudiments of training, most of it on the job. As a result owners of these small mines depended for their profits, such as they were, on lengthening the working day as much as they possibly could. The evidence in hand indicates that the normal working day before 1950 was almost literally from dawn to dusk. On the Karagwe tinfield in 1939 work began at 5:30 in the morning till 5 or 6 in the evening, after which the men were supposed to fetch their daily rations from the employers' stores, collect firewood and water and cook their only meal of the day.<sup>6</sup> Around the same period it was found out on the Musoma goldfield that owners of small mine properties frequently called out their men to work on Sundays but paid no special Sunday over-time rates.<sup>7</sup> In summary, three inter-related factors dictated the manner in which surplus value was extracted. These were: the nature and extent of a mineral deposit, the methods of its extraction, and the resources commanded by a mine owner. In these small mines extraction of 'absolute surplus value', based on lengthening the working day, was the norm.<sup>8</sup> Such a state of affairs is indicative of the low level of the development of the forces of production. As we shall see below, it was here that both wages and living conditions for mineworkers were extremely poor.

The larger mining properties, notably the Mwadui diamond mine, the Geita, Sekenke, Buhemba, Kiabakari and Saza gold mines, and the Mpanda lead mine, invested in substantial plant and equipment, especially after World War II. By the early 1950s most of the processes in ore extraction, traction and treatment were mechanized. The companies also ran regulated townships in which they provided varying ranges of services to their employees. As mechanization increased, and as the townships expanded and with them the services provided, job categories multiplied and differentiation within the mines' labor forces intensified.

Needless to say, these mines went through different stages of development before they would achieve high levels of technological advancement. At Williamson's Mwadui diamond mine, which opened in 1940, development work was greatly hampered by the War. Mining and gravel treatment were carried out by simple hand techniques with tools mostly locally purchased. It was not until 1946 that Williamson was able to embark upon a program of expansion and technical modernization.<sup>9</sup> In the mid-1930s Sekenke gold mine, the most mechanized mine at the time, employed only two air-compressed rock drills operated by experienced miners from Northern Rhodesia. For the most part the ore was worked by 'hammer boys' who used hand drills. Delivery of mined ore to the pit surface depended largely on human rather than mechanical power. The water pumping system was so inefficient that work underground was carried out in wet uncomfortable conditions.<sup>10</sup> By the end of the War the larger mines were doing much better than this, technologically speaking.

In 1956 Williamson Diamonds Ltd. at Mwadui celebrated its ten years of technical innovation with the completion of a large new heavy media separation plant, designed to treat up to 7,500 tons of gravel a day. It was fed by a

10,000-foot long conveyor belt which transported the gravels from the open-cast workings where the principal excavator unit was an electrically operated 'walking dragline'. Other types of mechanical excavation equipment were also at work. In the following year the company embarked upon an ambitious program of underground development and diamond drilling.<sup>11</sup> In its racially segregated township the company provided a wide range of services to its employees and their families. Williamson Diamonds was evidently a large enterprise with a complex system of labor management.

In the late 1950s Williamson Diamonds began a job evaluation exercise the results of which indicate the existence of a highly differentiated labor force. The company identified nine broad job categories of daily paid African employees in the mining (underground and surface), prospecting, treatment, engineering (including transport), township and administration departments, each of the departments with several occupational groups of varying skills and experiences. In mining, for example, there were drillers, blasters, operators of excavators, drivers, lashers, timbermen, banksmen, general laborers, a clerk and a storeman. The African compound administration controlled maintenance artisans and laborers, cleaners, shop attendants, security guards, storemen, tailors, cooks, bar waiters, and administrative assistants and clerks. The wage rates ranged from sh. 5.50 in category one to sh. 25.00 in category nine. Besides, there was a small number of 'senior' African employees on monthly rates.<sup>12</sup> Mwadui was of course the largest mine in the territory. The other mines cannot be expected to have operated as complex a system of labor management as that of Mwadui, but there were many similarities.

By the late 1930s the larger mines were operating 8-hour work shifts. There are some indications that the average working day in the earlier period was considerably longer, but the evidence is scanty. Any over-time or Sunday work was paid a special over-time rate. But labor was strictly controlled and closely supervised. In the regulated compounds labor was restricted in movement and in some cases even subjected to a military-style discipline as a way of extracting maximum work performance. On the enclosed property of Mwadui workers could only go out over the weekends. This was aimed partly at combating absenteeism and partly at minimizing chances of diamond smuggling.<sup>13</sup> At the Geita mine workers were awakened by a siren just before dawn, and the distribution of work was preceded by a military-style parade on the central grounds of the compound commanded by the company sergeant major.<sup>14</sup> At every entry point to important production departments at Mwadui - the power house, the heavy media separation plant, the mine workings, the boiler shop and so on - there was a check post manned by a supervisor who checked identity documents and barred from entry workers who reported after the siren went, or refused exit to those who wanted to leave before the end of the shift.<sup>15</sup>

The outstanding feature of mine work in the bigger mines was white supervision to which every African worker was subject. Most of the white supervisors tended to be miners and artisans with work experience in the Southern and Central African mining industry. In some cases direct supervision was carried out by African nyamparas, but there was always some white overseer around the corner who exercised final authority at the place of work. Employers needed the white supervisors partly because of their skills and experience in mining and related jobs and partly because of the employers' belief that, if left unsupervised by Europeans, Africans were more likely than not to loaf around or do shoddy work.<sup>16</sup>

Interviews with former mineworkers on white supervision evoke memories of terror and mutual hatred. Supervisors often addressed their work subordinates in obscene language, drawing on a repertoire of opprobrious, and usually



racist terms and epithets. They kicked the laborers about and sometimes flogged them with hippopotamus whips, which was against the law. On numerous occasions African laborers were provoked into fighting back, and violent racial confrontations at work constituted a feature of mining life.<sup>17</sup> At the Mwadui diamond mine a trade union leader recounted incidents in 1960 to illustrate mistreatment of African workers by their white supervisors. A Mr. King had kicked the ration bread of an African employee and later contemptuously given him a shilling in compensation. At the HMS, the gravel treatment plant, an African was booted by a European supervisor because he had accidentally caused soil to touch the supervisor's trousers.<sup>18</sup> Occasionally, especially from the late 1950s, aggrieved workers would complain to management but usually no action was taken. Only a sustained campaign by the Tanganyika Mine Workers' Union from 1959 onwards evoked some response.

Like in many other employment centres in colonial Africa, mineworkers were assessed and paid on the basis of the labor card system, known as the kipande in East Africa. Payment was made on completion of 30 days' work, each day's work being recorded on the card by the supervisor. According to the courts' interpretation of the relevant sections of the Master and Native Servants Ordinance, once a laborer started work on the kipande, it became a binding contract until he finished his 30 days' work, which he had to do within 60 days. Continuous absence from work for 4 days was an offense. The kipande was popularly referred to as the poor man's way of working. It was both a symbol and an instrument of labor exploitation and oppression, and also served as a means of imposing work discipline. Supervisors would erase or refuse to enter on the card a day's work as a sanction for a whole range of 'offences', including reporting late for duty, loitering, refusal to obey orders, shoddy work, failure to complete a task, saucy conduct towards a supervisor and so on. Supervisors enjoyed absolute power over their subordinates in this respect and recorded or deducted days from the cards according to their whims and fancies. A day not entered on the card would earn no wages and no noma ticket for the daily ration. Unfair wage deduction by means of the kipande system was one of the major grievances frequently expressed by the workers.<sup>19</sup> Sometimes employers attempted to retain labor by deferring payment on completed labor cards.<sup>20</sup>

Except for the alluvial mines, mining accidents constituted the scourge of life on the mines. I am presently in the initial stages of a systematic study of the accidents but there is already an indication that they were quite frequent and in some cases extensive. Underground work was naturally the most dangerous, with deaths and injuries resulting from accidental detonation of explosives during ore blasting, collapse of mine roofs, sudden falling of rock and inundation of mines. Former workers at the Geita mine indicated that an average of 3 deaths, due mainly to mining accidents, occurred daily. A man who worked there between 1948 and 1951 estimated that some 200 people died in mining accidents while he was there. The company had full-time employees whose job was to bury the dead. Gold came to be associated with majini spirits, and often workers took underground with them magic medicine as protection against accidents.<sup>21</sup>

There were situations where accidents were inevitable, for example in the case of an unexpected inundation of a mine. In most cases, however, the frequency of the accidents reflected either the reluctance of the mine owners to invest resources in ensuring maximum safety, because that would erode their profits, or a lack of technical know how on the part of management, or a combination of both. Most accidents on the Karagwe tinfield were attributed to tributors who were totally unschooled in the scientific methods of mining and were starved of resources to invest in safety.<sup>22</sup> Some miners also suffered the long-term effects of mine work by contracting diseases connected with

mining some of which were fatal. Silicosis caused by the inhaling of rock dust and pneumonia, sometimes resulting from working in a wet, poorly drained mine, are ready examples.

The work situation on the Lupa alluvial gold field, discovered in 1922, was radically different from that which obtained on the settled mines. Alluvial gold mining entailed the recovery of gold originally eroded from the parent rock and later deposited in plateaux and river valleys. The most common recovery process consisted in the washing of alluvium with water using pans (panning) or sluice boxes (sluicing) and then picking the small residue of gold by hand. The collection of working tools consisted only of pans or sluice boxes, bars and shovels. Alluvial mining was therefore suitable for 'small men' of small means in search of a fortune, should they come across a lucky strike. Gangs of workmen under one employer ranged from 5 to 100, depending on the size of a claim.

In the early stages of alluvial mining on the Lupa work was restricted to the banks of the larger streams in dry season. The working unit was a small gang of men using a sluice-box under the supervision of an African kapitao. Few diggers, i.e. employers, visited their claims to supervise workmen. Work came to a standstill in wet season when the river banks became flooded. As the main river banks got exhausted of their gold deposits and as the search for gold took a frantic turn, especially during the Depression, small streams, creeks and storm drains were invaded for gold. Deposits here were scattered and patchy, but of payable value. In this phase gold was mainly won by panning. The 'panning boy', working on his own, became the working unit. Prospecting and winning (actual mining) were largely done by unsupervised panners trusting to luck and distribution for their finds. Wet season work assumed major importance. To beat water shortage in dry season some employers employed the 'dry-blower', driven by a petrol engine, to extract gold from dry earth dug from dry ravines and storm drains, filled up valleys and mbugas. Each dry blower was attended by a group of about 35 men who naturally worked under supervision. Since dry blowers required considerable capital, few diggers employed them. The typical worker in the industry during our period, therefore, remained the unsupervised panning boy.<sup>23</sup>

Apart from the daily rate, based on the working day, the alluvial gold workers in panning and sluicing were paid a bonus, locally known as the prizi, based on the amount of gold recovered per day. The standard rate was 20 cents for every pennyweight of gold, though in periods of serious labor shortage, employers outbade one another by paying higher rates. In a situation of unsupervised labor, the prizi also served the function of motivating the workers to expend maximum energy on the field in order to recover as much gold as possible. But it was also common for the unsupervised laborers to sell gold to illegal dealers or to other employers who paid higher prizi rates. Sometimes workmen, in order to maximize their prizis, dug for gold on claims belonging to other diggers. The bonus system, as a result, often aroused much controversy among the diggers and between government and the diggers.<sup>24</sup>

By the late 1930s alluvial gold on the Lupa was difficult to come by and economical operation had a much greater element of chance than in earlier days. Early in 1942 diggers introduced the 'quarter' system whereby a laborer had to return a minimum weight of gold in order to get two days marked on his kipande. The prizi was paid only for gold over and above this minimum. Gold below the required minimum weight earned no wages and no food ration. The diggers claimed that the system was designed "to get an honest day's work out of a laborer and to prevent pure loafing." Government found the new system reprehensible inasmuch as diggers were attempting to pass the gamble of finding gold on the laborer, thus encouraging gold theft and illegal digging

on other people's claims. But government never effectively intervened in the relations between diggers and their men. Most probably, therefore, some diggers got away with its implementation.<sup>25</sup> By the 1950s most of the expatriate diggers had left and, increasingly, the little gold recovered on the Lupa was won by workers organized in co-operatives.

#### Living Conditions on the Settled Mines

The quality of living conditions on the smaller, less valuable mines, operating on meagre resources, was obviously inferior to that on the richer mines. Some were better than others but, on the whole, wages, rations, housing, sanitation, health and other facilities were extremely poor. Most employers depended on a single small mine and could only invest in worker's welfare purely on the basis of returns from the mine. They would usually give investment priority to physical means of production, especially ore treatment machinery.

Only medium-size mines ran rather regulated camps, employing a camp policeman or two to run them. The camps in most of the small mines were rather informal, with poor, or even dilapidated, housing and bad or no sanitation. From a third to half of the labor force lived out of camp. More than 80 per cent of the twenty or so Musoma mines inspected in 1939 fell into this category. The standard laborers' housing consisted of either grass huts or wattle and daub thatched 'rondavels', 12 to 15 feet in diameter, standing 10 yards apart. Each of the small huts accommodated up to 8 men or more. Few mines had regular married quarters, and when they did, two families or more shared a rondavel. At most of the mines sanitation was conspicuously absent. There was usually no piped water. Trench or pit latrine accommodation was sometimes provided, but there were no screens between seats, and latrines were usually so dirty that workmen preferred fouling the uncut surrounding grass, with all the imaginable hazards to public health.<sup>26</sup> In Morogoro, mica deposits were scattered over the Uluguru hills and mountains, situated mostly in inhabited areas. Most labor was therefore within reasonable reach of their homes. Those who worked far from their homes were responsible for erecting their own grass huts near their places of work.<sup>27</sup>

Labour inspectors admitted that workers' food rations were inadequate, monotonous and un nourishing. The standard ration at most of the Musoma mines consisted of a daily issue of maize meal, a weekly issue of beans, salt and sometimes groundnuts. If the employer shot a buck a Sunday issue of meat might be received.<sup>28</sup> In 1935 a government official complained of the Musoma mine owners: "there appears to be a belief among some of the smaller employers that, provided a native is given two pounds or so of maize or muhogo (cassava) meal all has been done which ought to be done. The laborer cooks this as best he may, or if firewood is not to hand, mixes it with water and eats it raw."<sup>29</sup> In 1943 it was reported that rations in the Morogoro mica mining industry consisted of maize and cassava flour only. Fortunately, the recipients of this poor ration were able to return home over the weekends and supplement it with better food.<sup>30</sup>

Although the Master and Native Servants Ordinance required that employers take care of their sick laborers, few of the smaller ones did. At best medical facilities available at some of these mines consisted of a poorly equipped dispensary run by an unqualified, barely literate dispenser. At some mines the sick were attended either by the manager who kept "a very primitive assortment of drugs and bandages" at his house, or by the mine clerk who had only a first-aid kit in his office. Others gave no medical care of any kind, leaving their sick laborers to either seek traditional cure if they could get it or die.<sup>31</sup>

The positive aspect of life on the small mines is that in general life in the camps was not regimented. Government sometimes expressed disappointment that the camps were run on "extremely happy-go-lucky lines." Single women from the surrounding country slept with their boy friends in the camps. Trafficking in liquor was uncontrolled, and government authorities urged employers in vain to invoke the Native Liquor Ordinance and set up controlled liquor shops. As the mine owners provided no recreational amenities to their labor, they had no moral basis for restricting their workmen's 'social freedom'.<sup>32</sup>

Generally speaking the larger mines, in the early stages of their development, provided conditions which were only marginally better than those on the small mines. Only when they had reached a full production stage, especially after World War II, did some of them provide a palpably better quality of life for their workers. The common feature of these mines is that provision of services to workers, especially housing, was organized on the basis of a 'colour-class complex'. Housing, medical services, recreational amenities and schools (where they were provided) were segregated on the basis of race and employment status. The best facilities were enjoyed by whites. Next came the Asians and then the 'senior' African employees, mainly clerks, supervisors and artisans. The predominant majority of the African workers received relatively inferior services. Among the latter, contract laborers fared worse. The social life of the African workers was manipulated and controlled to serve the interests of the employers.

The 1939 labor inspector's report on conditions on the Musoma goldfield, already referred to, singled out for praise the Buhemba and Kiabakari mines. At Buhemba, where some 1,000 Africans were employed, there were about 300 units of housing allocated according to the status of the workers. The mud-brick huts occupied by the low paid workers were found to be spacious, "remarkably clean and in very good repair." Higher grade workers occupied "real houses with galvanized roofs." At Kiabakari 20 married couples were provided with separate huts, an unusual feature of mine compound life at that time. Housing for European employees was assessed as superior to government quarters for colonial officials in many administrative centres. At both mines running water was readily available, and the compounds were kept clean by full-time sanitary squads. Hospital facilities were located on the premises and company transport was available to ferry serious cases to Musoma government hospital. The companies ran clubs where their workers could buy their traditional brew. Shopping facilities were also provided. Rations were judged to be sufficiently nourishing. Apart from the usual maize meal, beans and salt, a weekly issue of meat, sugar and fruit was a regular feature of the ration. Kiabakari operated an evening school which its workers attended on a voluntary basis and learned mainly the three Rs and elementary English.<sup>33</sup>

Conditions, especially housing, at the Geita mine, the biggest gold mine in the territory, constituted an issue of frequent friction between Government and the Company. A visiting delegation of the Empire Parliamentary Association complained about overcrowding in the Geita laborers' huts. The delegation members were appalled when they observed that the laborers slept on the bare floor.<sup>34</sup> As late as 1953 the company's Ridge-8 compound consisted of what the Deputy Labour Commissioner described as dilapidated mud and wattle circular huts. Construction of new mud-brick houses was progressing slowly, at the rate of three per month. The main compound at Geita consisted mostly of the standard corrugated iron rondavels with thatched roofs, constructed in the late 1930s.<sup>35</sup> Except for some few workers in the supervisory category, married accommodation was inadequate. A newly appointed labor affairs adviser described workers' housing at Geita in 1952 as "frankly shocking," and although he recommended construction of new housing units, evidence based on

interviews with former workers at Geita indicates that no substantial number of new units were constructed.<sup>36</sup>

The earliest dietary available for Geita is for the year 1948. It looks quite impressive. It consisted of a daily issue of maize meal, beans, groundnuts and sugar, and a weekly issue of vegetable oils, greens, salt, and meat (twice a week).<sup>37</sup> Single workers received cooked meals in a communal mess. However, oral sources are replete with complaints about sour flour and rotten beans being a source of workers' frequent stomach ailments.<sup>38</sup> A racially segregated hospital was built in the late 1930s and was manned by a full-time medical officer. Prophylactics against cerebro-spinal meningitis, malaria and pneumonia were administered regularly. Racially segregated recreational facilities were also provided by the company.<sup>39</sup>

Conditions at the Mwadui diamond mine, which eventually became a model of labor management, did not improve appreciably until the mid-1950s. The original workers' housing consisted mainly of the standard circular huts which only began to be dismantled in 1951 when construction of a new compound started. Early in 1952 the Labour Commissioner urged management to speed up construction of the new compound as the state of overcrowding in the old one was "most undesirable." The new compound, completed in 1954, consisted of permanent brick-and-mortar units for single and married employees. Adequate kitchen facilities, and ablution and latrine accommodation, with running water, were provided.<sup>40</sup>

By the late 1950s Mwadui was a fully fledged mining town modelled on the southern and central African experience. Besides the new compound, officially designated as African Township, there were housing units for senior African employees, Asian quarters and a European township. The European employees and their families had access to a club with such facilities as a swimming pool, a bar, indoor games, a cinema hall, a children's park and a golf course. Facilities at the Asiatic club were rather inferior but still better than what was available for the Africans. Before 1960, when the African Township community centre was completed, the only recreational amenity available for the African workers was a company-run mapuya (local beer) club. Primary school education for employees' children and hospital services, including specialized treatment, were available on a racially segregated basis. Bus transport within the town was provided, and so were racially segregated shopping facilities. The rations, commuted to cash payment only in 1960, were reputedly nourishing.<sup>41</sup>

Reports about relatively good living conditions on the bigger mines, which in any case were usually exaggerated by colonial officials sympathetic to management, are likely to obscure the fact that workers on these mines were subjected to various forms of social control, restriction on their freedoms, and mistreatment. In other words, the mineworkers were subjected to what some social scientists have characterized as extramural discipline which is imposed outside the bounds of the work place.<sup>42</sup> We may attribute this 'extramuralism' to three main factors: (1) the need to prevent theft of valuable minerals, especially gold and diamonds, (2) the desire to control behaviour on the part of the workmen that might adversely affect their work discipline and their productivity, and (3) the need to prevent the possibility of a breakdown in general order on the mine or, even more significantly, combination by the workers to put demands to, or even rebel against the authority of management.

The denial of the mineworker's freedom and his control were embodied in the administration of the compound under the direct control of the compound manager assisted by the compound police. Most compound managers were recruited

from Southern Africa and they manifested the same kinds of beliefs about African labor that were prevalent in that part of the continent. Even colonial officials admitted that compound managers' attitudes towards Africans left much to be desired.<sup>43</sup> A district officer described the compound manager at Mpanda as an "irascible disciplinarian" who had "a peculiar mind towards the African, conducive to believing that all and sundry, unless kept so strictly controlled and disciplined that they can hardly think, are thieves, liars and vagabonds."<sup>44</sup> A police commissioner was reluctant to give compound managers powers of search without warrant (which they exercised, anyway) because, he feared, they were "usually a 'tough' type of individual, impatient of the law and its safeguards."<sup>45</sup> The compound police, recruited mainly from among the ranks of ex-KAR soldiers, constituted an instrument of terror on the mines. They were identified not only by their uniforms but also by what one labor inspector described as "vicious looking" whips which they carried as "a badge of authority." In fact they often used these whips against the workers and, although this was illegal, they usually got away with it. Their powers of search and arrest were virtually unlimited. The compound sergeant major tried simple cases with the help of the tribal elders.<sup>46</sup>

The compound was a place where the worker enjoyed no privacy and little freedom of movement. In their overcrowded huts, the workers could be searched any time. Up to the early 1950s female residents of Mwadui wanting to go out of the enclosed mine were allegedly searched for hidden diamonds even in their private parts. New recruits at Mwadui could not get out of the mine until they had been there for at least three months. Even then, they could only go out on the weekends. There were restrictions on receiving visitors both at Mwadui and at Geita. A complicated and highly restrictive pass system of getting visitors into Mwadui was in force, and at Geita unmarried women were not allowed into the compound. Controlled drinking hours at the company-run beer clubs were strictly enforced. Geita employees who wanted to brew beer in their company-owned quarters had to obtain a special license from management at the cost of sh.2/= each time. Drinking parties at such places were closely watched by the compound police.<sup>47</sup>

Restrictions on contract labor, the pariah group of the mine compound, were even more stringent. They tended to live in separate units, either in barrack-type buildings or in circular huts where the state of overcrowding was above average. They were constantly herded to ensure against their desertion. Whereas 'voluntary' labor at Geita was, on arrival, given some measure of choice on the nature of their job, manamba (contract) labor was given no such choice. Once recruited on contract, a worker at Geita could not marry until the end of his contract. No wonder that cases of adultery, involving fellow workers' wives, and rape of girls in the surrounding country, reached epidemic proportions.<sup>48</sup>

A newly appointed 'Native Labour Adviser' at Geita remarked in 1952 that construction of decent housing for workers was in itself insufficient. He argued:

A house: a collection of bricks and mortar with a roof over it is a useless - even a dangerous thing, unless it is merely incidental to the establishment of a happy community. More human degradation is concentrated in a tenement room than in any rural shack. We should aim at the African housing at the Geita being so planned that satisfactory hygienic housing is supplied with a socially well organized community which is essentially African in its behaviour pattern and conduct.<sup>49</sup>

His "socially well organized community" was the compound where housing was allocated on the basis of workers' ethnic groups. Each group was housed separately in a cluster of huts under the leadership of a company-appointed tribal elder or headman who not only mediated in the disputes among his people but also served as an important link between them and the mine management. The Mwadui mine managed its compound on similar lines. One important institution of the tribal compound was the evening tribal dance.

As I have argued elsewhere, the tribal compound, which sought to tie the worker to traditional institutions, was, objectively, a subtle form of social control which held in check the emergence of group consciousness beyond the tribe. It helped management to keep the workers divided, and the former must have quietly relished the frequent inter-tribal fights, their disturbance of the peace notwithstanding.<sup>50</sup>

To many workers, however, who found themselves among strangers in a strange place, the tribal compound served the function of a mutual aid society. At Geita, for example, the company simply buried the dead; it never informed the victims' relatives. Fellow tribesmen usually volunteered to do that, and to return home whatever personal effects were left by the deceased.<sup>51</sup>

Very often, the so-called perquisites received by the workers were often meant to elicit their loyalty to management and to encourage them to work harder. Food rations constitute a pertinent case in point. Following upon the recommendations of the Native Labour Adviser in 1952, Geita mine eventually issued rations to workers' families. The maximum ration issued was for one wife and two children. Available evidence indicates that absenteeism and loafing were lowest among married workers who could not forgo their food rations for fear of starving their families. Since families of hospitalized employees received no rations, married workers would avoid hospitalization as much as they possibly could, suffering, as it were, with suppressed bitterness.<sup>51</sup>

### Living Conditions on the Alluvial Mine Fields

Alluvial mining took place on the Karagwe tinfield in northwestern Tanganyika and on the Lupa goldfield in southwestern Tanzania. Because alluvial mining did not require much capital investment in mining equipment, it was an appropriate type of enterprise for men of small means. It tended to attract 'petty capitalists' who had failed to make it elsewhere, for example in planting, farming or trading. Their weakness as entrepreneurs easily reflected itself in the depressed and depressing conditions which their employees had to endure.

The Karagwe tinfield was discovered in 1924. Until the end of World War II when the Kyerwa Syndicate, the major firm on the field, embarked on a major development of the lode deposits under its claims, more than half of the tin won on the field was from alluvial deposits. An observer in 1940 remarked that most of the 62 employers on the field started work "literally without a penny in their pockets" and carried on from month to month on the results of the previous one. A couple of bad months, the observer assessed, would put most of them out of action. Most worked other people's claims on 'tributory' arrangements.

A tributor bore all the costs of production, including acquiring and maintaining all tools and equipment; recruiting, maintaining and paying labor; and costs incurred by the tin buyer, for example royalties, freight and insurance. In addition, he surrendered 20 per cent of the gross value of the tin to the claim-holder. There were even sub-tributors who worked ground

allotted to them by the tributors and paid an agreed proportion of the gross value of the tin won to the tributors who in turn paid the agreed tribute on this tin to the claim-holder. The absentee claim holder, who did nothing and lived in the relative comfort of Bukoba town, received free money while the tributors and sub-tributors bore all these costs. Moreover, tributors were haunted by a sense of insecurity as tribute arrangements could be terminated any time. Tributors were therefore extremely cost conscious, a fact which was reflected both in the manner in which they worked the deposits and in how they treated their labor. They tended to rob the richest portion of a claim, skipping low grade ground. They were invariably bad employers. A government officer's description of these people in 1940 could not have been more succinct: "Tributors, working from hand to mouth in most cases, skimp their responsibilities to labor in regard to housing, food and medical attention, in an effort to offset the tribute payment."<sup>53</sup>

Government was seriously concerned about labor conditions on the tinfield which assumed scandalous proportions. Several inquiries were made between 1938 and the end of the War but little happened by way of improvement. In the majority of cases the laborers had to erect their own grass huts where they lived in overcrowded conditions. Sanitation was completely neglected. The food rations were described by a labor officer as "poor, unnourishing, monotonous and inadequate." Every laborer received one and a half to two pounds of maize meal and a small tin of beans daily, plus a twice weekly small supply of salt. The more generous employer might occasionally issue a plug of tobacco. The policy was "no work no rations" and so no rations were issued on Sundays, and the sick were usually never fed. Often many workers absented themselves from work while they went to look for food in the neighbouring villages.

A labor officer remarked in 1938 that the neglect of sick laborers in Karagwe was "the outstanding feature to be regretted." "If a man becomes ill," observed another colonial officer two years later, "he must in most camps get well himself or get out, if necessary in a shroud." Few employers stocked any medicines or dressings, and the nearest dispensary at Kaisho was anywhere between 10 and 40 miles from the tin workings. When accidents occurred, the injured were dumped in a passing lorry and sent to Bukoba government hospital, 100 miles away, "if they are sufficiently ill to warrant this concession." A Government dispensary on the field was only put up in 1943. Few employers ever gave food to sick laborers. In most cases, the sick depended for their sustenance upon the generosity of their hut mates.

Cases of default in payment of wages were quite frequent. It was common for workers to be owed up to four months' worth of wages and sometimes they were never paid anything. Many workers were often cheated. Merali Shariff, an Asian tributor, would sometimes pretend that he was giving some of his workers a canoe ride across the Kagera. He would then leave them on the Ugandan side of the river thus disposing of them unpaid. In some cases workers would receive temptingly big advances on their first card, and that was all the wages they received.<sup>54</sup> The Karagwe tinfield established such a bad reputation that it always had a serious labor shortage. Most of its labor supply came from the depressed Belgian territory of Ruanda-Urundi.

By the late 1920s the Lupa goldfield, discovered in 1922, was already producing 85 per cent of the colony's annual gold output. The onset of the Depression, which gave rise to the international abandonment of the gold standard which, in turn, triggered off a price boom for gold, had dramatic results for the Lupa. The number of claim-holders on the field rose by 200 per cent in the second half of 1931. Between 1931 and 1936 the number of diggers



increased from 300 to 1,000, and their laborers from 5,000 to 20,000. Expatriate farmers, planters and traders in Tanganyika and the neighbouring colonies who had fallen on evil days in the Depression flocked to the Lupa "in the hope of being able to tide over the present bad times." A significant proportion of them were 'poor whites', indigent Boers from rural South Africa, under threat of proletarianization. About half of the field's labor force came from the colonies of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, especially the latter whose copper industry had been devastated by the Depression. They walked hundreds of miles through tough country to get to the Lupa.<sup>55</sup>

As much as 95 per cent or more of the gold produced on the Lupa in the 1930s came from alluvial deposits. This was an industry which was easy to get into because it did not require large amounts of capital. It attracted transient characters who simply came to try their luck as well as a few "down and outs" who managed to eke out an existence. Alluvial diggers were characteristically a 'nomadic race', a factor dictated by the nature of alluvial mining. A rumor of a minor strike of gold in some other place, was usually followed by a stampede to the new locality. On average, diggers made 5 to 6 moves a year, taking along with them, of course, their labor force.

Two observers aptly described most of the Lupa gold diggers as "squatters in the most literal sense of the word, whose boys may or may not ever see any of the money promised them as wages, and who are quite unable to provide proper housing, sanitation or medical facilities." Labourers lived, in most cases, in temporary shacks where sanitation was conspicuously absent. The surroundings, including the river banks and pot holes, were continually fouled. What saved the population from a dysentery epidemic, observed a visitor to the field, was the "universal habit of drinking tea."<sup>56</sup>

In general the diggers, these small men, "whose economic horizon stretches no further than the day after tomorrow," frequently ran into problems in trying to make both ends meet. Their laborers were easily the victims of this situation as the diggers tried to minimize costs. They paid the lowest wage rates in the mining industry. In many cases the rate actually paid was lower than the verbal rate promised at the time of recruitment. 'No gold no day' was the accepted motto of the field. Labourers who returned with no gold at the end of the working day were credited with no wages. Nor were the sick paid any wages or given any food. In their issue of food rations, the diggers sedulously adhered to the standard trio of maize meal, beans and salt. Some even had difficulties buying enough supplies to feed their labor. Nutritional deficiency diseases, notably scurvy, were rampant on the field. In the late 1930s Government campaigned among the diggers in vain for improved labor feeding standards. Medical care for labor was invariably not given as hardly any of the diggers could afford it. It was not until 1936, when Government built a hospital and three dispensaries on the field, that laborers could get some medical attention.<sup>57</sup>

The greatest headache for government authorities was the non-payment of wages, a common phenomenon on the Lupa. By nature of alluvial gold mining, most diggers were gamblers and their laborers per force gambled with them. The average digger tended to take on more laborers than he could pay in the hope that he might make a lucky strike. More often than not such hopes never materialized. Cases of unpaid wages occupied nearly 90 per cent of the labor officer's time. In 1937 he received complaints against 539 employers, involving sh. 26,708/= of unpaid wages some of which had been accumulated in previous years. Some diggers used to present their labor with I.O.U. chits which were often not worth more than the pieces of paper on which the commitments were written. Others, faced with large bills of unpaid wages, allowed their rations to run out for days, thus getting rid of their labor. Some diggers, especially after 1938 when gold became increasingly difficult to

find, would depart at the dead of night for the neighboring colonies and leave their labor unpaid.<sup>58</sup>

There is need to explain why, despite such unfavourable conditions, people still sought employment on the Lupa. The explanation is multifaceted. In the first place, work on the Lupa was for many the only way in which they could earn their tax money. This was particularly so in the Depression, especially in the case of workers from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. The second attraction was the relative freedom of the worker whose work on the field was usually unsupervised and who, in his informal camp life, did not have to endure the rigours of compound life. Thirdly, for those who were well versed in the art, was the attraction of illegal gold dealing, an opportunity to make a fortune at a stroke. Fourthly, was the nature of work in alluvial mining which, unlike reef mining, did not involve dangerous or fatal accidents. Finally, the general atmosphere of the field offered a social life that had many interesting aspects to it. This latter point needs elaboration.

In its heyday the Lupa attracted not only diggers and laborers but also settled and itinerant traders, butchers, petty craftsmen, and a section of the population which "throve apparently on nothing." The latter constituted the goldfield's floating population which included liquor traffickers, prostitutes, gold smugglers, and the genuinely unemployed. A visiting cleric in 1938 was horrified to discover that, although the majority of the Africans had no apparent occupation, "several drinking booths do a roaring trade, and loose women haunt these dens of vice in great numbers."<sup>59</sup> The field's five or so major centers were towns in their own right.

This thinly veiled Lupa underworld was a subject of concern not only among the 'men of God' but also among the employers. The latter's worry was not so much about liquor traffickers or women of easy virtue as about the illegal gold dealers, burglars and all those whose activities constituted a threat to property. As early as 1832 the Lupa Gold Diggers Association urged government to turn the Lupa which, they alleged, was a place of "unrebuked license", into a controlled area. Government easily obliged by passing in the same year the Mining (Controlled Areas) Ordinance which, among other things, provided for obliging all Africans on the Lupa to carry entry permits. A permanent administrative post was also established on the field in 1934. The diggers remained unsatisfied, alleging that the law had many loopholes. In 1934, with the backing of the Provincial Commissioner and the local police chief, the Diggers Association called for a fully-fledged pass system with a centralized fingerprint identification bureau. The Governor found the demand objectionable as it would constitute "an unwarranted interference with the personal liberty of thousands in an effort to secure advantage for a small number of employers."<sup>60</sup> Imposing restrictions of this sort on people scattered over a sparsely populated 1,000 square miles was, in any case, not a practical proposition. People came and went as they wished and casual existence remained the outstanding feature of the Lupa goldfield.

### The Role of the State

There may be a point in E.P. Thompson's contention that those moments in which governing institutions appear as the direct, and unmediated organs of a 'ruling class' are exceedingly rare and transient. More often these institutions operate with a good deal of autonomy, and sometimes with distinct interests of their own, within a general context of class power which prescribes the limits beyond which this autonomy cannot with safety be stretched.<sup>61</sup>

In the same vein Berman and Lonsdale have taken to task the reductionist 'instrumental' analysis of the colonial state as the subordinate 'agent' of the bourgeoisie based mainly in the metropole. They argue that although the colonial state provides a political framework within which capital reproduces and augments itself, it (the state) needs to distance itself from the immediate process of production in order to be able to rule with the consent of the governed and "maintain or renovate the structures of domination and accumulation more generally." The state may therefore sometimes act against the immediate interests of an economically dominant class.<sup>62</sup>

Whereas Berman and Lonsdale have introduced an important corrective to the reductionist interpretation of the colonial state as the unmediated agent of the metropolitan bourgeoisie, their view is in need of modification. A quest for the consent of the governed in a colonial situation would be a contradiction in terms. There are, in my opinion, two basic explanations behind state intervention on behalf of the workers within the framework of colonialism. First, it seeks to minimize social discontent and therefore forestall popular disturbances the suppression of which would be both expensive and politically damaging. Secondly, state intervention would many times be aimed at dampening outside political criticisms, regarding colonial oppression and exploitation, emanating both from diplomatic or international circles and from liberal politicians in the mother country.

The colonial state in Tanganyika intervened in different ways on behalf of workers in the mining industry to regulate conditions under which they worked and lived. The intervention took many forms: legislation, enforcement of the legislation, labor and mine inspection, providing advice to employers on the care of labor, and even direct material contribution in the form, for example, of providing medical services where employers were not able to do so.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that the colonial state was not a monolithic phenomenon. There were within it contradictory tendencies which defined the manner of its intervention. One discerns three main levels of contradiction. The first was the division between, on the one hand, the provincial and distinct administration, the 'men on the spot', in touch with employers and their workmen on the minefields and, on the other, the central bureaucracy in Dar-es-Salaam. The former came under more direct pressure from the employers with whom they rubbed shoulders in the local European clubs and with whom they tended to sympathize. The latter had a rather wider horizon, not only with an interest in profitability of mining or in internal order but also with an eye on international opinion and the politics of the mother country. The second form of contradiction was at the level of departmental interests. For example, medical officers, concerned about the health and nutritional standards of the wage earning population, sometimes found themselves at odds with officials of the department of mines who tended to be more concerned about the profitability of mining and therefore to acquiesce in the employers' mistreatment of labor in respect of feeding, medical care, wages and so on. At the height of mine labor shortage in 1935, the Director of Lands and Mines warned against "excessively high wages" as low cost of production was essential for attracting mining capital into the country.<sup>63</sup> Finally, there were sometimes subtle ideological differences among individual members of the colonial regime. The differences emerged in the form of debates between liberals and conservatives, the latter tending to advocate the point of view of the cost-conscious employer and the former expressing concern over crude forms of labor exploitation which offended their liberal conscience. All these influences were brought to bear upon the character of state intervention, though the nature of their impacts is difficult to pin down.

The principal labor legislation governing relations between labor and capital in the colony was the 1923 Master and Native Servants Ordinance. Among other things, the ordinance defined employment as a contract between the two parties, spelling out rights and obligations on both sides and providing for penalties to be incurred in case of breach of the terms of the contract. The obligations of the employers in respect of payment, housing, feeding and medical care for their labor were clearly spelt out. Failing to carry out any of these things constituted an offence punishable by law.

Both in its formulation and in its implementation or enforcement, the Ordinance was found to be wanting as far as the welfare of the workers was concerned. As to its formulation three examples will suffice. Labour inspectors found out that, according to the High Court interpretation of Section 37 (1), they could not institute proceedings to compel employers to improve labor conditions. Complaints could only be lodged by the workers themselves who were usually ignorant of their legal rights, expressed in a language which they did not understand, and who, in any case, would be dissuaded from seeking legal redress by the terror of their employers.<sup>64</sup>

An impecunious employer defaulting in payment of wages was not liable for conviction if it was established that at the commencement of work he had reasonable grounds to believe that he would be in a position to pay his workers at the expiration of their contract. Many diggers on the Lupa were able to exploit this loophole in the law.<sup>65</sup>

In 1943 Government expressed concern over the safety of workers at a lead smelting plant that was in the process of construction at Mpanda mine. Investigations were made into the ways in which workers might be compensated in case of lead poisoning. The 1920 Mining Ordinance provided for enforcement of safety measures, but there was no legal provision for compensation for contracting an occupational disease. Compensation was provided for only in the case of an accident. Government would not be drawn into introducing a new, more comprehensive, law regarding workmen's compensation which, they said, they were not in a position to enforce.<sup>66</sup>

Even in cases of employers' violation of the law, the forces of law and order sometimes proved to be miserably ineffective. In 1939 S.P. Aay, a Dutch tin mine operator in Karagwe, openly assaulted his workmen by beating them with a stick and setting his dogs on them. The incident was reported to the police but no action was taken because, in the words of a colonial labor officer "it is a difficult matter for a native policeman to interfere between a European and his labor."<sup>67</sup>

Despite such apparent weaknesses in the law and its implementation regarding the welfare of wage labor, Government was quite sensitive to criticisms of neglect, whether they were internal or external. Many inquiries on which so much of our information in this paper is based were instituted by Government in response to allegations of deteriorating conditions on the mines. These enquiries, however, were not followed up with decisive action. Government action was largely constrained by their desire to maintain the profitability of the mining industry and to protect the small mine operators, the predominant majority in the industry, from being squeezed out of mining.

The outbreak of scurvy and other nutritional deficiency diseases on the Lupa led the Government to launch a campaign in 1936 to improve the standards of feeding labor. Efforts were made to grow citrus fruits and green vegetables in the area, and employers were encouraged to buy them to be able to include antiscorbutics in their rations for labor. Some reef mine operators responded favorably but almost none of the alluvial diggers did. Propaganda was disseminated all over the field in the form of 'Medical Pamphlets' containing information on balanced diets. The pamphlets argued that, in the final

analysis, a balanced diet for the worker would benefit the employer as labor would become more productive. The nutrition campaign, which smacks of government by crisis, fell on deaf ears. When employers did not respond, Government toyed with the idea of a compulsory scale of rations but finally dropped it under pressure from the provincial administration in Mbeya who argued that a compulsory scale of rations would be difficult to enforce and, more seriously, would involve small employers in extra expense thus driving them to the wall.<sup>68</sup>

The non-payment of wages on the Lupa by some of the small employers was, as we have seen, another ugly feature of the minesfield. The British colonial office intervened in 1937 by asking the Tanganyika government to look into the possibility of forcing holders of prospecting rights on the Lupa to make security deposits with government to cover their wage liabilities. The Mbeya Provincial Commissioner, under pressure from the Lupa Diggers Association, advised against the suggestion on grounds that, if implemented, the system would ruin or drive away many small diggers who had never defaulted. He even invented some casuistry to rationalize the non-payment of wages: "many natives like the easy life and are prepared to accept their luck as good gamblers do." The central government and, apparently, the Colonial office in London easily accepted these arguments.<sup>69</sup> The Tanganyika mining sector, moderate as it was, was a vital part of the colonial economy. Nothing, it seems, would be done which would jeopardize production in this sector - not even if it was in the interest of the mineworkers.

### Conclusion

The evidence against the validity of the paternalist model of colonial labor relations is incontrovertible. Colonial enterprises, whether in mining, agriculture or trade, were set up in order to earn profits. In pursuit of this end, minimization of production costs, probably the most crucial of which was expenditure on labor, constituted a major area of entrepreneurial attention. The impact of this on the condition of mine labor has, one hopes, been clearly illustrated. Employers in some cases were prepared to manipulate pre-capitalist features of colonial society, especially the absence of the cash nexus and the taming influence of traditional authority, to maximize returns from labor. The uncritical observer might read as paternalism what in essence was a crafty exercise in social control in the interest of capital accumulation. This exercise was based not on sentimental feelings or on any sense of social obligation but on calculation.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>R.C. Jerrard, Hints on the Care and Management of African Labour (n.pl. 1937).
- <sup>2</sup>Cited in R. Bendix, Work and Authority in Industry (New York, 1963), p. 47.
- <sup>3</sup>"Proletarianization versus peasantization: A colonial dilemma in rural transformation," in H.W. Okoth-Ogendo (ed.), Approaches to Rural Transformation in Eastern Africa (Nairobi, 1981).
- <sup>4</sup>B.J. Berman and J.M. Lonsdale: "Crisis of accumulation: the development of the labour control system in Kenya, 1919-1929," Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1980), esp. pp. 57-60.
- <sup>5</sup>Especially Charles van Onselen: Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia (London, 1973); Charles Perrings, Black Mineworkers in Central Africa (New York, 1979); Bill Freund, Capital and Labour in the Nigerian Tin Mines (Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1981).
- <sup>6</sup>Tanzania National Archives (hereafter TNA): file no. 25952: Labour officer's report on the Karagwe area, Dec. 1938/Jan. 1939.
- <sup>7</sup>T.N.A. 25944 Report on Musoma Goldfield, Feb. 27 - March 23, 1939.
- <sup>8</sup>See Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. I (London, 1974), Part III.
- <sup>9</sup>A.C. Ofunguo, History of Labour on the Mwadui Diamond Mine, (M. A. dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, 1977), ch. 1.
- <sup>10</sup>T.N.A. 23047: F. Longland, "Investigation into Labour in Gold Mining Areas: Draft Final Report," hereafter Longland Report, Feb. 1936.
- <sup>11</sup>Tanganyika Government, Annual Reports of the Department of Mines, 1956 and 1957 (Government Printer, Dar es Salaam).
- <sup>12</sup>Williamson Diamonds Ltd., "Job Classification" file: J. Mwesiga collection.
- <sup>13</sup>Ofunguo, op. cit., ch. 4.
- <sup>14</sup>Gullaka Geita Interviews, May/June 1977: interview with Jacob Kafunikwa.
- <sup>15</sup>Williamson Diamonds Ltd, "Confidential" (labour) file: Mwesiga collection.
- <sup>16</sup>TNA 23047, Longland Report (report on Sekenke mine).
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid.; S. Warioba Musoma Interviews, June 1977; Gullaka Geita Interviews, esp. interview with J. Ntongane and J. Mwemba.
- <sup>18</sup>Williamson Diamonds Ltd. Tanganyika Mine Workers' Union (TMWU) File, J. Mwesiga collection, V. Mhango to Gen. Manager Feb. 26, 1960.
- <sup>19</sup>TNA 23047 Longland Report, Interim Report no. 1 Nov. 30, 1935; Kasimila Mpanda interview report in my possession. Gullaka Geita Interviews, interviews with J. Ntongane and W. Luhonko.

- <sup>20</sup>Gullaka Geita Interviews, interview with Kahungu Chuwa; TNA 31708, P.C. (Eastern) to Chief Secretary, Aug. 13, 1943.
- <sup>21</sup>Gullaka Geita Interviews, Interviews with John Mwemba, Benedito Mutelani, J. Ntongane and W. Luhonko. The figures are obviously impressionistic. The main point to be made is that accidents were frequent and extensive.
- <sup>22</sup>TNA 25967 Report by O.A. Flynn on the Karagwe Tin Area, Feb. 1940.
- <sup>23</sup>TNA 20429, Memorandum of the Lupa Gold Diggers Association to the Governor, Aug. 1932; TNA 22922, A.G.O. Hodgson to Chief Secretary (Northern Rhodesia), Oct. 6, 1937.
- <sup>24</sup>See for example TNA 20429, Report on the Lupa Goldfields by Capt. J.L. Berne, June 1932 and Idem. Memorandum of the Lupa Gold Diggers Association.
- <sup>25</sup>TNA 30336, Labourers, system of payment of wages by results, 1942.
- <sup>26</sup>TNA 25944, Report by Labour Officer on Gold Mines in Musoma Area, 1939.
- <sup>27</sup>TNA 31708 P.C. Eastern Prov. to Chief Secretary Aug. 13, 1943.
- <sup>28</sup>TNA 25944, Labour Officer's report on Musoma.
- <sup>29</sup>TNA 23047 Longland Report.
- <sup>30</sup>TNA 31708 D.C. Morogoro to P.C. Eastern Prov. Aug. 21, 1943.
- <sup>31</sup>TNA 25944, Labour officer's report on Musoma.
- <sup>32</sup>TNA 23047 Longland Report, interim report no. 1; TNA 25944, Labour Officer's Report on Musoma.
- <sup>33</sup>TNA 25944, Labour officer's report on Musoma.
- <sup>34</sup>TNA 25950, Vol. I, Labour Commissioner to Member for Labour, Education and Social Welfare, Ap. 5, 1948.
- <sup>35</sup>Ibid., Vol. II, Labour Commissioner to Member for Social Services, Ap. 16, 1952.
- <sup>36</sup>TNA 23047, E.B. Kirkman, Memorandum to the Consulting Engineer, Jan. 16, 1952; Gullaka Geita interview report.
- <sup>37</sup>TNA 25950, Vol. I, Labour Commissioner to Member for Labour, Education and Social Welfare Ap. 5, 1948.
- <sup>38</sup>Gullaka Geita interviews, interview with Maziku Mang'ola.
- <sup>39</sup>TNA 25950, Vol. I, Labour Commissioner to Member for Labour, Education and Social Welfare Ap. 5, 1948. Gullaka Geita Interview Report.
- <sup>40</sup>TNA 25414, Vol. II. Labour Commissioner to General Manager, Williamson Diamonds Ltd., Jan. 3, 1952. Idem, I.C. Chopra to Labour Commissioner Dec. 27, 1951. A.C. Ofunguo, op. cit., p. 13.

- 41Ofunguo, op. cit. chs. 1 and 3.
- 42See Samuel Cohn, "Keeping the Navvies in Line," in Louise A. Tilly and Charles A. Tilly (eds.) Class Conflict & Collective Action, Beverly Hills, 1981, pp. 143-149.
- 43See, for example, TNA 23047, Longland to Chief Secretary Dec. 2, 1935.
- 44TNA 29155, Inspector in charge of Police, Kigoma District to Superintendent of Police, Western Prov. Oct. 21, 1940.
- 45TNA 37555, Acting Commissioner of Police to Chief Secretary May 24, 1948.
- 46TNA 25944, Report on Musoma Goldfield. Gullaka Geita Interview Report, interviews with Jacob Kafunikwa, Maziku Mang'ola and John Mwemba.
- 47Author's personal experience during temporary visits to Mwadui between 1962 and 1977; Ofunguo, op. cit. ch. 3; Gullaka Geita Interview Report, interviews with John Ntongane, Jacobo Makwebele, Maziku Mang'ola, and Seleman Seif; information by former domestic servant (female) at Mwadui in the early 1950s who wishes to remain anonymous.
- 48Gullaka Geita Interview Report, interviews with John Ntongane, Wibingire Luhonko, Jacob Kafunikwa, Jacobo Makwebele and Seleman Seif.
- 49TNA 23047, Kirkman Memo to the Consulting Engineer (1952).
- 50See my "Peasant Resistance to Proletarianization in Colonial Tanzania," Boston University African Studies Center Working Paper No. 81 (1983); on inter-tribal fights see Gullaka Geita Interview Report, interview with Wibingire Luhonko.
- 51Gullaka Geita Interviews, interview with John Mwemba.
- 52Ibid, interviews with John Ntongane and Wibingire Luhonko.
- 53TNA 25967 Report by Mr. O.A. Flynn on the Kanagwe Tin Area (Feb. 1940).
- 54TNA 25952 Labour Officer's Report on the Kanagwe Tin Area. (Dec. 1938/Jan. 1939.).
- 55Department of Mines Annual Reports (Dar es Salaam, 1929, 1931, 1936); TNA 25075, Report by Lieutenant Col. Gore-Brown and Mr. Bush on the Lupa Gold Field (Nov. 1936).
- 56TNA 25075 Gore-Brown and Bush; TNA 25294; P. C. Iringa to Chief Secretary, Feb. 2, 1933.
- 57TNA 29002, feeding of labour on the Lupa; TNA 25075 "Report by Lt. Col. Gore-Brown and Mr. Bush on the Lupa Gold field" (Nov. 1936); Khamsini loc. cit.
- 58TNA 22922, Major C. Scarth, circular to District Officers; TNA 25075, Gore-Borwn and Bush, report (1936); TNA 25901, Labour Inspector's Reports (1938-39); A. R. Khamsini, The Gold Miners and Mine Workers on the Lupa, 1922-63. (M. A. Thesis, University of Dar es Salaam, 1977), chs. 2 and 3.



59TNA 22922, Rev. James A. Ross "Some Notes on a Visit to the Lupa Goldfields", Dec. 1937.

60TNA 22469 "Issue of Permits to Natives in the Controlled Areas of the Lupa"; TNA 20429, folios 5-6 minute to Chief Secretary; folio 73a, report by Capt. Berne (June 1932); folio 82, memorandum of the Lupa Gold Diggers Association to the Governor (Aug. 1932).

61E. P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays (London, 1979), p.48.

62Berman and Lonsdale, loc. cit.

63TNA 23047, Director of Lands and Mines to Chief Secretary Sep. 12, 1935.

64TNA 25967, Flynn's report on Karagwe (1940).

65TNA 22922, Report by H. L. Brigham, June 25, 1935.

66TNA 31700, "Protection of Mine Workers at the Urnwira Goldfields Mine."

67TNA 25952, "Labour Officer's Report on the Karagwe Tin Area.

68TNA 29002, feeding of labour on the Lupa.

69TNA 22922, W. Ormsby-Gore to Sir MacMichael Nov. 18, 1937; P. C. Mbeya to Huggins Dec. 23, 1937; D. M. Kennedy to Ormsby-Gore, Jan. 26, 1938.