INTRODUCTION

The years immediately following the armistice of the First World War saw the rapid growth of labour movements throughout the world. In sub-Saharan Africa, despite the region's relative weakness of capitalist penetration, the period was punctuated by stirrings of industrial discontent among African workers, apart from a contemporaneous spate of strike actions by European labour in settler-dominated southern Africa. The places affected ranged as widely as from Freetown to Cape Town, from Lagos to Lourenço Marques, from Nairobi to Johannesburg and many other industrial centres. Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, was no exception. Although it has become a conventional wisdom in Zimbabwean historiography that it was not until 1945 before the African workers systematically used strikes as an industrial weapon, the colony was, in fact, 'shaken' by an African strike movement or movements in the period from 1918 to 1921. In 1919 alone African workers are known to have mounted several work stoppages of a considerable scale in major towns, railways, mines, etc. Moreover, with this rumbling of discontent at workshops emerged various urban social movements, most notably community actions in town locations and mutual aid movements.

By 1918 industrialization in Southern Rhodesia had given rise a new group of Africans—a group who increasingly depended on wage employment as a major source of incomes, and who settled themselves in urban areas semi-permanently or permanently. It was this first generation of the African working class who were at the heart of such labour protest, as well as the community and self-help movements. In the sense, among others, that they began to endeavour to shape themselves as 'communities', the events of 1918-21 signalled a crucial turning point in the evolution of African political and social life.

The first part of this essay is an attempt to describe the upsurge of African industrial protest of 1918-21. It was perhaps
the earliest of its kind in the colony's history and much of it has so far remained in obscurity; as such, it is worth to be accounted for in full detail. If the first part essentially addresses itself to the history of events, the second part of this study more concerns itself with 'long-term structure' by dealing with this singular period in a broader social context. I shall take a closer look at the African communities in the capital city, especially focusing on the work and life of a group of workers who participated in one of the strikes of the time, and who simultaneously established a self-help association, namely, the Tonga or Zambesi municipal workers. An attempt will be made to demonstrate how the municipal labour movement and other African social movements of Salisbury (Harare) were moulded by the changing political economy of the country and what experience and consciousness lay behind the cohering of African labour of 1918-21. In such ways the study hopes to throw some light on the particular character of working class formation in early Zimbabwe.

Among a complex of socio-economic changes that converged during and after the First World War to give rise to militant labour protest, two changes are of general importance. One was a sharp increase in the cost of living from the outbreak of the war in 1914, combined with the employing class's indifference or reluctance to adjust wage scales to this, which was implicitly or explicitly justified in the name of 'domestic peace' during the war time. The result was perhaps the most drastic drop in real wages in the labour history of the country. During the period between 1914 and 1921 African real wages declined to less than a half of the pre-war level, a level to which they did not return until a few decades later. The consequential impoverishment of African workers and peasants was so manifest that it prompted Native Department officials to comment: 'Natives can no longer afford to buy blankets and clothing as they used to, and are resorting to the wearing of skins and other primitive garments' and 'the majority of boys working on mines and farms are clad in sacks'.

With this combination of biting inflation and stagnant wages, there developed new circumstances very favourable to industrial action. As White Rhodesia was heavily involved in the war, its economy seriously suffered from the drain of manpower, especially European labour. The situation in turn considerably strengthened the bargaining power of the European workers and, indeed, almost all categories of White labour, including railway and mine employees, artisans, shop assistants, civil servants and even the police, were to attempt to recover their lost ground and to secure the institutional protection of the White wage earners. They demanded higher wages, etc. by organizing strikes and deputations, and/or forming trade unions and a Labour party during and soon after the war.
A somewhat similar situation came into being for African labour as well. The wartime high prices of peasant produce, the decline of real wages, and the demand by the military for African manpower combined to militate against the supply of African labour. Still more importantly, the country, particularly its densely populated industrial centres, was devastated by the Influenza Epidemic in October and November 1918, which suddenly disrupted the established pattern of African labour supply, as it was reported: 'Apart from the temporary and local results of the epidemic such as the pell-mell flight from many labour centres and the natural reluctance to return to what were regarded as centres of infection, many natives coming to the Territory in search of work were induced by fear to turn back to their homes before they even crossed the border; this influence affected not only the stream of independent labourers, but also those proceeding under the aegis of the Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau'.* In understanding the implications of the new situation in the labour market the African workers were hardly slower than their European counterparts. 'Since the recent influenza epidemic', wrote *The Rhodesia Herald* in December 1918, 'many natives have got the idea into their heads that there is a scarcity of natives and are consequently demanding higher wages'.

The initial stirrings of discontent largely remained subterranean or rather isolated as in the two strikes on mines; one in which the miners employed on the Globe & Phoenix mine demanded increased wages in November 1918, and the other involving the sanitary workers at the Wankie (Hwange) colliery who opposed the introduction of a new procedure in their work in March 1919.7 But powerful undercurrents for change began to surface, when the African railway employees in Bulawayo came out on a strike on 14 July 1919. The cessation of work involved 570 workers, practically all the Africans employed at Bulawayo station and railway workshops, and continued for three days. In common with African strikes in South Africa in those days, it occurred in the wake of a European strike, only a day after the end of a two-day nation-wide strike by the European railway employees, which resulted in the granting of higher war bonuses. Presumably in part learning a lesson from the European organized action, the African employees lost no time to force into further concessions the railway authorities who must have been at their keenest to re-establish and maintain an industrial truce.® On the first day of the strike the workers refused negotiation of any kind, only sending a deputation to demand a wage increase. The matter was serious enough to warrant the intervention of the Native Department and the following day an 'indaba' was held on the initiative of the Superintendent of Natives, Bulawayo. The workers' attitude was far from conciliatory at the meeting: 'To all their suggestions', reported *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, 'the boys had one reply, that they wanted a wage of 5/- a day [the average wage was then 6d. per day] and that unless their demands were conceded they would at once leave for their "kyas"'; and 'The reason that 5/- a day or 7/- 10s. a month, had been fixed upon was--because it was "what the white men got"'.® This hard attitude the
management flatly answered by the summary 'discharge' of all the strikers.

The strikers used pickets, held meetings and staged a demonstration 'in some sort of military order' in town, their well-organized conduct impressing a newspaper reporter sufficiently to write: 'From the south end of the platform a view could be obtained of the native huts on the town side of the line and here it was evident that the main body of the dissatisfied ones were assembled, for hundreds of natives could be seen congregated in small and large groups, each of which appeared to have its speaker or speakers who could be seen gesticulating and haranguing their listeners'. There was thus little disarray among the rank and file for the management to take advantage of. The position meanwhile became aggravated as the perishable goods were rapidly accumulated at the station, although the coaling of locomotives and other necessary work at the loco. sheds were kept going by European workers. On the third day of the work stoppage the authorities made a concession and managed to bring the workers to the table of negotiation with the promise of no victimization. The outcome was that 'the natives receive the same daily or monthly wage as at present, but that at each month end each man who has been employed for a year or more will receive an additional amount, which will vary according to the number of years he has served on the railway'.

It may appear at a glance that the concessions the workers won were not particularly impressive, but such was not the case at all in view of the colony's history of labour-coercive laws and practice which rendered virtually any forms of African workers's industrial action to a criminal sanction or to an extrajudicial punishment. The news of the 'success story' of Bulawayo spread quickly. The first to follow suit was the 'loco. boys' at the Que Que (Kwekwe) railway station, who walked out about two weeks later. Now that both state and management were determined to nip the apparent strike fever in the bud, thirteen workers were promptly arrested for 'refusing to obey the employer's lawful commands' under the masters and servants laws. 'The sight of seven or eight policemen parading the loco. boys to the Court House', it was reported, 'had the desired effect of bringing the remainder of the boys employed in the other departments to their bearings'.

Despite the quick reaction of the colonial authorities, from the railway strikes ensued a militant upsurge of African labour protest, the most notable of which were a series of work stoppages by municipal employees in major urban centres in the latter half of 1919. As common in many other workplaces of the time, the African workers employed by the town authorities had been squeezed by bad working conditions and intensified work pressures. The on-going inflation tended to make their employers economize expenditures on rations and housing, not to mention wages. Also the end of the war entailed an enormous expansion of municipal services, which had previously been curtailed to the minimum due to war-time exigencies, and which as a rule increased work demands on each worker through
the introduction of new labour management or machinery. Such reorganization at work processes did not work out without invigorating the spirit of discontent among the municipal workers.

On 6 August, only eight days after the incident at Que Que, the Salisbury municipal workers struck work. On the previous day the capital town had celebrated the British victory in the war. As part of peace celebrations, the Town Council arranged a big feast at the town location 'in order to impress upon the natives' the importance of the occasion.' So were the virtues of obedience and how good it was 'to be in Rhodesia' and 'to belong to the British empire' preached by the Mayor and a missionary before a crowd of more than 2,000 Africans. The feast was started with three cheers for town officials and the King. Thus, not surprisingly, in the words of The Rhodesia Herald, 'something of a sensation occurred in Municipal circles' the following morning, when the municipal workers dared to test 'how good it was to be in Rhodesia'. That morning they, between 300 and 400 in total, marched in a body to the town house to intimate that they would not work unless a higher rate of pay was granted. The Town Engineer, then acting as a compound manager, talked with the strikers, following which workers were somewhat mollified. But upon finding there were still 'obstinate' workers, the police were called in and thirteen leaders arrested. The rest were eventually persuaded to work in the afternoon, when the Town Clerk promised an investigation into their grievances. The apparent 'ringleaders' were dismissed, and those arrested convicted at the magistrate's court for 'refusing to obey', each with the sentence of a fine of £2 or a month's imprisonment with hard labour.

The Bulawayo railway strike also had repercussions within the town itself. In his annual report for 1919, the Native Commissioner, Bulawayo, remarked that the strike was 'followed by a similar movement among the natives employed by the Municipal Council'. The paucity of evidence for this case does not enable us to discuss possible relations and mutual influence between the workers' action in Salisbury and Bulawayo. However, when two or three more strikes were staged or attempted by municipal workers in provincial towns in early December, it was evident that those were only part of an African strike movement, set in motion by, in the opinion of the press in reference to one of those strikes, 'the example of the Salisbury municipal native employees, or some other form of unrest'. Moreover, the simultaneous occurrence of these events strongly tempts us to say that there had been a degree of nation-wide coordination among the municipal workers.

On 1 December the local authorities of Umtali (Mutare) and Gatooma (Kadoma) were surprised to find their African employees refusing to work. In the case of Umtali the workers demanded wage increments and in the other case dissatisfaction centred around the adoption of a thirty days ticket system in place of the practice of paying wages by the calendar month. In both cases events took a course similar to those in Salisbury. Meetings with management or a Native Department official were held, where investigation into the matter was promised; and upon some participants beginning to waver,
the leaders or those still defiant were rounded up by the police under the masters and servants laws. In Umtali thirty-four workers and in Gatooma eleven were taken before the magistrate, and all, except one, went to gaol. In concurrence with these disputes, further unrest was found among the Gwelo (Gweru) municipal workers over the low wages and the use of the ticket system. In this case the existing wage scales seem to have been reconsidered, with the result that possible work stoppage was averted.

At this point mention has to be made as to parallel developments that took place in other industries during the same period. Very difficult as it is to examine the position of the domestic workers, their discontent, in Bulawayo at least, came to be more frequently evinced shortly after the July railway strikes (typically in the form of 'individual quarrel' with their employers). This was testified by an increase in the number of offences of the masters and servants laws by domestic employees at the time, as a local newspaper reported in September: 'Numerous cases of troublesome and obstreperous servants have recently occupied the attention of the Magistrates ...'. In January 1920, closely following upon the municipal strikes and unrest in Umtali, Gatooma and Gwelo—and also a series of European mine employees' walkouts—two mines are known to have witnessed the incidence of African collective action. 'At the Bushtick gold mine ... the workers voiced their need for higher wages, and at least one worker corresponded with a Rand miner about the advantages of a trade union'. The second case happened at the Shamva mine, where the workers successfully boycotted the mine stores which allegedly charged extortionate prices for goods. Their success was attributed to the 'thoroughness of organisation' by the Chief Native Commissioner, who was impressed by the sophistication the workers' tactics: he remarked that 'the leaders influence and control the rest by means of harangues and debates, and by circularising them with notices, pamphlets and other propagandist literature'.

Militancy among the African workers seems to have reached its peak during the months from July 1919 to January the following year, more especially the last two months of the period. If the cases of 'refusing to obey' in criminal registers, as shown in Appendix, are to be used as an index for African labour militancy, it may be said that the momentum of protest slackened a little after January 1920 and then revived the following year. Whatever the case might be, the foregoing clearly reveals that the colony was confronted on a considerable scale with African protest inspired by industrial grievances in the immediate post-war years, although there had existed various forms of covert resistance, such as desertion, and isolated strikes since the earliest days of colonialism.

As in the labour disturbances soon after the Second World War, the epicentre of protest was Bulawayo. In May 1920 a local newspaper reported a new development: 'A movement among local native employees [sic] to secure increased wages in view of the high cost of living has been brought to notice of the municipal authorities'. 'The originators of the movement are', it continued, 'boys employed
in offices and stores, builders' labourers, and labourers employed in the mechanical trade', residing at the town location. None but such people felt more acutely the crashing impact of inflation. Location inhabitants were often long-term urban residents and lived with their families, their cash needs consequently being far greater than the 'single' migrant workers who received rations and housing from their employers, and who perhaps had stronger rural connections. The 'originators', being employed at scattered places in relatively small numbers, had to face difficulties in effectively using the 'strength of numbers' at workplaces. So did they organize themselves as a location community, or as a kind of general workers 'union'. They held several meetings at the location and tried by a 'constitutional' method to make their voice heard. Through the Location Superintendent the Town Council was approached, who then 'brought it [the workers' petition] to the notice of the public bodies, and large employers of native labour of the town'.

Nothing further is known about this movement.

The train of events in Bulawayo was crowned with yet another walkout by municipal workers several months later, which ended in the largest single prosecution of workers, no less than 103, between 1918 and 1921. On 24 January 1921 labourers employed at the Road Department of the Bulawayo Town Council stopped working at mid-day in protest against the increase of task imposed since the number of European overseers had been tripled. Consequently, twenty-one workers were arrested for 'leaving work' under the masters and servants laws. The following morning their co-workers 'of many Tribes', living in a compound, went on strike. According to the court hearing held later, the workers' complaints were that 'whilst working they were not given enough time for rest'; that 'they had too much work to do'; that 'they objected being hit about and sworn at'; and also that 'they were not very much satisfied with the wages they were getting'. The arrest of eighty-two Africans on the charge of 'refusing to obey' resulted, and all, together with those in custody from the previous day, were imprisoned with hard labour.

The task of this section of cataloguing the cases of post-war African industrial action is still incomplete without referring to a further two strikes that occurred in 1921. One strike, which erupted at the Wankie mine in September 1921, has been well documented by C. van Onselen. He wrote: 'The miners' right to sell beer was threatened in this case through the actions of a compound 'policeman'; so they came out on a two-day strike which ended only when the police had been called in and marched them back to the pithead. For workers forced to 'live' on below-subsistence wages, the cause of petty trading was one that was vital to fight for'.

The last in our long list was unique in terms of the occupational composition of the strikers. It involved the ricksha pullers working in Salisbury. In the morning of 3 February 1921 ricksha service was withdrawn from the town. The workers, after having marched to the Town House in protest against police harassment, stopped hauling rickshas throughout that morning. Tension between the ricksha workers and the town police had a long
history. Unlike other types of employment, those who demanded strict work discipline were not the private employers but the Town Council and the police. The wide-spread practice of ricksha business was an arrangement whereby an African hired a vehicle for ls. a day from one of the several European proprietors operating in the town. The puller was thus out in the street as an independent, self-employed labourer, though his pass was still signed on by the ricksha owner and his accommodation also provided for by the same. On the other hand, the municipality had very strictly regulated the behaviour of the pullers in the street through a set of bye-laws and a registration system of ricksha labourers. For example, pulling a ricksha without licence, being indecently clad, using abusive language, failing to stand in rank, reckless pulling, being asleep in a ricksha—all this was illegal and, indeed, the arrest of pullers for such offences was an everyday occurrence. In January 1921 a ricksha worker, in his dash for a customer, mistakenly bumped into a European woman. An accident such as this in the settler-dominated society was a scandal. The police thereupon became so zealous in enforcing the ricksha bye-laws that within a matter of a week they made a score of arrests. It was this police high-handedness that elicited the workers' mass reaction.

The strike itself was short-lived and perhaps of a minor nature after all, but it is of interest to us in two ways. First, it is indicative of the extent to which the use of direct action had become popular with the African workers. It can be ascertained that strike action was not the preserve for those workers relatively well-placed for combined action, like the municipal labourers or those employed at the railways and mines. Second, it also reveals the early existence of a sort of 'craft brotherhood', if not 'craft unionism' proper, among a certain section of the African workers.

As the year of 1922 progressed, the incidence of African strike action became less frequent and the African labour movement was certainly at a low ebb in the subsequent years. This trajectory of development may be attributed, in part, to the fact that from 1921 the runaway inflation occasioned by the war noticeably subsided, with the result of the re-adjustment, though to a very slight degree, of African real wages to the prevailing circumstances. In addition, in view of the substantial scale of African protest, it may be argued that the power of combination exerted to a certain extent an upward pressure on African wages. However, perhaps the most important reason for the downturn of the movement was an increase in African labour supply from around 1920, which seriously damaged the workers' bargaining position obtained in the wake of the Influenza Epidemic. The 'market forces' decisively swung in disfavour of African labour particularly after the collapse of the prices of livestock and grain in early 1921 and the ravaging drought of 1922, both driving many indigenous peasants into wage employment. In much the same way, it may be added, from the latter half of 1925, when African labour once again became in short supply owing, above all, to the competition for labour with the Northern Rhodesian mines and the rapid expansion of settler agriculture in the colony, signs were not lacking of the revival of African industrial action:
'between December 1925 and October 1928', Phimister has noted, 'five strikes and four work stoppages took place on various mines scattered throughout the country'.

II

For all the variations and peculiarities of its components, the African labour protest of 1918-21 seems to illustrate generally, first, the working of the labour-coercive system of early colonial capitalism in Southern Rhodesia and, secondly, features of African industrial action and its ideological character under this system. Our discussion here, now a little more analytical, starts with noting the patterns of reaction by the authorities and employers towards African labour action.

One of the attitudes taken in official circles after the Bulawayo railway strike in 1919 was characteristically to pretend not to be impressed and to give little publicity to such events, apparently in the hope of this contributing to the isolation of each dispute and the containment of discontent. The Native Commissioner, Bulawayo, did refer to the strikes in Bulawayo in his annual report for 1919, but he did so only in a passing remark and was very reluctant to recognize them as such, as he quibbled: 'In each instance the strike, if strike it may be called, was short lived and of no immediate importance'.

Behind this masked indifference (which made it very hard for historians of later period to gain the full picture of the events), however, existed a great alarm and exasperation among the officials and employers. This manifested itself in the state action of crushing unrest one by one, most commonly by arresting strikers under the masters and servants laws, except in the rare cases where employers became conciliatory in face of workers' pressures. These patterns of reaction can be understood in conjunction with two structural features of the political economy of Southern Rhodesia. First, the major attraction for capital investment of the colony, despite such serious profitability constraints as her rather limited natural resources and geographical isolation from world markets, lay in the fact that the country's capitalist enterprises could command, with the assistance of the state, an ample supply of cheap labour provided by the central African peasantry. The heavy reliance upon the African muscles by Rhodesian industries, many of them operating with limited profit margins, inevitably made the employing class very sensitive to the real or imaginary danger of African labour disturbances. The system might—and in fact did—accommodate the movements of a small number of European workers and treat them as a subordinate partner (about whom, in the words of a leader of the Rhodesia Labour Party, 'there is nothing of the Red Flag'), but the same could not be said with African labour. That economic reality also necessitated the second feature of Rhodesian colonialism, i.e. the absence of a massive European working class immigration and the consequential very high ratio of Blacks to
Whites. This, too, was conducive to creating White Rhodesia's sensitiveness to 'race relations'.

Both the state and capital were thus of the same mind, as an industrialist put it in relation to the mining industry in 1919, that 'Rhodesia will be quite out of competition for capital and settlers once economy in the cost of production and freedom from Labour turmoil cease to offer compensations for the relatively low-grade of our great ore bodies'. In their view, labour disturbances would pose a direct challenge to the future of the colony, supposedly poised for a great post-war development. So did the administration delay even in 1920 the repeal of war-time Martial Law in anticipation of labour upheavals. This was done ostensibly on the grounds of the imminence of further European labour unrest, but much of their concern, one may suspect, rather hovered over the possibilities of the European labour movement stimulating or accelerating the radicalization of African labour, as it had just been happening on the Witwatersrand down south.

An editorial in *The Bulawayo Chronicle* conveyed such anxiety over the Bulawayo railway strike of 1919 with unusual frankness: 'Here we have a repetition of the recent experiences on the Rand, except that there is no sign of the movement extending. The natives have more than imitated the European workers in that they have asked for the increase of their pay by 100 per cent. ... we may now mention that there were said to have been some irresponsible attempts while the European strike was on to get the natives out also. We cannot believe that any responsible organiser of white labour would have advocated such a step'. A year and half later, by which time the country had experienced numbers of African strikes, a similar sense of uneasiness was expressed by the Native Commissioner, Umtali: 'Portents have not been lacking that the demand for increased wages on the part of Europeans culminating in success where strikes are resorted to, are not without their influence and reaction upon the native labourers.' The power of African labour at the time was strong enough to convince at least one cautious Native Department official of the necessity of a Native Labour Board as a safety valve (an idea which was, however, to remain as a heresy within the ruling classes much later until after the Second World War). As the same Native Commissioner continued:

The latter [the African workers] ... are conversant with the white man's methods of combating the increased cost of commodities [sic], yet when he attempts to imitate them he finds he is liable to be dealt with criminally. Moreover the Native is often thrown out of work when his European overseer strikes and so suffers loss of wages while the European gains. He is left without means of effectually representing his claims and abstract justice is simply conveniently denied him. These unhappy conditions must inevitably result in fostering general and dangerous discontent. That is a consummation we must be prepared to guard against. As the natives are not permitted to resort to agitation to gain what they consider to be their rights in this respect, a medium for
the fair and effective representation of their claims with power to remedy their just grievances when ascertained, should be provided as an act of grace.40

Considering a repressive system in which direct action was most likely to result in participants' material loss, rather than gains, it is not surprising to find that the overriding concern of striking workers should be how best to fend off the counterattack from employers and state. This is partly evident in the fact that the strikes were organized precisely at the time of a labour shortage, when the employers were perhaps inclined to think twice about dismissing the 'disobedient' servants and calling the police. Yet more instructive was the case of the Bulawayo railway strikers. When, in July 1919, the management finally caved in and proposed the strikers to select nine delegates for negotiation, their reply was that they 'were afraid that if a deputation were appointed it would be clapped in gaol, or otherwise summarily dealt with'.41 It was only after the railway authorities had repeatedly assured no victimization when the strikers accepted the proposal. Furthermore, apparently not believing in the managerial promise, the workers unilaterally changed the subsequent meeting into a two-hour mass bargaining session, when 'the deputation appointed by the strikers, which instead of nine comprised 50 boys representing all departments concerned met the Acting General Manager'.42

The strength of the bargaining power exercised by the railway workers in Bulawayo, however, cannot be considered very representative. In many instances, as we have seen, workers' solidarity was crushed by the powerful alliance of the state and the employers before any negotiation in proper was commenced. That there existed little chance for a peaceful negotiation between the management and labour created yet another important element of the strikers' collective consciousness, namely, the preparedness with which workers were to endure personal sufferings, such as the loss of job, and fines or imprisonment with hard labour.

This aspect was embodied in a militant tradition of withholding labour by 'going to gaol'. Since certain industries like settler agriculture were very vulnerable to a sudden withdrawal of labour, workers seem to have not rarely resorted to the act of 'going to gaol' (as well as desertion) to win concessions or to embarrass their employers. This was well attested by a European farmer in Mashonaland earlier in 1901. He bitterly complained at a farmers meeting that 'in every seed-sowing and harvest season his whole native labour had been taken away, the boys having been hauled up before the magistratte'. According to him:

No master could avail himself of the [masters and servants] law's benefits during seed time or harvest, because of the loss he would incur personally. He had either to pay his boy's fine (to get him back immediately) or lose his servants during these two most important periods of the year. ... That acted as a direct encouragement to the native, who very quickly saw that he could
annoy and disobey his master with impunity in this way. ... If he were fined or imprisoned he would go home and boast of it. He was looked upon as a sort of hero if he had done time in the Salisbury gaol.

The farmer went on to say that the employer 'had consequently felt himself compelled to take the punishment of his boys into his own hands'. But a corporal punishment did not achieve a desired effect, 'because native telegraphy [sic] was so highly developed that if you ill-treated a boy today, before sunset tomorrow it was known 50 miles away', thus with no labour forthcoming.  

In order to deter such action (and other forms of labour resistance), the Masters and Servants Ordinance (No. 5 of 1901), which consolidated several Cape masters and servants laws, provided for heavy penal sanctions, such as that spare diet or solitary confinement, besides hard labour, might be inflicted; that the servant imprisoned must return to the same master to finish his contract, plus for a period he or she was in prison; and that the convicted servant employed on public works might be sent back to do the same work as he had performed before. Notwithstanding these threats, however, the act of 'going to gaol' was resorted to by some of the strikers, notably municipal workers, in 1918-21.

The municipal strike in Bulawayo in 1921 was filled with intrepid behaviour of this sort from the beginning to the end. On 25 January of that year, when the second group refused to work, they were 'marched down to the police station, where they were given the choice of being arrested, or going on with their jobs'. And '73 boys preferred to be arrested'. At the magistrate court all the workers involved in the dispute were sentenced to a fine or imprisonment with hard labour, but 'the fines were not paid, the natives saying they would go to jail'. Another instance was the Umtali municipal strike of December 1919. The fine of 10s. or seven days hard labour imposed by the magistrate 'was treated as a joke' by the prisoners. The town clerk, apparently much annoyed with the prospect of labour trouble after this, 'promised to go into the matter of wages' and made an offer 'to advance their fine if they went back to work'. Nonetheless, the workers were in a defiant mood and 'they all selected to go to prison'. Their hard and uncompromising line invited a flippant comment from a European reporter: 'Luckily, however, their punishment will be made to suit the crime and poetic justice meted [sic] out as they are now employed, in convict garb, and under unusual discipline, in doing the same work as they were doing before. The Government, however, get the money for their work and the municipality saves the food bill'.

One can only imagine a high level of industrial morale behind such concerted action. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of these acts, but the above-cited farmer's complaint and Umtali town clerk's eventual conciliatory attitude lead us to infer that in some instances the imprisonment of strikers was, in fact, not the end of a work stoppage but just the real beginning of labour
trouble. From this it may be further argued that the act of 'going to gaol' was not totally ineffectual, though demanding not a little sacrifice on the part of labour, as a form of collective bargaining under an extremely labour-coercive system.

Let us now examine the nature of African solidarity in the strikes of 1918-21. To what extent did collectivism, shaped by common experiences at workplaces, play a role in the movement? The answer is not so simple when a strike was organized by the workers of same ethnic origin. In this situation there must have been an amalgamation between a rural tradition and an industrial awakening to defy an easy analysis. The case in point was the Salisbury ricksha labourers who struck work in February 1921. The occupation of hauling rickshas in the capital town had been virtually monopolized over years by certain indigenous Africans. My analysis of the 1911 census shows that out of the total of 112 ricksha-pullers (recorded on the existing Salisbury householders'census returns) 107 were Shona, all, except two Anglicans, following traditional religion. And, according to an African informant, those who worked 'like a donkey' were southern Shona groups. This strong linkage between job and ethnicity, together with our limited knowledge of these workers, does not allow us to go far beyond conjecturing that their 'craft brotherhood' as expressed in their walkout was firmly interwoven with—and, to speculate further, came into being out of—the tradition of a 'home boy' solidarity associated with a peasant culture.

In many other cases, however, evidence underlines with less ambiguity the prominence of a workshop collectivism, although this does not necessarily preclude its interaction with an ethnic factor. The Que Que railway strikers convicted in July 1919 comprised eight Atonga, four Sena and one indigenous African; the Salisbury municipal strikers who met the same fate the following month three Shona and ten aliens; the Umtali municipal strikers in December 1919 eighteen Shona and fifteen aliens; the Bulawayo municipal strikers in January 1921 forty indigenous and sixty-two alien Africans, besides one unidentified person; and so forth. Moreover, not only did many of the disputes of the time embrace various 'tribal' and national groupings but also workers engaged in different duties and with different status. In the case of the Bulawayo railway strike, all kinds of African employees, except some 'Labour Bureau' workers, laid down tools and threatened to go home, despite there being divisions within their ranks, between the different language and cultural groups, between the monthly and daily employees, between those now ready to return to rural habitats with savings and those not in such a position, as well as between the workers employed in the loco. and goods departments. We shall later explore the significance of this phenomenon in more detail in the Salisbury context. Here suffice it to say, together with a recent critic of 'the historiography and sociology of Rhodesia', that 'the notion of 'race' to the exclusion of class ... and the idea of the backward 'tribesman' are all singularly inappropriate tools for the study of industry in a colonial political economy'.

43
One of the theoretical difficulties that students of early labour history of Southern Rhodesia face is how African labour protest can be linked with the country's folklore. Most of the early instances of African industrial action were covert ones. Cases of outright protest were usually sporadic in expression. They crumbled under the heavy pressures of state and employers and quickly sank into oblivion as if nothing had happened. It may be possible to identify the causes and immediate effects of an action, but it is exceedingly difficult to find its long-term effects. It may be also possible to acclaim the vitality and resilience of the oppressed, so moralizing the past for today, or to recapture the spirits of rationalism in an action, so exploding the myth of tribesman, but it is still very difficult to sensibly discuss its political and social significance in a specific historical context.

To illustrate the point in respect to our subject, it may be of use to compare the events in Southern Rhodesia with those in South Africa. In South Africa African labour protest, starting from on the eve of the First World War and reaching its peak in the post-War years, had dynamics so powerful that it gave birth to an organized African labour. The year 1919 will be remembered in that country as one of the debut of the ICU, the first successful African trade union movement. In Southern Rhodesia, however, many years had to lapse before a trade union movement made its appearance; in 1919 one of the pioneers of the Rhodesian ICU, Masotsha Ndlovu, was still a young man in the process of learning from the events in South Africa, while working in Cape Town. In South Africa the protest resulted in the recognition by the ruling classes of the presence of an African working class, and this was expressed in the passing of the Native Urban Areas Act, the sitting of Pass Laws Committees, and the introduction of a wide range of social control measures. In Southern Rhodesia, on the other hand, it was only during the 1930s and beyond when a similar attempt to restructure the African urban communities from above was made. All this, in broad terms a reflection of the late-developing and peripheral nature of Southern Rhodesian capitalism and constraints in class formation thereunder, suggests that the social impact of even the post-War labour protest, being perhaps in the most militant phase to be seen prior to the 1939-45 War, cannot be measured by a 'big' yardstick that historians have been accustomed to using. The delicate contours of our issue would be only appreciated when we approach it more closely and go over the workers' everyday life with a fine-tooth comb. For this reason we shall undertake in the following a case study of the Tonga municipal workers and the African communities in Salisbury. By way of concentrating on a 'microworld'—and perhaps a little infringing upon the 'territories' of anthropologists and sociologists—it is hoped to identify the changes that were taking place in African workers' life and to assign the labour militancy of the time a proper status in the 'long-term structure' of the country's history.
The Salisbury municipal strike in August 1919 was staged by virtually all Africans employed by the Town Council, but the leading group was the Tonga sanitary workers. These workers came from North-Western Rhodesia and were commonly referred to as the Zambezis. Outside the municipal employment there were very few Zambezis in the town. Most of them belonged to the peoples of the 'Paramount Chief' Monze, and their home area was a plateau north of the present Kariba Dam.

The Tonga plateau formally came under the rule of the B.S.A. Company in 1899, which by 1904 started to collect a tax in the area with a view to pushing indigenous peasants into wage employment in Southern Rhodesia as well as to financing the cost of administration. In 1906 the railway from Southern Rhodesia was driven through the heart of plateau to link up with the Congo, which resulted in the alienation of a tract of land along the railway. The region was located so close to mines and towns in the south that it experienced from as early as the end of the 1890s the operation of labour recruiting agencies coming from south. And Northern Rhodesia at this stage created virtually no market for the sale of local agricultural produce, through which Tonga peasants' cash needs might be met. These, together with the early Tonga society's proverbial susceptibility to drought and famine, combined to set in motion a large-scale Tonga labour migration from the very early years of colonial rule. Yong men went down to Southern Rhodesia or South Africa, often working in the types of employment disliked by other African worker-peasants.

It was shortly after the African risings of 1896-7 that Tonga workers were first engaged by the Salisbury municipality. Despite or because of the unpopularity of the municipal works in the town, they quickly became an almost exclusive supplier of labour to the Town Council. Like other groups of African migrants, Tonga peasants, when coming to Salisbury, carefully followed the footpaths already charted by their 'brothers' in order to ensure the success of their sojourn in town. Of the manner in which they migrated to Salisbury the town clerk wrote: 'we have always had a constant supply, one gang coming as soon as the others left, and often boys have been waiting to be taken on'.

The early municipal works done by the Africans ranged from the removal of night-soil, rubbish and slop water to the making and repairing of streets, from lighting street lamps to working on the public gardens, besides the works of a handful of municipal police and office messengers. The first two were the major municipal services, requiring the largest numbers of labourers and demanded either manual labour in a revolting odor, dust and very unhealthy conditions or physically-exacting labour under the tropical sun. But the wages for the municipal labourers were notoriously low. In 1903 the monthly cash wage for a worker at the public gardens started from 10s. and increased, if he proved 'efficient', by 2s. 4d. every month up to 20s. or 25s. and the same at the municipal compound averaged at from 16s. to 20s. This meant that the cost of labour per head was almost equivalent to, or at least in one
occasion even lower than, that of convict labour hired out by the government. Moreover, these wage rates were slashed by 1904, when the colony sank deep into a depression, and thereafter the municipal African wages were continuously below the poor wages of chibaro (slaves), i.e. workers recruited by the Labour Bureau.

As wages were kept at a more or less irreducible level, so were the employer's expenditure on housing. During the period from the early years of the century to 1921 the workers were billeted on two compounds, the sanitary workers on the Sanitary Farm behind the Kopje, while the remainder on a compound to the north of the town location. At these places workers were crammed into shacks and slept on old packing cases and iron bunks. With this respect the sanitary inspector's report in 1915 is worth to quote in some length:

Taken generally, the Compound is, in my opinion, very far from being in a sanitary condition, and I think it is only reasonable to suggest that the Municipality should at least be on a par with such local firms as the B.S.A. Co. Tobacco Warehouse, S.A. Breweries, Cubitts and others. Native Quarters. There are of wood and iron, two continuous rows of square rooms varying in size from 10' square to 20'x10', of an average height of 8'-6". They are badly lighted and ventilated, smoke begrimed, dirty, and so crowded as to make proper cleaning almost impossible. Twelve rooms accommodate 114 natives. All these quarters, except two rooms, have only earth floors, thereby completing the difficulty of effectual cleansing. As many as 15 natives are occupying one room 20'x10'.

Bathing and washing. No bathing or washing facilities are provided, whereby natives could be encouraged to wash themselves and their clothing, thereby improving the health conditions of the Compound.

Together with these low wages and grossly inadequate accommodation existed a system designed to ensure a work discipline and allow for the maximum use of migrant labour. The workers were discouraged to live independently and expected to stay in the compounds for better supervision, where the managerial philosophy characteristically centred around discipline and punishment. In the compound manager's own words in 1903: 'Treatment: A firm hand. Always keep your word. Punish well when required. Do nothing by halves. A child with a man's vice.'

Such 'masters and servants' relations were then bolstered by a formidable set of laws and practices, controlling and cheapening African labour. Upon entering town, all the African job seekers must go to the registry office to procure passes to seek work. The registration certificates showed particulars of their previous labour records, including wages, so that new employers were unlikely to pay higher wages than before. Once the Africans had obtained jobs, they were required to get certificates for contracts of
service. It was illegal for the Africans to sleep outside the authorized places, i.e. a town location or their master's premises, and a 9 o'clock night curfew was imposed. The masters and servants legislation prohibited virtually any forms of labour resistance. Every month, until their departure from town, the African workers had to renew their certificates for contracts of service at the registry office, endorsing, together with the registration certificates, that they were neither contract-breakers nor 'loafers'. The police and other officials saw to it through a frequent check of passes in streets, sanitary lanes, railway station, location, registry office, everywhere in the town that the system was properly working. And 'petty apartheid', such as the prohibition of using sidewalks by Africans, and racial 'etiquette', such as demanding Africans to take off hats, gave subtle yet powerful finishing touches to the domination of colonial capital over African labour.

This is the outline of the world the Tonga workers entered. In order to understand how they interacted with, struggled with, and tried to change this environment, one must first take into account two things that conditioned the pattern of their response. First, the case was an classic example in which one ethnic group was associated with one occupation. As S. Thornton has suggested in reference to the Bulawayo municipal workers, this linkage, along with their lower status in African job hierarchy and shared experiences at the crowded compound and at hardly pleasant work, etc., was to create a particularly strong sense of brotherhood among them.157

The second feature worth to note is the very unique nature of their migration to Salisbury. The dominant trend of the labour migration of Central African peasants was a movement towards the industrialized south, where wages and working conditions were generally more attractive. Just as Salisbury was a hub of migration networks for the peoples of Nyasaland and other northern areas, Bulawayo was a major centre of the Tonga community abroad.66 In this situation the supply of Tonga labour to the Salisbury Town Council represented an unusual reflex movement to the north. The supply was no more than a spillover of the mainstream of Tonga migration to the south, and the Tonga workers in Salisbury could not be phlegmatic in comparing between their wages and working conditions and opportunities offered in the south.

From this it can be seen that the 'continuous' supply of Tonga labour to the Salisbury municipality was in reality in a precarious position. This was not apparent during the depression of 1903-c.1907, since in this period job opportunities in the colony shrank and the workers tended to stick to the well-trodden paths to employment. However, as the colonial economy entered an unprecedented boom in 1908-11, the situation was altered. In these years the mining industry began to demand a large share in the colony's African labour supply, and the working conditions in the mining industry were considerably improved through the imposition of the minimum standards on rations, housing, etc. by the government who found their action necessary for the long-term development of
the mining industry. Meanwhile, the colony's capital town expanded rapidly, with its European population doubling from 1,684 in 1907 to 3,479 in 1911. The municipal works lagged behind this rapid urban growth, the burden of which was, like in the post-First World War years, placed upon the shoulders of the municipal employees.

Thus in these 'prosperous' years the Tonga peasants had an widened option in selecting jobs and, not surprisingly, discontent mounted among their 'brothers' in Salisbury. The first major protest by the latter occurred in May 1909. Workers refused to receive their Sunday allowance of meat 'on account of it not being sufficient', and a strike resulted. In the manner reminiscent of the 1919 strike, they tried to proceed 'to the Town House to discuss their grievances', marching 'in a body armed with sticks and axes'. Dete, Mangwali, and ten other Zambesis ended up behind bars on the charge of 'refusing to obey'. The suppression of the strike, however, backfired on the employer. The employment by the municipality thereafter became unpopular with the Tonga workers, who instead increasingly looked to employment on mines, undoubtedly mainly in the south. In the Salisbury context there appeared what might be called a combination of withholding labour, being quite effective in a situation that 'No natives from Southern Rhodesia will undertake the work'. As the compound manager had to complain in October 1910: 'I beg to suggest that the Municipal Compound labourers should have their meat rations increased by half. Labour is getting scarce lately. ... All the Council Native Labour has been Zambeza [sic] natives ... and it's only Zambeza natives that care to do the work. So it would disorganize the Compound to lose hold of those now, and something must be done'.

Not infrequently, it seems, similar attempts to control the labour market were made. In 1914, for instance, the municipal compound was subjected to a series of surprise visits by the B.S.A Police, and this had, in the words of the town clerk, 'an unfortunate effect on the labour supply, which is recruited to some extent by volunteers coming to the compound'. The town clerk was thus compelled to request the police 'not to enter the municipal compound unless either accompanied by the manager ... or with his approval'. The foregoing leaves little doubt that a tradition of industrial action, both overt and covert, was not absent among the municipal employees by the early 1910s. And no wonder that the Tonga sanitary workers played a central role in the 1919 strike.

Viewed from another angle, the Tonga workers' increased reluctance to come to work for the Town Council from 1909 was a reflection of the competition for African labour between the mining industry and the Salisbury municipality, the latter losing the battle. The position of labour supply to the municipality was so aggravated in the early 1910s, especially after the Labour Bureau had established a semi-monopoly in recruiting labour in Northern Rhodesia by 1911, that the Council grudgingly took on the 'expensive' labour supplied by the Bureau for some years.
Meanwhile, a serious search for a new source of cheaper labour was started. A break-through was made in 1912, a year of drought, when the Council managed to procure some voluntary labour coming from the north. Thereafter, the municipal works depended to an increasing extent on Angoni and other northern labourers, although the sanitary work continued to be carried out by Tonga workers. And this reorganization of the municipal labour force constitutes a precondition for the 'cosmopolitan' nature of the 1919 action.

The making of a 'cosmopolitan' labour force alone, of course, does not explain why the action was of a 'cosmopolitan' character: we know that under certain circumstances 'ethnicity' could be a divisive factor within a culturally heterogeneous urban community, as in a 'tribal' fight that erupted between the Gomani Angoni and the Chipeta in and around the Salisbury location in 1922, resulting in the death of a Chipeta worker. This question brings us to a new dimension of the issue, i.e. the changing nature of African urban community.

At the beginning of the century Salisbury's African community predominantly comprised migrant worker-peasants, with a major exception of a few fully-proletarianized South African Blacks. In 1903 the average length of service offered by the Tonga municipal workers was one or one-and-a-half years, while the same of the indigenous Africans, who constituted as much as slightly less than a half of the African population in Salisbury, was even shorter, no more than a few months. For a complex set of reasons the oscillating of African worker-peasants between town and the country came to stay for decades to follow, but this should not obscure the following two points. First, by the First World War there emerged a sizable and slowly increasing number of Africans who continuously stayed in town for years. They did so in part because they managed to obtain better categories of job like teachers, drivers, government messengers, eating-house managers, and small artisans, and/or, perhaps more significantly, because they lost access to land in the home areas. It is known that the Tonga community had several such people. It was above all these early African urbanites whom the colonial system could hardly accommodate. It was also the same group who had high aspirations for decent life within town. And it was these people, as many were old-timers in work and town life, and as some were better educated, from whom key figures of 'tribal' labour migrancy networks and community leaders were bound to emerge.

Secondly, the expansion of the ranks of real wage-earners might be a gradual (and also tardy) process, but one must exercise prudence in applying this 'gradualist' notion to the history of political and cultural life, the quality of which could change 'all of sudden' to determine the structure of the subsequent years. The years shortly before and after 1920 seem to have been such a turning point. The cultural horizons of the African workers were dramatically extended in this period. Tea meetings, for instance, suddenly became a popular form of recreation. They no longer meant only the 'respectable' meetings held at chapels and churches, but boisterous all-night dances, whether tea was served or not, at the
location beer hall or at some other places.® The craze of tea
meetings, which captured not only men but also women, contributed to
the creation of a new genre of dance and music (perhaps best
characterized as being neither 'European' nor 'traditional'), a
prototype of the latter-day Tsaba Tsaba dance and music. Likewise
football ceased to be a sport exclusively played by church people or
South Africans, as in the past.® It was now regularly played (and
watched) by common workers at vacant plots outside the town on
Sundays, so that in 1923 the Town Council, a firm believer of the
philosophy that a healthy body means a contented mind, established a
'recreation ground' within the location (with a view to concen­
trating African sports on one spot) for football clubs.®

In every aspect of life the African urban populace, in particuli
the long-term urban dwellers, became self-assertive. In the
municipal location the residents frequently united themselves as a
community. As mentioned earlier, the soaring prices of mealie meal,
clothes, etc. seriously ate into their small incomes. And they had
to pay a high monthly rental of 10s. for a hut, which had been
doubled in 1907. The reduced real wages and the high rentals
rendered the urbanized men and women more dependent on 'informal'
jobs, but much of this option was precluded when by the end of 1918
the municipality had usurped the African business of traditional
beer. These provoked, from 1914 but more impressively from the
beginning of 1919, a series of protest movements, boycotting the
location and the municipal beer hall, or sending petitions to the
Native Department and the Legislative Council. At a meeting in'
early 1919 location residents, while complaining of the municipal
beer monopoly, high rentals and other difficulties in life, demanded
that they should be 'notified beforehand of any contemplated bye­
laws affecting their welfare to enable them to hold meetings and
discuss such regulations'.® Such community consciousness was
pronounced especially by women's protest. In 1920 'about 150 native
women of all tribes'—practically all the women residing in the
location—stood together and voiced their grievances before the
Superintendent of Natives, Salisbury.® And a few month later, in
January 1921, when five women and eleven men were taken before the
magistrate on the charge of being in possession of 'kaffir beer', the
court was surrounded by 'fully one hundred' protesters, no doubt the
bulk of them being women. 'The gang of natives outside', wrote The
Rhodesia Herald, 'took a keen interest in the proceedings, and when,
by some unknown means, they heard the sentence almost as soon as it
was delivered, there was much animated conversation and gesticula­
tion. The hubbub became so great eventually that the police were
compelled to clear the courtyard, as it was almost impossible inside
the Court to hear the witnesses' evidence'.® The proliferation of
mass action on this scale was, it must be emphasized, a novel
phenomenon which Salisbury, then a village-like tiny colonial
township, had never seen before the war.

Close parallel with these changes at the grass roots level ran
the political activation of the upper segments of the African
urbanites, notably certain South African and indigenous men. The
situation here was further compounded by the fact that the post-war
years were the time when the first generation of Shona 'mission boys' had been reaching a matured age as 'plough farmers', artisans, drivers, Native Department messengers, etc. at both rural and urban scenes, as well as the fact that the period coincided with the final years of B.S.A. Company rule, so making the question of the constitutional position of the Africans a central issue among thinking Africans. The interplay of these—and also of course simmering rural discontent—led to the emergence of various 'political' bodies from 1919, all claiming to be mouthpieces of the Southern Rhodesian Africans, thus ushering a new era in the history of African political life.90

It was as if the African communities had undergone a cultural transmutation during the war years. Much of the initiative of changes came from the proletarianized men and women, and the urban Africans were increasingly acquiring a 'habit of solidarity'. Did this atmosphere permeate into workshops and compounds? Can we find the same social trends and state of mind in the 1919 municipal strike or other industrial disputes of the time? The answer seems to be affirmative. From the fact that among the arrested leaders in the Salisbury municipal strike were a Mchemwa and two other Shona workers, possibly employed as office messengers or drivers,92 it may be conjectured that key workers at workplace took the lead in the action. At any rate this pattern of initiative was ubiquitous throughout the colony. That which the Bulawayo railway workers won in July 1919, namely the new wage scales with monthly increments after a year's service, could not be but the very demands of the old hands, and at the heart of unrest among the Gwelo municipal workers in December the same year was reportedly discontent among the Africans in service for several years.33 And the Salisbury strike of 1919, in common with many other African social movements of the time, was further featured by the involvement of all ethnic groups and various categories of workers employed by the Council. This may be ascribed to the extent to which the workers were driven to the wall—indeed, in 1919 some municipal workers were forced to sleep in the open owing to the compound being incapable of accommodating a rapidly expanding labour force.34 But one should not overlook in the matter the presence of a subjective element, namely, a culture that kept the men together, and that was becoming a norm of the African urban communities.

IV

It has been argued in the previous section that the post-war years were marked by the acquisition of a habit of solidarity by African workers. The point may be further supported by the coming into being from 1918 of self-help associations which, too, were to become an integral part of African urban social life. It is true that even prior to that date the African workers had formed what a sociologist has termed primary communities around, for instance, a key member of their ethnic group (often called a 'headman', 'chief' or 'king'), working in Salisbury, and/or one of the town missions, with whose
denomination they had previous links in the home area.95 But these early forms of association were essentially spontaneous and informal. After the war, in contrast, they launched to organize a variety of corporate bodies, most commonly styling themselves as burial societies, in order to cope with difficulties in urban life. This movement obviously grew out of the previous forms of association, but it was catalyzed by the strained and restless atmosphere of the time and it was eventually transformed into a lasting culture of the emerging African working class. Our remaining task is thus to examine its connection with the labour movements of the day and to assess its long-term implications in the history of African labour, while still keeping an eye on the Tonga municipal workers.

The first to set up a burial society in Salisbury was, if a 1955 The African Weekly obituary is to be believed, 'Chief' Zuze Komasho who came from Tete:

Mr. Komasho came to Salisbury in 1605 [1905?] and has been residing in the Harare Township ever since that time. In 1918 he influenced his fellowmen to form a burial society which is now known as Tete Burial Society No. 1. As a result of his initiative, many other tribes in the Township followed his example and formed their own burial societies. ... Mr. Komasho was a moving spirit behind his people and all will live to remember his leadership which enabled them to come together and help one another in time of sickness and death.36

Another association which might also claim to be the oldest was the Senna Burial Society, started in 1918 (which was to split into a Port Herald Burial Society and a Chinde Society Company, Senna Mission).37 After 1918 the forming of such cohesion suddenly came into vogue, the energy being concentrated on about the period from mid-1919 to an early part of 1920. This is attested to by the location superintendent, who first referred to the movement in his annual report for 1919-20: 'Several of the tribes here formed clubs, their subscriptions being devoted to helping one another in sickness, payment of fines for the less serious offences of members, and indulging in expensive funerals'.38 It is known that by the middle of the 1920s the Salisbury Africans had, in addition to the societies already mentioned, such bodies as the Gazaland Burial Society, the Northern Rhodesia Burial Society, the Chikunda Club, the Atonga Society, the Angoni Burial Society, and the Chinyao (Nyau) Society, some of them extending branches to mines and towns.39 Considering that the Chinyao Society, a Malawi secret dance, directly originated, unlike other societies, from rural communities, it is possible that the society had been brought into Salisbury in the very early days, but it, too, gathered its strength after the war.100

It is worth to stress that the movement gained momentum during the period when the town, its African community more than others, was twice ravaged by influenza epidemic (the second one being less
severe), besides other infectious diseases which threatened the town as well in the same period. In the course of the first influenza attack no less than 300 Africans were killed, more than 2,000 being sent to an isolation camp. The sick and destitutes were looked after by their friends and relatives, and few escaped from the nightmare of death in a land far away from home. The incident thus dramatically drove home all the town Africans the importance of mutual help, which no doubt greatly contributed to the making of burial societies.

Thus we know that what might be called the burial society movement developed side by side with the post-war labour protest with its peak from July 1919 to January 1920, as well as agitation in the Salisbury location from the beginning of 1919. This broad link between association making and mass actions was more evident in the case of the Tonga workers. Although the precise date of the establishment is shrouded in mist, they certainly had organized a Northern Rhodesia Burial Society by early September 1919. Given the fact that they were almost exclusively confined to municipal employment, it is quite probable that the organization had some connection with the municipal strike of August 1919, whether it was directly involved in the action or not. Whatever the precise interaction between the society and the industrial action might be, at least one burial society was, it can be asserted, the organizational expression of a heightened collective consciousness at a workshop. Hence pertinent questions arise: was it a disguised form of a trade union? In what ways did it differ from what we understand by a trade union? What was the nature of the esprit de corps of the Tonga workers? Now in order is discussion on what the Northern Rhodesia Burial Society (or the burial society movement in general) was.

The organization was started by Simonga, Kawanba and other Zambesias at the municipal compound on the Sanitary Farm. Simonga seems to have been a central figure, since he assumed the title of Governor of the society. They appointed John Simunza as King. Simunza was one of the Zambesi old timers at the age of about 40 and already known as 'King of the Zambezi peoples'. His occupation was a cattle buyer for a butcher but formerly a 'native police' in Salisbury for a number of years. The government had been quite uneasy about the growth of African self-help societies. They, desiring to bring them under supervision, were encouraging the societies to place their funds in the hands of the Native Department in return for official recognition. In compliance with this policy, the new association, as some other burial societies did, opened an account at the Native Commissioner's Office on the 9th September and made a W.D. Masawi or Chipwayo, a messenger for the Native Department (and to act as secretary for the Rhodesia Native Association in the 1920s), their President. On Christmas they held a feast and sports for members.

The Society was very akin to the Beni dance, or perhaps a Beni dance itself, which had been rippling off since 1918 from eastern Africa to central and southern Africa apparently through ex-African
soldiers. Like the Beni the Society laid much stress on hierarchy and status, obviously modelled on a military force and colonial society. The formal organizational structure comprised 'officers' and soldiers, the former including from President, King, Governor-General, Town Clerk-Business Manager-Interpreter, Solicitor, Brigadier-General, Lieut.-Colonel, Major-in-Charge, down to Warrant Officer, etc. Also like the Beni it possessed a fictitious military band (beni) and staged a drill or dance in leisure time. One of the rules of the Society read: 'No soldier to be allowed to be absent from parade at any day, as the parades are to be held at the location ground at 3.30 p.m. every Saturday and at 2.30 p.m. on holidays'. In addition, the Society very much concerned itself with the smart and clean appearance of members, as another rule had it: 'All soldiers are carefully warned to obtain their uniform which will be of the khaki shirt, 1 knicker (khaki), 1 hat, which will be worn on parade, and puttees (if obtained). Hair to be combed. Feet washed if boots cleaned'.

One may interpret these features, as J.C. Mitchell did in his study on the Beni-Kalela dance in the Copperbelt, as the expression of a desire for 'vicarious participation' in the world from which the Africans were excluded. There may be something in this, perhaps. But if this 'compensation' theory is associated with the assumption that the Africans were simply imitating a 'European way of life' and the men of wealth and prestige, then it leads us to miss the crux of this remarkably robust African urban culture. A more comprehensive and plausible explanation would view the Society's hierarchy and organized drill as a replication, rather than a compensation, of experiences in the discipline-centred colonial situation. The workers thereby transformed the actual world into a play and game, something to be managed and manipulated by themselves. And, indeed, the ethos of the Society seems to lie in its desire to regulate social relationships by workers themselves.

The point becomes still much clearer when we shift attention from the organized recreation to another function of the Society, i.e. a moral improvement movement. The Society expected its members to observe certain etiquette of the African workers' community. Its concern with the clean and smart appearance of the members may be seen in this light. The organized drill, apart from its mere recreational function, may be interpreted as a method for moral improvement through discipline. In much the same way the members were expected 'to salute superior officers whenever they meet them; Lords as well as their wives'. It may be mentioned that this courtesy was extended to other African groups, as it was ruled: 'Every [sic] soldiers are strictly warned to salute every [sic] seniors, either Chinde, Portuguese, Kings and Governors and Generals. There is no difference'. A corporate action was a virtue, and an egocentric action a vice: a complaint to the government must be done not as an individual but as a body through 'Brigadier-General', that is, W.D. Chipwayo, and a member must not leave the town without giving notice to the Society.
To foster a fraternal spirit was obviously the main purpose of the movement. The 'Governeror' for the Port Herald Society specifically delineated the point: 'The people who join the Society must be of good condition not to be rough each other. If one of the Society offends you, you can go to the Magistrate, Royal or Judge to appeal, and they will decide you. ... If one of your Lords tells you a thing obey him. If you are not quite satisfied with what he says, you can talk with nicely, until he will have it right.'\textsuperscript{109} It appears that when a proper behaviour was not observed, a general practice was to hold a court to decide the case.\textsuperscript{109} The Chikunda Club is known to have expelled one member in 1920 on the ground of his 'disgraceful' involvement in a stabbing affray.\textsuperscript{110}

Nor were the efforts to regulate social relationships confined to the fields of recreation and morality. As the name itself suggest, the Society was additionally a thrift society to meet the pecuniary needs of members, and it so cushioned the burden of the colonial situation. As partly shown by the location superintendent's report quoted earlier, the burial societies offered financial assistance through the collection of membership fees to those member workers who fell sick, who were stranded in towns and elsewhere, and who were 'unluckily' arrested by the police for 'petty crimes', like offences of the pass laws and the masters and servants laws, so common in everyday life. They also socialized death in a proper manner, organizing decent—but, to officials, extravagant and pompous—funerals, buying coffins and on occasion even hiring motor cars, a real luxury for the poor men in those days.\textsuperscript{111}

It is certain therefore that the Northern Rhodesia Burial Society (and other kindred societies) retained many of the attributes ascribed to modern trade unionism. As everywhere in the world, arranging recreational activities, affording mutual aid in times of sickness, etc., and nurturing fraternity were important functions of the trade unions. The I.C.U., Rhodesia, later claimed to offer many benefits ranging from 'legal advice and assistance', 'assistance to members ... of sickness, unemployment, or old age, and funeral expenses' to 'grants and endowments to clubs, schools, debating societies, etc.'\textsuperscript{112} and R. Riddell, who surveyed the Salisbury Municipal Workers Union, 'one of the most effective African trade unions', in the early 1970s, noticed that major attractions of the Union were a mutual aid scheme which entitled a worker to borrow money, a burial scheme, 'a grant to help in the payment of rents in the townships', and others.\textsuperscript{113} Also, day-to-day organizational activities within the societies such as holding regular meetings, selecting officials, discussions over the use of funds, and mediating disputes among workers were not very distant from those of the latter-day trade unions. Indeed, the affinity between the self-help societies and the trade unions has been recognized by a pioneer African trade unionist, T.C. Shato Nyakauru (who started in 1941 an African waiters association), when he has recalled in my recent interview that 'Our association in those days was just like a burial society; we helped each other'.\textsuperscript{114}
These close connections between the early mutual aid associations and the trade unions notwithstanding, the early societies differed from the industrial unions in a crucial respect. They did regulate relations between workers, surely, but little evidence exists to suggest that the driving force behind such cohering of African workers was an aspiration to influence relations between capital and labour at workshops. This is true with even the Northern Rhodesia Burial Society, created at a municipal compound in the atmosphere of industrial unrest. They were not, after all, aimed at embracing all the municipal employees. The fact that practically all societies were tied to a particular region or ethnic group (although some might have been open to everybody in theory) reveals the strength of ethnic self-consciousness in deciding the African workers' behaviour.

Yet, having made this point, it is at once necessary to go on to say two things. First, the importance of ethnic self-consciousness, the origins of which may be ultimately attributed to a peasant culture, should not lead us to assume that the African workers were deeply trapped in their 'tribal' past, and that ethnic brotherhood, a 'vertical' unity so to speak, disaccords by nature with wider, 'horizontal' unities. On the contrary, the evidence and arguments already presented have amply shown that such views are false: far from stubbornly conservative and backward-looking, the apparent thrust of 'Zambesism' was 'modernism' and 'urbanity', nor, indeed, did the Zambesi brotherhood preclude broader solidarities.

Secondly, our evidence also underlines the necessity for us to go beyond the widely-held, though often implicitly, automatic equation between the process of industrialization and the making of African working class communities. This equation, if made in a rigid and static way, would take us nowhere towards the explanation of collective action among urban Africans at the earliest stages of industrialization and would make unintelligible the 'stratigraphical' nature of African urban culture, each stratum of which was the product of a particular African experience. In the face of the history and nature of African participation in wage employment, it is rather natural that the 'base' strata of African urban culture received the strong injection of peasant traditions; so, workers were bound together, among others, by human relations very familiar to them, that is, ethnic and regional ties.

Finally, a brief reference may well be made to yet another revealing point in assessing the evolution of African workers' social movements. This was the fact that the earliest self-help societies in the capital town were invariably formed by foreign labourers. The Shona-speaking workers, despite their numerical superiority, were hardly prominent in this movement. It was not until towards the end of the 1920s, or during and after the Great Depression, when they set up 'pachawo (their own) societies' in towns and districts. This feature may be explained by differential processes of proletarianization among the central African peasantry. The early proletarian elements in Salisbury, whose needs for mutual help therein must have been greatest, were largely drawn from the peoples from the Northern territories, as
evidenced by the fact that the Salisbury location before 1920 was occupied almost exclusively by such peoples. The indigenous Africans, on the other hand, had their natal communities relatively close to the industrial centres, with their strategy to obtain cash incomes being more or less dependent upon peasant production, or at least a combination of this and wage employment. This goes some way to explain why in contrast to Bulawayo, which already witnessed urban movements among local Africans by 1918 and became the central locus of protest, African politics and social movements in early Salisbury were often divided and lacked a centripetal force to pull various movements into one—a force that had to be created by Southern Rhodesian Africans themselves, rather than extraterritorial peoples.

CONCLUSION

In the years during but especially following the First World War African social life in urban areas underwent qualitative changes. Qualitative, because changes took place not only in the 'exogenous' levels of life (as manifested in a drop in real wages, the War, the influenza epidemic, a labour shortage, overcrowded compounds, intensified work demands, the municipal beer monopoly, and the rest), but also in the deeper, 'endogenous' levels of life, concerning the life-style and outlook of people. Changes; partly because a considerable number of urbanized African men and women had been engendered by the three decades of colonial rule, but, more importantly, because they set out creating a habit of solidarity and cohesion in defense of their interests. Many new phenomena came to surface in the space of a few years. There was a proliferation of strike action throughout the country, the scale and intensity of which were by far greater than historians have hitherto thought. There were a multitude of protest actions based on a community basis, although we have discussed them only briefly. And there came into being mutual aid associations aspiring to control the everyday life of working men. All this points to one and the same thing—the emergence of an African working class, with its special character moulded by the early Zimbabwean and central African setting. The ruling world did not recognize this as such and the young colony was entering, superficially at least, the golden age of colonialism. But, in retrospect, the story was bound to unfold itself.
## APPENDIX AFRICAN INDUSTRIAL PROTEST (AND CRIMINAL CASES OF 'REFUSING TO OBEY'), NOV. 1918-DEC. 1921

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWNS (AND MAGISTERIAL DISTRICTS)</th>
<th>MINES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bulawayo</td>
<td>Gwelo</td>
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### 1918

- **Nov. Strike**
  - Globe & Phoenix

### 1919

- **Mar. Strike**
  - Sanitary Workers
  - Wankie

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Accused</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>Strike</td>
<td>4 Accused</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>Sanitary</td>
<td>3 Accused</td>
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<td>May</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>Sanitary</td>
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<td>June</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>Sanitary</td>
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<td>Aug.</td>
<td>Strike</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>13 Arrests</td>
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<td>Oct.</td>
<td>Strike</td>
<td>11 Accused</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
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<td>13 Arrests</td>
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<td>Nov.</td>
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<td>Nov.</td>
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<td>11 Arrests</td>
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<td>Dec.</td>
<td>Strike</td>
<td>3 Accused</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>15 Arrests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>Unrest</td>
<td>12 Accused</td>
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### 1920

- **Jan.**
  - Unrest
  - Bushtick
  - Store
  - Boycott
  - Shaava
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<th>TOWNS (AND MAGISTERIAL DISTRICTS)</th>
<th>MINES</th>
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<td>Bulawayo</td>
<td>Gwelo</td>
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<td>&lt;br&gt;(Mar, 5 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Mar, 4 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Apr, 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(May, 13 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(June 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(June 6 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Aug, 22 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Sep, 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Oct, 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Dec, 12 Accused)&lt;br&gt;Jan, Strike&lt;br&gt;Municipal&lt;br&gt;103 Arrests&lt;br&gt;(Feb, 5 Accused)&lt;br&gt;Feb, Strike&lt;br&gt;Ricksha&lt;br&gt;Pullers&lt;br&gt;(Mar, 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Mar, 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Aug, 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Sep, 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Sep, Strike&lt;br&gt;Wankie)&lt;br&gt;(Apr, 7 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Apr, 8 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Apr, 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(May, 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(June 4 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(July 4 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(July 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Aug, 3 Accused)&lt;br&gt;(Sep, 3 Accused)</td>
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<td>Salisbury</td>
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<td>Umtali</td>
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| (Nov. 10 Accused) | (Nov. 6 Accused) | (Dec. 5 Accused) | (Dec. 11 Accused) | (Dec. 7 Accused) |

**SOURCE:**


(3) N/9/1/22, Annual Report of Native Comm., Bulawayo, for 1919.


**NOTE:**
(1) The cases of 'refusing to obey'—the contravention of (6), 1, Chap. IV, the Masters and Servants Ordinance (No. 5 of 1901) as amended—as indicated by ( ), are taken from criminal registers, when more than three persons were brought up at the magistrate court at one time. They are arranged according to magisterial districts. Thus, not all the prisoners shown here were Africans employed in towns. For example, the five accused at the Bulawayo district court in February 1921 and the fifteen at the Gatooma district court in December 1919 were farm labourers and wood cutters respectively. Similarly, some others were mine labourers.

(2) The precise date of the Bulawayo municipal strike that took place after the railway strike of July 1919 is not known. It is possible that the incident was the same as either the case of December 1919 or the case of January 1920 in Bulawayo in the above list.


7. Van Onselen, Chibaro, 222-3.


10. Ibid., 16 July 1919.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 18 July 1919.

13. Ibid., 1 Aug. 1919; D/4/30/5, cases 467-79 of 1919.


15. Ibid., 7 Aug. 1919.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.; D/4/7/24, cases 1601-13 of 1919.


23. Van Onselen, Chibaro, 223.


25. For the early African strikes, see Phimister, 'The Shamva mine strike', 65.


27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 29 Jan. 1921; D/4/1/39, cases 229-331 of 1921.

29. Van Onselen, Chibaro, 223.

31. See for example ibid., 18 Nov. 1922.
32. Ibid., 21 Jan. 1921. See also the ricksha cases in the criminal register, D/4/7/28.
37. Ibid. 1 Dec. 1919.
42. Ibid.
43. Rhod. Her., 24 June 1901.
46. Rhod. Her., 5 Dec. 1919. It seems that the Gatooma municipal strikers also adopted the same attitude in court in December 1919: D/4/17/8, cases 975-86 of 1919.
48. D/4/30/5, cases 467-79 of 1919; D/4/7/24, cases 1601-13 of 1919; D/4/3/12, case 1137 of 1919; D/4/1/39, cases 229-331 of 1921.
52. According to Bul. Chron., 8 Aug. 1919, 'many [of the strikers were] connected with the Sanitary Department'.
53. LG/47/19, Town Clerk, Salisbury, to Secr., Administrator's Dep., 7 Sept. 1911. The term 'Tonga', or 'Zambesi', is used rather loosely in this paper, refering to the peoples living at Monze and its adjacent areas in North-Western Rhodesia, although, strictly speaking, 'Sanitary Farm workers could be divided into Tonga and Batwa' (R. Parry, 'Murder, Migrants and the Salisbury Municipality, 1907-1912' (unpub. paper, June 1983), 3). Before c.1900, however, the Africans coming from the Zambezi valley in the Portuguese territories were referred to as 'Zambesis'.
54. For a recent account of the early Tonga plateau see M. Dixon-Fyle, 'Agricultural improvement and political protest on the Tonga plateau, Northern Rhodesia', Journal of African History, XVIII (1977), 579-82.
Until the beginning of 1898 the municipal labour force had been largely drawn from the local Africans and occasionally supplemented by the Shangaans, etc. (LG/47/1, O.H. Ogilvie, Sanitary Insp. to Board of Management, 17 Mar. 1892; Rhod. Her., 12 Jan. 1894, 16 Feb. and 31 Aug. 1898). By 1903, however, a vast majority of the municipal employees were Tongas (LG/38, Answers to a Comm. appointed by the Chamber of Mines, Transvaal, Aug. 1903).

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Bureau labour cost at least 5s. higher per head per month than the voluntary labour employed by the municipality (LG/52/6/4, Town Engineer to T.C., 15 June 1922).


Parry, 'Murder, Migrants', 10-11.


A Jesuit missionery at the Chikuni mission near Chief Monze's village wrote in the early 1910:

There has, of late, been an exodus of our Christian boys, more than half of whom have gone south in search of work. ... the sight of a boy returned from work and brilliantly clad from head to foot gives them all "Bulawayo fever." We cannot blame them. There is not employment for many here. ... Besides we know that in Bulawayo they will be well looked after by Fr. Nicot.
70. S.R., Report of the Director of Census ... 1911 (Sess. Paps, A7, 1912), Table C.
71. Rhod. Her., 20 May 1909; D/4/7/12, cases 563-94 of 1909.
72. LG/52/6/1, Compound Manager to T.C., 14 Oct. 1910 and 22 Aug. 1911.
73. LG/47/19, T.C. to Secr., Native Affairs, Livingstone, 9 Sept. 1911.
74. LG/52/6/1, Compound Manager to T.C., 14 Oct. 1910.
75. LG/47/22, T.C. to District Supt, BSA Police, 5 June 1914.
76. See above all LG/47/19, T.C. to Secr., Native Affairs, Livingstone, 9 Sept. 1911; T.C. to Manager, R.N.L.B., Bulawayo, 23 Nov. 1911.
77. LG/52/6/1, Compound Manager to T.C., 30 Apr. 1912.
78. For the use of Angoni labour see D/3/5/34, case 1725 of 1913. The gradual departure of Tonga workers from the employment of the Town Council may be also attributed to the fact that with the growth of the colonial economy of Northern Rhodesia, especially from the mid-1920s, the Tonga societies, situated near an artery of the Copperbelt, were transformed from relatively poor, drought-stricken communities into ones of commercial agriculture. Accordingly, the Tonga plateau in general ceased to function as a large reservoir of cheap labour. See Dixon-Fyle, 'Agricultural improvement', especially 582-3.
79. D/3/5/57, cases 1398 and 1596 of 1922: LG/52/6/4, Location Supt to T.C., 30 May 1922.
81. Many of the long-term town dwellers resided in the municipal location, while some staying either on employers' premises or in private locations outside the town. The fact that in 1914 the town location was occupied by 420 adults and 60 children, and in 1925 by 1,065 men, 352 women, and 321 children gives us an idea of the size of the stabilized section of the African community: LG/52/6/1, Location Supt to T.C., 3 Mar. 1914; Location Supt's Report, in Municipality of Salisbury, Minute of his Worship the Mayor For the Year ended 31st July 1925 (Salisbury, 1925); hereafter the Salisbury Mayor's Minutes will be cited as Mayor's Minute with mayoral year.
82. See the careers of Zambesi workers recorded in the court in 1912: Parry, 'Murder, Migrants', 3.
83. LG/52/6/1, Location Supt to T.C., 3 Mar. 1914; LG/47/44, T.C. to T.C., Umtali, 15 Feb. 1927. By 1930 the boom of tea meetings or all-night dances were felt among the youth in many rural areas: see correspondence in S235/392.
84. Town missions organized football games as a method to attract African workers from the very early years of colonialism. St. Michael's mission (Anglican), Salisbury, set up an 'officially recognized' football ground, the first of its kind, in 1909: LG/38, E.J. Parker to T.C., 27 Aug. 1909; LG/47/17, T.C. to E.J. Parker, 28 Oct. 1909. Philip Mukasa, one of the first Shona students who went to the Nenguwo Training Institute (Wesleyan), was drawn into membership of the Wesleyan Church through a football team in c.1900 when he was working in Salisbury: R.
Feaden, 'Nenguwo Training Institution and the first Shona teachers', in J.A. Dachs (ed.), *Christianity South of the Zambezi*, 1 (Gwelo, 1973), 74.


87. N/3/20/2, W.S. Taberer to C.N.C., 3 Jan. 1919.


89. *Rhod. Her.*, 11 Jan. 1921. See also D/4/7/28, cases 80-95 of 1921.

90. In July 1921 twenty-five South African blacks met in Salisbury to establish a Union Bantu Vigilance Association. Unlike their earlier Union Natives Vigilance Organization, started in February 1914, this organization aimed 'in time to be representative of all the Bantu peoples in Northern and Southern Rhodesia' (*Rhod. Her.*, 25 July 1921; N/3/7/2, W.S. Taberer, Supt of Natives, Salisbury, to C.N.C., 30 Mar. 1914). The organizing secretary was A.Z. Twala, who was the former secretary of the South African Native Natal Congress, Vryheid branch (*Rhod. Her.*, 6 Dec. 1922). This development, therefore, can be seen as partly a northern extension of the South African Congress movement, contrary to T.O. Ranger's account that Twala believed that the influence of the Congress 'should be resisted' in favour of the Jabavu strategy (T.O. Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia* (London, 1970), 91). Out of this movement the Rhodesia Bantu Voters' Association came into being in 1923, activating mainly African social movements in Bulawayo and Matabeleland (see correspondence in N/3/21/6; Ranger, *The African Voice*, 88-109). Meanwhile, in 1919 a Rhodesia Native Association had been formed in Salisbury, with its founding members being indigenous and Central Africans (mostly Wesleyan), as well as South Africans (notably J. Moeketsi and E.F. Mare) who were also instrumental in initiating the Union Bantu Vigilance Association, etc. (see above all R. Feaden, 'The contribution of the Epworth Mission settlement to African development', in T.O. Ranger and J. Weller (eds.), *Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa* (Berkeley, 1975), 135-51).

For our present purposes it is important to raise a question why these 'political' developments took place in the post-war years. There is some evidence for the existence of a degree of cooperation between the 'politically-conscious' élites and the masses in the location. For example, in 1921 E. Mankayi, a member of the Executive Committee of the Union Bantu Vigilance Association, lobbied for the amendment of the Kaffir Beer Ordinance on behalf of the location residents: Hist. Mss Collect., LE3/1/2, Petition signed by E. Mankayi, 16 May 1921; *Rhod. Her.*, 25 July 1921.


92. D/4/7/24, cases 1601-13 of 1919.


94. LG/52/6/2, W. Wardley to T.C., 7 Jan. 1920.
95. J. Rex, Race, Colonialism and the City (London, 1973), 15. For an analysis of the ethnic composition of religious groups in Salisbury see Yoshikuni, 'The 1911 Census'.
97. See correspondence in N/3/21/2 and S138/10.
98. Location Supt's Report, in Mayor's Minute 1919-20.
99. In addition to note 97 above, see Rhod. Her., 12, 17, 27, 31 Jan. 1920; 28, 29 Aug. 1923; LG/52/6/2, Location Supt to T.C., 31 Dec. 1920; S715/1, Statement by D. Saidi, 13 May 1926; D/3/5/78, case 3281 of 1927.
100. Since it was a secret dance society, the Chinyao did not come under official supervision and caused much anxiety and suspicion among the powers that be (see files in S715/1). Thus, the Location Superintendent expelled the dance from the town location by 1922, when they had fights with non-members: LG/52/6/3, Location Supt to T.C., 30 May 1922.
103. This paragraph is based on ibid.
106. This point seems to be supported by recent sociological and anthropological studies on popular recreation. See for example S.M. Gelber, 'Working at playing: The culture of the workplace and the rise of baseball', Journal of Social History, XVI, 4 (1983), 3-22. In a similar way, but in the 'Africanist' perspective, T.O. Ranger views the Beni as a 'creative African response' and 'an expression of African communalism' in his comprehensive and detailed examination of the history of the Beni: Ranger, Dance and Society in Eastern Africa 1890-1970 (London, 1975), 164. For another useful discussion on the same subject see van Onselen, Chibaro, 198-204.
110. LG/52/6/2, Location Supt to T.C., 31 Dec. 1920.
111. Of 'conspicuous consumption' in worker funerals the Location Superintendent wrote: 'the cost of one or two funerals with motor cars in attendance seems to have dampened this movement, and treasurers, etc., are frequently changed' (Location Supt's Report, in Mayor's Minute 1919-20). But, in fact, the movement was hardly 'dampened', as the same Superintendent reported the following year: 'Benefit societies still flourish' (ibid. 1920-1).
115. A similar conclusion has been reached by Ranger in his Dance
To support this point further, I wish to point out that the Northern Rhodesia Burial Society can be considered the precursor of the Northern Rhodesia Bantu Association, a prominent 'political' group in Bulawayo in the 1930s: for the latter see S138/41, P.C. Gobe and J. Kateka to C.N.C. and Native Affairs Comm., 6 Mar. 1930. In addition, 'tribal' societies, although later on increasingly blamed for their narrow horizons of unity, not infrequently acted as the units to mobilize popular support for Nationalist politics. For instance, the first public meeting held by the Nyasaland African Congress, Salisbury Branch, in September 1946 was attended by such bodies as the Achewa Tribal Society, the Angoni Tribal Society, the Mang'anja Society, the Mosa Welfare Association, etc.: The African Weekly, 23 Oct. 1946.


See S.R., Report of C.N.C. for the Year 1929 (Sess. Paps, C.S.R. 14, 1930), 1; correspondence in S1542/A6. Perhaps the most active of the Shona-speaking peoples in this respect were, significantly enough, the Manyika workers whose home areas were relatively distant from Salisbury, and who had been known for their early participation in wage employment. They had a Salisbury branch of the Young Ethiopian Manyika Society by 1930, and also the Light of Manyika Society and the Manyika Burial Society by the early 1930s: S138/22, N.C., Inyanga, to C.N.C., 20 Feb. 1930; The African Weekly, 24 Jan. 1951; S565, case 5292 of 1934. In contrast, the peoples of central Mashonaland were known for their least commitment to wage employment and urban life in Salisbury well into the 1940s (The Bantu Mirror, 28 Apr. 1943), except those who became government employees, artisans and the like, and who were involved in 'elite politics' from around 1920.

Location Supt's Report, in Mayor's Minute 1914-15.