

# The White Man's Burden: Imperial Formulation of Educational Policy in Northern Rhodesia

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## Abstract

This paper analyzes the origins of Zambia's education system during early British colonial rule when the country was referred to as Northern Rhodesia. Special focus will be put on vocational education, which emerged in the colony as a potential venue for native social mobility in the 1929 to 1940 period. It argues that the formulation of vocational education policies specifically, and educational policies more generally, was guided by a worldview based on deep-seated, clearly defined racial hierarchies and that the subsequent development of education for natives (or lack thereof) was shaped by settlers' political influence, as well as geopolitical considerations in London. Moreover, while scholars commonly deem the United Kingdom's 1940 Colonial Development Act to have initiated the era of modern "development," it will be argued that, in the Northern Rhodesia context, this era already started in the 1920s. The final part of the paper considers the development era's long-lasting impact on Zambia's economic fortunes.

*Take up the White Man's burden, Send forth the best ye breed  
Go bind your sons to exile, to serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness, On fluttered folk and wild—  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child.*

- Rudyard Kipling, *The White Man's Burden*, first verse, 1899

## Introduction

The year 1940 is commonly referred to as the year when the British Empire introduced elements of social development and welfare in its African colonies. Yet, in Northern Rhodesia, the first *modern* development era had already begun in the 1920s. With a focus on educational policies, and more specifically vocational education, the following lines will shed light on the early days of British social development policy. Vocational education, in this context, means the provision of government-sponsored practical training on a secondary school level, with the aim to prepare students for manual labor jobs (in the primary and industrial sectors, but excluding agriculture), thereby offering students a viable pathway to social mobility.

In part one, it will be argued that Northern Rhodesia's standing within the Empire rose alongside the increasing importance of copper. As in other colonies, the imperial scheme centered around the maintenance of stark economic imbalances, which shaped the role of the Northern Rhodesian native population as a provider of natural resources. Thus, while the idea of "development" already existed well before 1940, the term mainly pertained to the development of resources. Part two focuses on the formation of educational policies in Northern Rhodesia between 1924 and 1940. As it turns out, not only was the ideology guiding these policies an embodiment of the White Man's Burden – the moral obligation to modernize those who were deemed inherently inferior – but, moreover, the subsequent direction of education was determined, on the one hand, by fierce white settler resistance to African advancement, and, on the other hand, by geopolitical considerations originating in the imperial center. The beginnings and the early downfall of Northern Rhodesia's vocational education system, which will be examined in parts three and four, serves as a case study for imperial and racial politics, which drove the first development era. Shedding light on the fact that Northern Rhodesia's native population was categorically denied substantial education and social mobility not only puts Zambia's path to independence in a different context, but also highlights some of the darker days of European interaction with the rest of the world, which occurred under the benevolent guise of "development."

## Northern Rhodesia in the Imperial Scheme

From the mid-1920s to 1940, Northern Rhodesia's position in the British Empire gained significance through the rising significance of copper as an internationally traded commodity. Although early explorers in the territory had already become aware of its vast resource base, it was shortly after the global copper price reached the highest value in the

20<sup>th</sup> century that the British Crown started to turn its attention to the area.<sup>1</sup> After reaching a settlement with the British South Africa Company, the first appointed British governor started to rule over a population which, according to official reports, was described as an array of “primitive tribes” whose previous subordination to “unchecked” Arab slavery had only been reversed by the arrival of British order.<sup>2</sup> The assumption of power of the colonial government led to the opening of the first copper mines in the northwestern part of the colony. Apart from copper, which has maintained its status as the country’s most significant commodity until the present day, the territory would also come to serve as a major provider of zinc, vanadium, lead, and, to a lesser degree, gold and silver.<sup>3</sup> Like in other parts of the world, the British colonial scheme was simple: commodities were transferred out of the area into the metropolitan center, or sold to other countries, where they were manufactured into finished goods and exported all across the world. Colonies were largely obliged to “buy British” – an obligation that prevented the development of domestic industries.<sup>4</sup>

The rise of copper and the British assumption of power in the 1920s unofficially started the first development era in Northern Rhodesia. In 1927, the Colonial Office began to compile annual reports about the state of affairs in the Sub-Saharan colony. Through these reports, the British imperial scheme was transformed into numbers. Readers found detailed figures, tables, and comments not only pertaining to the “barbarism of the natives,”<sup>5</sup> but also to social indicators, and, paramount to all, intra-imperial trade relations. For instance, in the 1934-edition, one reads that while in 1929, official copper extraction amounted to a mere 5,400 tons,<sup>6</sup> this number increased to 137,000 tons in 1933.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, the reported value of copper exports rose from £55,000<sup>8</sup> in 1924, to £7.5 million in 1927, £13million in 1929,<sup>9</sup> £238 million in 1934,<sup>10</sup> and finally £534 million in 1938.<sup>11</sup> In that year, copper accounted for 88 percent of Northern Rhodesian exports. Until the onset of World War II, at least 50 percent of these exports routinely went to Britain. The next largest export destinations, in 1937, were Germany (32 percent) and Italy (10 percent).<sup>12</sup> On the other end of the bargain, goods from the United Kingdom accounted for at least 80 percent of all imports into its Sub-Saharan colony.<sup>13</sup> Naturally, while these values

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<sup>1</sup> Between 1914 and 1920, the copper price was above £4 per pound (in 1997 currency). This price remained unmatched for the rest of the century. See Sullivan, Sznoppek, and Wagner, *20th Century U.S. Mineral Prices Decline*, 5.

<sup>2</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Colonial Annual Report Northern Rhodesia 1929*, 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Parnell and Harris, “The Turning Point in Urban Policy,” 127.

<sup>5</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Colonial Annual Report Northern Rhodesia 1929*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> After the mid-1930s, such exact measurements were missing from the reports, presumably because the size of copper production had surpassed the colonial government’s ability to measure it. See His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Report on the Progress of Northern Rhodesia 1934*, 21.

<sup>8</sup> All historical market figures in this paper are inflation-adjusted to reflect 2015-values. The average annual inflation rate used is 5.3 percent. This is done to make these figures more approachable for the 21st century readership.

<sup>9</sup> For the 1924-1929 figures, please refer to *Colonial Annual Report Northern Rhodesia 1929*, 27.

<sup>10</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Report on the Progress of Northern Rhodesia 1934*, 24.

<sup>11</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Report on the Progress of Northern Rhodesia 1938*, 16.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

fluctuated with changing copper prices, not only do these numbers set the stage for the first development era in Northern Rhodesia to unfold, but they also document the underlying master-servant dichotomy between the imperial center and its colony.

With the enactment of the Colonial Development Act of 1929, development became an official policy in British Africa. The signing was primarily driven by economic distress in the center. Having already been hit by a severe depression in the early 1920s, during the “Great Slump,” the British economy underwent a hitherto unprecedented contraction of 5 percent in 1931. Its trade with the world was halved, and unemployment reached 3.5 million by 1932.<sup>14</sup> Fearing the continuous viability of its imperial project, Britain turned to intra-empire trade to make up for the reversal of globalized commerce.<sup>15</sup> Given increasing difficulties with local populations in its Asian and Caribbean domains, African colonies became the main source of alleviation. Through the 1929 Act, “advances” were to be made by loan or grant to governments, “for the purpose of aiding and developing agriculture and industry in the colony...thereby promoting commerce...in the United Kingdom.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, imperial contributions would predominantly be employed for “productive projects,”<sup>17</sup> including the improvement of local communication and transportation infrastructure, water, electricity, forestry, fisheries, and “the development of mineral resources.”<sup>18</sup> After a decade in which the merits of such provisions were categorically neglected in the mainstream political discourse in London, “development” of African colonies now became official policy even though the term “development” generally referred to enhanced resource extraction methods.<sup>19</sup>

Yet, while the efforts that resulted from this policy shift are oftentimes dismissed by scholars as too one-sided and minuscule to be examined, the 1929 Act bore financial significance for Northern Rhodesia. The Act foresaw per-colony expenses of up to £57 million per year in the 1930s.<sup>20</sup> By 1940, however, the actual reported figure that had been spent on *all* colonies, a total of 42 entities, lay somewhere between only £280 and £400 million.<sup>21</sup> In the face of rapidly decreasing living standards in the metropolis, London’s spending power, and willingness to fund its colonies, decreased significantly.<sup>22</sup> The ensuing low expenditure level and parallel propping up of the imperial scheme constitute the main reason behind some scholars’ framing of the 1929 Act as “social imperialism,” whose provisions did not include any reference to the betterment of colonial peoples.<sup>23</sup> Such references, these scholars claim, only started to become a part of official policy with the enactment of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1940. To be sure, the large majority of the £30 million disbursed to Northern Rhodesia in loans and grants between

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas and Dimsdale, “Three Centuries of Data.”

<sup>15</sup> See Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 43-50.

<sup>16</sup> The Overseas Development Institute, *British Aid 5 – Colonial Development*, 15.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>18</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Colonial Development Act 1929*, 1-5.

<sup>19</sup> Cooper, “Modernizing Bureaucrats, Backward Africans,” 65.

<sup>20</sup> The Overseas Development Institute, *British Aid 5 – Colonial Development*, 22.

<sup>21</sup> While Cooper estimates the number to be £286 million (£5 million in 1929, which he incidentally draws from official reports, where it is stated as the lowest possible amount to be granted), the Office of Development Assistance reports £389 million (£6.6 million in 1929). See Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 67; The Overseas Development Institute, *British Aid 5 – Colonial Development*, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 67-70.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

1930 and 1940<sup>24</sup> pale in comparison to the previously mentioned export values of copper and were in fact almost exclusively capital expenditures. What is striking, however, is that Northern Rhodesia, along with the resource-rich Tanganyika Territories, Nyasaland, and Sierra Leone, ranked among the top five recipients of all colonial holdings between 1929 and 1940.<sup>25</sup> And, as described in part three, while social development provisions were largely absent from the 1929 Act, welfare spending as part of social development in Northern Rhodesia had already been increasing since the 1920s.

Indeed, in Northern Rhodesia, most of the presumed novel aspects of the 1940 Act had already been introduced two decades earlier. According to Eckert, during the post-WWII era, British Africa witnessed the “introduction of elements of the welfare state,” which was intended to “make colonies more productive and ideologically more stable.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, as a late result of the 1940 Act,<sup>27</sup> “waves of experts” were sent to colonies “to increase efficiency in the agricultural and industrial sectors and to introduce social policies, including education, thereby using the full-scale of modern scientific methods.”<sup>28</sup> However, the 1929 Act already included a provision whereby “scientific research, instruction and experiments in the science, methods and practice of agriculture and industry” should be fostered.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, as we have already seen, means for “regulating the social”<sup>30</sup> were already manifested in the annual colonial reports on Northern Rhodesia, which were circulating since the late 1920s. Ironically, it is the scientific basis underlying these reports through which the exploitative imperial scheme should be rationalized and elevated to an objective level. For the contemporary reader, however, they serve as a testimony of how, during this first development era, colonialism was systematically euphemized.<sup>31</sup> Finally, welfare had already entered the official terminology of these reports in the early 1930s: Starting in 1933, Colonial Annual Reports were renamed to Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of Northern Rhodesia, thereby reflecting the new official preoccupation with native living standards, as well as the increase in educational spending in the Sub-Saharan colony, to which we turn in the following section.<sup>32</sup>

## Formulating First Educational Policies

From 1891 until the early 1920s, education in Northern Rhodesia was administered by missionary societies. Overseeing 1,500 schools with 50,000 students upon the start of colonial administration, their curricula were confined to Biblical studies.<sup>33</sup> This was challenged by the arrival of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, which conducted an eight-

<sup>24</sup> The Overseas Development Institute, *British Aid 5 – Colonial Development*, 14.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>26</sup> Eckert, “Regulating The Social,” 469.

<sup>27</sup> Due to the war, most provisions in the 1940-Act were only implemented in the 1950s. By 1955, however, one-third of the Act’s total funding remained unspent.

<sup>28</sup> Eckert, “Regulating The Social,” 469.

<sup>29</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Colonial Development Act 1929*, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Eckert, “Regulating The Social,” 472.

<sup>31</sup> As a matter of historical irony, consider the fact that these reports were made publicly available for purchase at select outlets.

<sup>32</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Colonial Annual Report Northern Rhodesia 1933*, 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> Kelly, *Education in a Declining Economy*, 7.

month survey on the “dark continent,”<sup>34</sup> including Northern Rhodesia, in 1924. A private philanthropy, the Commission’s stated mission was the “erection or improvement of tenement house dwellings in New York City for the poor families of New York City and for educational purposes in the education of Negroes both in Africa and the United States.”<sup>35</sup> Their concluding report on their 1924 research visit, “Education in East Africa,” asserted that “education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life.”<sup>36</sup> In this sense, the purpose of education was found in “advancing agriculture, developing industries, improving health, training people in the management of their own affairs, and inculcating ideals of citizenship and service.”<sup>37</sup> One of the immediate consequences of the Commission’s visit was constituted by the unification of the Northern Rhodesian school system under central administration. Established in 1925, the Department of Native Education was funded and controlled by the Colonial Office in London, even though school management rested with missionary societies.<sup>38</sup>

Unsurprisingly, however, it was politics that came to dominate the direction of the colony’s educational system until 1930. Driven by the findings of the Commission, missionaries and the Department of Native Education in the mid-1920s were calling for an increase in educational funding. Nevertheless, given the metropolitan unwillingness to substantially develop its African domains during this decade, an increase in spending that would foster anything more than basic (primary) education for natives was unimaginable.<sup>39</sup> The Commission’s suggestions that called for the provision of industrial and vocational training for natives, therefore, all but imploded in the face of the political realities in the British Empire. The metropolitan unwillingness, in turn, shaped the colonial government’s prevalent assumptions about the native population for the remainder of the decade: People of color, the new and convenient conventional wisdom came to hold, were inherently unable to adapt to European social standards—a people locked in tradition and tribal structures, whose natural surrounding was rural.<sup>40</sup>

Given natives’ perceived inability to transcend into “modernity,” a dual education system was erected, which distinguished between education for the masses (the natives) and education for the small white elite.<sup>41</sup> In 1928, the latter made up 0.14 percent of the colony’s population.<sup>42</sup> The Commission’s proposal to distinguish between education for the native masses and the native elite, therefore, received a spin through which a quickly evolving system of racial segregation became manifested in official policy. For people of color, the Phelps-Stokes Commission’s principle of “adaptation” would henceforth shape curricula. Thus, educational content became “utilitarian and agriculture based,” thereby laying almost no emphasis on literacy, mathematics, or science.<sup>43</sup> By doing so, people

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<sup>34</sup> The Chicago Defender, “How Africa Is Rising,” 13.

<sup>35</sup> McKay, *Phelps-Stokes Fund Records, 1893-1970*, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Kelly, *Education in a Declining Economy*, 8.

<sup>39</sup> Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 49-50.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Carmody, “The Politics of Catholic Education in Zambia,” 782.

<sup>42</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Colonial Annual Report Northern Rhodesia 1929*, 7.

<sup>43</sup> Carmody, “The Politics of Catholic Education in Zambia,” 782.

would be prepared for life in the village, to be kept on the fields and out of the growing mining towns.<sup>44</sup> Until the late 1950s, the Phelps-Stokes report's recommendation calling for the education of a small native elite, including the implementation of a university system, remained suppressed by geopolitical aspirations in the metropolis and the dictates of an evolving apartheid regime in the colony. Contrary to the educational quality to which the native population was entitled, "European education," remained closer to metropolitan standards and included algebra, geometry, French, and Latin.<sup>45</sup>

While the Commission's proposals were filtered through a peculiar lens, the recommendations themselves had already been founded on the belief in a strong racial hierarchy. The most prominent study of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, which had been written in 1917, was titled "Negro Education in the United States."<sup>46</sup> While their final conclusions called for increased funding of African American schools, they were sharply criticized for those parts, which would later be reproduced in "Education in Africa." For W.E.B. Du Bois, the Commission's call for the promotion of vocational and industrial training would only foster the economic subordination of African Americans, essentially imposing a color ceiling on their social mobility in southern states.<sup>47</sup> However, the disparity between the apparent goodwill of the Commission's educational proposals, which went much further than the missionaries' teaching of the Bible, and the harsh critique of the prominent African American civil rights activist was no disparity at all. Undoubtedly, the Commission did call for an uplifting of the African (American) and yet this should not happen outside a clearly defined racial order – a mode of thinking that had already acted as the intellectual fuel that drove the "Scramble for Africa" in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Thus, even though people of color were viewed as inherently inferior, modernity dictated their integration into the world of science and progress. Accordingly, the Commission publicly dismissed the merits of the missionary educational system they encountered in Sub-Saharan Africa. In an interview following the Commission's research visit, chairman Dr. Jesse Jones not only asserted that missionaries' emphasis on faith-based education was merely a "decorative process unrelated to the life and needs of primitive people," but that it also elicited "ridicule concerning the 'mission boys' who are said to represent the futility and harm of educating natives away from 'their place' in the colonial scheme arranged by western civilization for the Africans."<sup>48</sup> Thus, leaving local populations exposed to the powers of superstition and religion was deemed backwards. Their integration into an educational system, which would make them fit to assume "their place" in the imperial scheme, was portrayed as progress entailing a strong moral obligation – Kipling's so eloquently stated White Man's Burden. In "progressive colonies," the article concludes, "native people are to be governed, to be exploited, and to be saved."<sup>49</sup> The early educational policy in Northern Rhodesia, therefore, not only serves as a testimony for colonial power structures, but also for the double standards based on deep-seated racism, which would come to shape decades of social development in Northern Rhodesia.

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<sup>44</sup> Kallaway, "Welfare and Education in British Colonial Africa," 343.

<sup>45</sup> His Majesty's Stationery Office, *Report on the Progress of Northern Rhodesia 1933*, 25.

<sup>46</sup> McKay, *Phelps-Stokes Fund Records, 1893-1970*, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> The Chicago Defender, "How Africa Is Rising," 13.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

In the discourse regarding the beginning of the first development era in the colony, the installation of the dual education system based on the adaptation principle can be viewed as an early example of the universalization of western values – values which were brought to Africa via the global dissimulation of seemingly benevolent European expertise. Underlying the Commission’s recommended necessity of adjusting Northern Rhodesian education to people’s characteristics was the “questionable assumption that there was little difference between the native problem in Africa and the Negro situation in the United States.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, what worked for people of color on one side of the world, so the conventional wisdom asserted, would surely work for those on the other side of the world as well. This notion was embodied by an increasing number of European experts who, after the formation of the Directorate of Native Education, flocked into the colony to bring “progress” to the native population. By the mid-1930s, their number exceeded 150.<sup>51</sup> Once more, this serves as an illustration that for Northern Rhodesia, elements of “modern” development were already introduced before the 1940s.<sup>52</sup>

## The Beginnings of Vocational Education

Only through the “Great Slump” was a small opening for natives to advance past the primary education level created. The metropolitan mindset surrounding the 1929 Colonial Development Act coincided with new realities in the colony. The copper boom of the 1920s had attracted thousands of locals who moved to the growing mining towns, in order to improve their living standards. However, given the lack of education past a primary level, the large majority was at best semi-skilled. Faced with decreasing revenues due to falling copper prices, white mine owners in the copperbelt started to worry about a shortage of qualified native labor.<sup>53</sup> As a result, the imperial aspirations in London and those on the ground came together to propose a simple solution: increase the productivity of native labor. The call of duty arising from the White Man’s Burden now reached the political elite in London, where it merged with the urge to save the metropolitan population from the fallout of the “Great Slump.” In the words of the Lord Privy Seal, Mr. J. H. Thomas upon the signing of the 1929 Act:

As far as our colonies are concerned...a great moral obligation attaches to this country to do all that it can to develop them. This motion lays the foundation for a long-range policy of constructive colonial development,...surely there is no more opportune time at which to do it than when it will in some way benefit our own unemployed people at home.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Carmody, “The Politics of Catholic Education in Zambia,” 782.

<sup>51</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Report on the Progress of Northern Rhodesia 1935*, 25.

<sup>52</sup> For a development cynic, the formation of the Directorate also serves as an early manifestation of “local ownership” – a guiding principle in today’s development era. The formation of the Directorate followed “the specific purpose of, “looking after and guaranteeing the interests of the indigenous population.” See Dall, “Confronting the Basic Education,” 8.

<sup>53</sup> Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 50.

<sup>54</sup> The Overseas Development Institute, *British Aid 5 – Colonial Development*, 17.

Here was a convenient win-win situation. Lord Thomas' rather vague notion of "development" was depicted as a noble cause, which, once more, needed to be done for the Africans; that the colonial center would benefit from the project as well was almost portrayed as a side effect. As a result, "Africans were pushed on the marketplace to sell primary products to raise funds for the Empire."<sup>55</sup>

This set the stage for the establishment of the first government-sponsored institution in crafts training. The Native Trades School at Lusaka opened its doors in 1934 during a period when the city was under heavy construction to be prepared to become the new capital in 1935 (replacing Livingstone). The purpose of the Trades School was to prepare natives for manual labor employment. It offered 4-year courses in woodwork, building, leatherwork, and thatching.<sup>56</sup> During the first years, students were gaining practical experiences in these fields by aiding in the construction of the new capital. Moreover, as an educational novelty, they also received an unprecedented level of literacy training. Apart from the 28 hours a week, which were focused core curricular activities, 12 hours a week were reserved to general education. This included coursework in English, anthropology, geography, history and civic education. While a majority of graduates worked in manual labor jobs, the first set of alumni also included post officers. However, the Trades School's enrollment numbers remained moderate at best throughout the 1930s. In 1935, the number of students was 54; by 1937, it increased to 72, only to drop again to 52 in 1938.<sup>57</sup>

In 1939, the Trades School was finally incorporated into the newly established Munali Boys Training Centre. Also situated in Lusaka, it was the first institution to combine primary and secondary education for boys between the ages of 6 and 18 in the colony, and included vocational training, clerical education, and teacher training. The vocational track consisted of four years of apprenticeship and a two-year internship. The revolutionary aspect of Munali's curricular comprehensiveness was reflected in its initial enrollment numbers: In the first vocational track intake, there were 55 students and a total student body exceeding 230. Meanwhile, as had already been the case in the Native Trades School, educational quality was reported to be low.<sup>58</sup>

The most immediate reason for the low educational quality at Munali was the lack of sufficient government funding which was made available for the colony's only government-funded secondary school. Even though exact numbers for Munali are missing from official reports, it is instructive to examine the overall spending level during this period. Educational expenses of the government continuously rose between the assumption of colonial power and 1940. In 1924, spending on education amounted to £19,000;<sup>59</sup> in 1928 the figure had already progressed to £368,000.<sup>60</sup> Until 1934, educational expenses further increased to £1.29 million.<sup>61</sup> Clearly, these continuous increases not only reflect the pressure exerted by missionaries and the Department of Native Education to increase funding, as well as the manpower needs of the miners in the early 1930s, but they

<sup>55</sup> Kallaway, "Welfare and Education in British Colonial Africa," 343.

<sup>56</sup> Hoppers, "Industrial Training and Labor Market Segmentation in Zambia," 45.

<sup>57</sup> Rothman, *African Urban Development in the Colonial Period*, 283.

<sup>58</sup> Hoppers, "Industrial Training and Labor Market Segmentation in Zambia," 45.

<sup>59</sup> His Majesty's Stationery Office, *Colonial Annual Report Northern Rhodesia 1929*, 38.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> His Majesty's Stationery Office, *Report on the Progress of Northern Rhodesia 1935*, 24.

also underline the fact that social development was already part of colonial politics in Northern Rhodesia before the 1940 Act was signed. While these expenditures were not included in the 1929 Act, they actually were part of official disbursement, divested from the annual revenues of the colonial government. In this regard, the colony seems to have had a special standing within the British Empire, particularly given its importance in the imperial scheme generally, and the advent of the Great Slump more specifically.

Nevertheless, when considering the heaviness of the burden the white man came to bear in the Sub-Saharan colony, these figures appear in a different light. Until 1937, educational expenses further jumped to £2.42 million.<sup>62</sup> Compared to the total student enrollment of natives in that year, which amounted to 121,000, the per capita expenses for each pupil was less than £20 (again, this number is expressed in inflation-adjusted 2015 values).<sup>63</sup> Thus, not many pupils were reported to even finish primary education, the officially prioritized education track.<sup>64</sup> What is certain, however, is that the general attitude toward Northern Rhodesia was well expressed by Lord Thomas: As the last colonial frontier of the Empire, natives should be made to work for the metropolis, their productivity – and perhaps even welfare – to be increased, but only up to a certain degree.<sup>65</sup>

## The Limits to Social Mobility

In the 1930s, politics continued to determine the degree of African social mobility. The once-perceived early-1930s threat arising from a lack of skilled native labor quickly vanished under the pressure from white labor unions. Though vocational education never even reached beyond Lusaka until independence, “Any form of education which was likely to prepare Africans to compete with local Europeans for employment raised an outcry.”<sup>66</sup> Not only did such resistance preclude native advancement past the primary and the weak secondary levels, but it also undermined any attempt at creating a track for higher vocational education, in order to train native artisans. Until the late 1950s, only whites occupied such jobs.<sup>67</sup> As a result of this renewed resistance, official discourse shifted away from fears of a lack of qualified native labor to preoccupation with the potential destabilizing effects of letting natives advance too far. When confronted with the need to install more secondary schools to promote native social mobility, in 1935, the Director of the Department of Native Education is reported to have replied harshly, “We already have a secondary school at Munali for boys.... If we open another, we shall create an intellectual unemployed proletariat.”<sup>68</sup> This statement reflected the fact that the colonial government was not willing to foster secondary education, including vocational education, past the establishment of the Natives Trades School and Munali.

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<sup>62</sup> His Majesty's Stationery Office, *Report on the Progress of Northern Rhodesia 1938*, 26.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>64</sup> Dall, “Confronting the Basic Education Crisis,” 9.

<sup>65</sup> The Overseas Development Institute, *British Aid 5 – Colonial Development*, 17.

<sup>66</sup> Sardanis, “Hard Work and Fantasies,” 40.

<sup>67</sup> Hoppers, “Industrial Training and Labor Market Segmentation in Zambia,” 47.

<sup>68</sup> Carmody, “The Politics of Catholic Education in Zambia,” 801.

Once more, this fear was fueled by changing circumstances in northwestern mining towns. Between 1929 and 1934, the number of native workers in the mines dropped from 22,000<sup>69</sup> to 11,000.<sup>70</sup> In the face of this rapid increase in unemployment, low wages, insecure working conditions, and the absence of any social services, conventional wisdom about natives arising from the adaptation policy turned out to be wrong. As we have already seen, officials in the 1920s deemed natives to be locked in tribal societies. Therefore, it was naively believed that during times of layoffs, “These men when returning to their villages on the termination of their contracts, will not be satisfied to live under normal conditions and will thus spread their knowledge to the more remote areas.”<sup>71</sup> While this notion was congruent with the principle behind maintaining the economically unbalanced imperial scheme outlined in part one, it missed the fact that most workers decided to stay in the cities.<sup>72</sup> While the colonial government’s adaptation ideology had allowed it to ignore the unfolding urban drama, this changed in 1935, when a strike quickly spread from one copperbelt mine across the whole northwestern region. For the colonial government, the most unraveling aspect of this development was the fact that the strike became widespread even in the absence of native trade unions whose formation remained prohibited until the late 1940s.<sup>73</sup> Together with similar incidents in other parts of the British Empire occurring before and during World War II, the increasing display of fierce native resistance against the imperial scheme not only led to the metropolitan belief that welfare needed to become official policy, which drove the signing of the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act, but likewise toughened officials’ stance on secondary, or vocational education for natives. While providing locals with some social services and basic education was deemed necessary in order to maintain the territorial integrity of the Empire, it was now set in stone that the formation of a native ruling class in this and in other colonies was even more threatening to the future of the United Kingdom.<sup>74</sup>

Further growing white settler influence and the ensuing labor market segmentation put a nail into the coffin for African advancement. In 1935, the reported number of settlers amounted to 1,352; by 1938 it had increased to 2,785.<sup>75</sup> Contrary to their native counterparts, European workers enjoyed strong union-backing, drawing on direct support from London. Using their influence with the colonial government, they managed to legally counter every advance of natives to anything beyond low-wage, semi-skilled level jobs. For instance, in 1943, an Apprenticeship Ordinance was imposed, which barred Africans from entering artisanal jobs, alongside other wide-ranging minimal education requirements to enter *white* jobs. Ironically, the imposition of such cynical measures occurred alongside the enactment of the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act whose official aim was to, “protect and advance the interests of the inhabitants of the colonies.”<sup>76</sup> While, “much had already been done,” the official statement continued, “there was room for further active development of the natural resources of the various territories so as to provide their

<sup>69</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Colonial Annual Report Northern Rhodesia 1929*, 7.

<sup>70</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Report on the Progress of Northern Rhodesia 1934*, 13.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>72</sup> Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 53.

<sup>73</sup> Hoppers, “Industrial Training and Labor Market Segmentation in Zambia,” 46.

<sup>74</sup> Carmody, “The Politics of Catholic Education in Zambia,” 801.

<sup>75</sup> His Majesty’s Stationery Office, *Report on the Progress of Northern Rhodesia 1938*, 9.

<sup>76</sup> The Overseas Development Institute, *British Aid 5 – Colonial Development*, 21.

peoples with improved standards of life.”<sup>77</sup> The apparent disparity between rhetoric and reality led Frederick Cooper to assert that on the eve of World War II, the former mattered substantially more than the latter, so that the 1940-Act was primarily serving to provide Britain with, “a progressive basis to continue colonial rule” during the impending era of self-determination and equal rights.<sup>78</sup> While native wages did increase in the 1940s, inequality remained stark until the end of colonial rule, with top wages for native mine workers amounting to £6 per month and those of settlers to £100.<sup>79</sup>

These political developments led to a downward spiral, which took the wind out of Munal’s promising start and buttressed the racial divide in the colony until independence. The already suboptimal educational quality at Munal further decreased alongside the colonial government’s increasing hesitance to sponsor secondary education. Evolving symptoms included inflexible curricula, which could not be adapted quickly enough to changing economic circumstances in the post-war era, a lack of qualified teachers, and insufficient infrastructure.<sup>80</sup> Due to the newly erected legal barriers in the labor market, graduates from the vocational track were quickly turned into, “a source of cheap semi-skilled labor for the construction of government buildings.”<sup>81</sup> Unsurprisingly, then, by 1948, *total* enrollment at Munal (including all tracks) had dropped from 230 to 48 (even though the 1940-Act had been renewed in 1945).<sup>82</sup> Thus, it occurred after social development goals had been put on the official colonial agenda that the expansion of secondary level education and native social mobility was stopped in Northern Rhodesia. With Munal’s recruitment confined to Lusaka, the workforce’s educational needs in northwestern mining towns remained all but ignored. As a result, the vast majority of Zambians would come to celebrate independence without having an education that surpassed the level of a European child.

## Conclusion

The post-war era witnessed continued white resistance to native uplifting. In the spirit of the 1940-Act, at the end of the decade, the colonial government embarked on an ambitious Ten-Year Development Plan. Its provisions stated that an educational spending quota should be established, which favored the overwhelming native majority. Yet, due to renewed pressures from white settlers, whose number in the early 1950s had skyrocketed to nearly 50,000,<sup>83</sup> the quota system, which had allotted 12 percent to African education and only 2 percent to white education in 1948, was reversed in 1953. Now the allocation was exactly opposite.<sup>84</sup> Once more, this took the wind out of the sails of the newly established Trades School System, which in the early 1950s sought to increase the amount of skilled African workers by offering vocational training. The effectiveness of Munal,

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.

<sup>78</sup> Cooper, “Modernizing Bureaucrats, Backward Africans,” 70.

<sup>79</sup> Hoppers, “Industrial Training and Labor Market Segmentation in Zambia,” 47.

<sup>80</sup> Kelly, *Education in a Declining Economy*, 10-12.

<sup>81</sup> Rothman, *African Urban Development in the Colonial Period*, 286.

<sup>82</sup> Hoppers, “Industrial Training and Labor Market Segmentation in Zambia,” 48.

<sup>83</sup> Roberts, “Northern Rhodesia: The Post-war Background, 1945-1953,” 22.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

which had been incorporated into this system, remained low. Most revealingly, the nationalist movement, which gained in strength following World War II, sought to abandon Trades Schools in the late 1950s. In the spirit of W.E.B. Du Bois, this kind of education was viewed as a manifestation of white dominance. Naturally, this did not help the quality of these schools. Until the early 1960s, nearly all of them were closed.<sup>85</sup> Upon independence, therefore, Munali was the only government-sponsored school in secondary education for natives. Apart from the Catholic St. Canisius and the Presbyterian Chipembi schools, there was no other path for Northern Rhodesian natives to attain education exceeding the most basic level. Revealingly, notable Munali graduates included Zambia's first and fourth president, Kenneth Kaunda and Rupiah Banda.<sup>86</sup>

British educational policies cast a long shadow over Zambia's path to independence. Labor market segregation was ultimately abandoned, but only in 1959. The first university available for Northern Rhodesian natives did not open until 1957. In 1964, President Kaunda, in his effort to build a nation, could count on a mere 1,200 secondary-certificate holders and 100 university graduates, in a total population of 3.5 million.<sup>87</sup> During the first decade of independence, the country embarked on a growth period based on import-substitution policies. Building up "human capital" by fostering vocational education was key to this approach. After the fall of global copper prices in the 1970s, however, Western influence in Zambia resurged through the World Bank's structural adjustment policies. Until the late 1990s, these policies again put a premium on primary education while neglecting the importance of skills training for the country's youth. At the end of the decade, in conjunction with the Zambian government, the Bank's development of a Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) system was designed to revive vocational training in the country. However, while its credit of USD 25 million was well-intended and led to some progress, (primarily on a governance level), the International Development Association's (IDA) closing of the credit in 2008 caught Zambia's 23 government-administrated vocational training centers by surprise and seriously depleted their funding capabilities.<sup>88</sup> As a result, symptoms of today's underfunding of vocational training highly resemble the ones of the 1930s: inflexible curricula, a lack of qualified teachers, and insufficient infrastructure. Thus, many of Zambia's, "critical manpower problems at the time of independence and many of its current difficulties in obtaining good quality, experienced, mid-level management," can be traced back to the first development period, occurring between 1929 and 1940.<sup>89</sup>

Besides labor issues, the direct outcome of decades of educational policies based on the White Man's Burden can be mainly located in the lack of a diversification of the Zambian economy. Copper continues to constitute almost 80 percent of Zambia's foreign earnings; the country's dependence on the global copper price has remained steady. Today, the biggest trading partner is China, which accounts for 25 percent of exports.<sup>90</sup> Given China's hands-off development approach, it is highly uncertain whether Zambia's industrial base will ever constitute more than the current 6 percent of the economy, or

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<sup>85</sup> Hoppers, "Industrial Training and Labor Market Segmentation in Zambia," 48.

<sup>86</sup> Sardanis, "Hard Work and Fantasies," 18.

<sup>87</sup> Mwalimu, "Education and the Economy," 1095.

<sup>88</sup> Perkins, *Project Performance Assessment Report Republic Of Zambia*, 13.

<sup>89</sup> Kelly, *Education in a Declining Economy*, 10.

<sup>90</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook: Zambia*.

whether the stunning increase of the informal economy, which employs almost 80 percent of the workforce, will ever be reversed.<sup>91</sup> With a current GDP per capita of \$3,900 (PPP) and a Gini Coefficient of 57.5, Zambia remains among the poorest and most unequal nations in the world, along with the other resource-rich, former top recipients of British assistance, Tanzania, Malawi (formerly Nyasaland), and Sierra Leone.<sup>92</sup>

Highlighting the pre-1940s period, therefore, puts Zambia's path to independence in a different light. While for Western scholarship, the interwar period focuses on intra-European developments, the post-WWII period's tale oftentimes is one of African liberalization and the moral rectification of former imperial powers – whose grand infrastructure projects still serve as a testimony of their paternalistic benevolence. Yet, overlooking the (at least) equally long-lasting impact of colonial domination in Sub-Saharan Africa makes it tempting to blame the native victim, whilst conveniently vindicating cuts in foreign aid and continuing exploitation on the ground through multinational corporations.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

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