

FROM DELCO ROAD TO MARAMPA PUB AND BACK:
AUSTRIA AT MARAMPA MINES, 1980-1985

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis highlights the period from 1980-85 in the history of the iron ore mines at Marampa, Sierra Leone, when they were operated by (a subsidiary of) an Austrian state-owned steel company. The mines had previously been abandoned by a British company, which had run it for decades. Hence, from its start, the Austrian 'rehabilitation project' was carried out in the shadow of its predecessor's heritage, but also against the general backdrop of Austria's history of marginal involvement in Africa. For several reasons the project failed within only 5 years. Intended as a contribution to the small body of Austrian-African shared historiography the thesis aims at reconstructing the short 'Austrian' period at Marampa mines, and to put it in the context of the general political and socio-economic climate of the time. The different ways the Marampa episode manifested itself in Austria are examined, using qualitative research methods and analyses of material from private and public archives. Interviews with former Austrian employees in the mines evoke memories of life at the mining site, its community and relations between Austrians and Sierra Leoneans. At the same time, their photographs, memorabilia, mementoes and reminiscences underline the impact the Marampa-experience had on their lives.

To my Parents

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APC	All Peoples' Congress
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DELCO	Sierra Leone Development Company
DIMINCO	National Diamond Mining Co
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EUFOR	European Union Force
NMJD	Network Movement for Justice and Development
MNE	Multinational Enterprise
MIOMC	Marampa Iron Ore Mining Company Ltd.
NACE	National Advocacy Coalition On Extractives
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMJD	Network Movement for Justice and Development
LMC	London Mining Company
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
KPCS	Kimberley Process Certification Scheme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OeKB	Österreichische Kontrollbank
ÖMV	Österreichische Mineralölverwaltung
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SIEROMCO	Sierra Leone Iron Ore and Metal Company Ltd
SLDC	Sierra Leone Diamond Company Ltd
SLST	Sierra Leone Selection Trust
SSD	Special Security Division
TRG	Titanium Resources Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
VA	VOEST Alpine
VAIT	VOEST Alpine Intertrading GmbH
VWM	Vereinigte Metallwerke Ranshofen-Berndorf AG
WTK	Wolfsegg-Traunthaler Kohlenwerks AG

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The extraction of mineral resources is strongly connected to human history and can be traced back thousands of years. From the Industrial Revolution onwards (Young 1992: 7), large-scale mining has led to the establishment of specific sites, which can, in Foucault's terms, be described as *Other Places*: '(S)omething like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites [...] are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (Foucault 1986: 25). These sites are interlinked with global capitalism; at the same time they can be seen as inextricably connected to actual place. The intersecting phenomena of discursive contingency, on the one hand, and material dependency, on the other, render mining sites precarious locations of aggregating discourse, ostensibly circulating around the ultimate exploitation of human and natural resources alike. However, these locations are '*contact zones* [...] where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power' (Pratt 1991:33). Such contexts are regularly provided in large-scale 'overseas' mining projects enacted by multinational enterprises from the 'global north' and the establishment of mining enclaves in the 'global south', which are '[...] linked up not in a national grid but in a transnational network that connects economically valued spaces dispersed around the world in a point-to-point fashion' (Ferguson 2006: 14). As actual 'meeting places of social forces' (Drainville 2004: 7), mining sites gather groups and individuals in a temporary setting. This setting is, in itself, and on many levels, subject to ongoing and mostly irrevocable transformation.

1.1. Research Topic

Marampa Mines is one such site where, over the decades, different Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) have been engaged in exploitation of the iron ore deposits in place. Over its 90-year history, Marampa has been a nodal point for Sierra Leone's economy, which also made it a site of political relevancy. Scottish geologist N.R. Junner discovered the iron ore formations in the area in 1926 (cf. Hills 2012). The discovery was followed by almost 50 years of exploitation by the Sierra Leone Development Company (DELCO). Initially closely connected to the colonial government (Hoogvelt & Tinker 1978: 74) the company remained in place for 14 years following independence, until it left abruptly in 1975, leaving 3000 local workers unemployed. Almost a decade later, still, the history of DELCO's long exploitation period seemed preserved at Marampa and its surroundings, as memory and in the form of the company's leftovers, office equipment, machinery and other traces: Fig I. shows DELCO Road in the mining town of *Lunsar*.

In 1979 Austromineral (founded in 1971), a 99.7% subsidiary of the large Austrian state-owned steel company VOEST Alpine Stahl GmbH (today: voestalpine) became interested in Marampa and started production officially in 1982. Taking on its predecessor's heritage proved far more difficult than expected, however; and the project collapsed prematurely after only two years of production, for both internal and external reasons. After the company left in 1985, attempts to run the mines locally failed and the site lay idle until 2005. Almost all the facilities were removed or destroyed during 10 years of civil war (1991-2002). At the time of writing (January 2013), British based London Mining PLC has commenced production at Marampa mines, following almost 30 years of inactivity at the site. The first shipment of iron ore reportedly left at the beginning of February 2012, and the official reopening of the mines took place on April 26, one day before the anniversary of Sierra Leone's independence.

Fig. I DELCO Rd., Lunsar



Photo: AM5M/R¹ (1983)

My own connection with Marampa goes back to the year 1982, when my father responded to a job advert for a teaching position at the then Austrian-managed mines. Subsequently, my family spent a year at the 'senior staff' mining compound at Marampa. Ever since, my own memory of this period has been shaped, as much by actual experiences, as by media reports and images, as well as family conversations and long slideshow-nights. Evidently, the one-year stay at Sierra Leone has left considerable traces in our lives. Many years after our return from Marampa, and during a walk through *Eisenerz*, a small Austrian mining town, I came across a typical Austrian country snack bar bearing all the common features, apart from being named Marampa Pub (Fig. II). A conversation with the owner elicited a very ambivalent narrative from somebody who had also stayed at Marampa during the early 1980s, and later

1 Given the small number of expatriates involved in the Marampa project, the identities of respondents have been protected and their responses and contributions made anonymous. Hence, the oral accounts and the material from private archives are marked with letter and number-combinations, so that the respondents' identities remain discernible without being personally identifiable. The letters indicate their gender, professional affiliation and duration of their stay. Other than that no further indication is given. Full names will be used when citing from written documentation. KEY: 1-11 (numbering arbitrary); M-male; F-female; AM-Austromineral; R-regular; T-temporary. Hence, "AM2M/R" describes a male expatriate staff member, affiliated with Austromineral, who spent at least a few months in the mines. Any additional information needed will be provided at the respective occasion.

nostalgically named his pub after the place. His African venture is well known in this remote town in Austria's mountainous countryside. This encounter triggered my interest in the differences and crosscutting perceptions of the Marampa exploitation project, especially in the light of a conspicuous lack of shared Austrian-African histories. Marampa Pub for me became a landmark symbolizing the relevance and persistence of the Austrian 'expat' experience at that mining site. It is thus also the entry point for this research project, which examines the memories, traces and archival records of the 'Austrian' period at Marampa mines (1980-1985).²

Fig II. Marampa Pub, Eisenerz



Photo: JM Hauser (2008)

This research has been carried out over two years, during which I visited archives in London, Linz and Vienna; established contact with different informants and institutions, conducted in-depth interviews and had conversations with 15 former Austrian expatriates and other people with links to Marampa mines during the 1980s. I realised that thirty years after their Marampa experience, across Vienna and in rural regions in

² The contract between Austromineral and the Sierra Leonean government was signed on 20 March 1980, with the official end of the project being recorded as 30 June 1985.

Austria, the homes of most former employees had mementoes from Sierra Leone on display (nests, masks, figures and/or pictures, elephant tusks or a caftan) or in storage to be brought out for the benefit of visitors. I was shown folders containing documents, invitations and shopping lists, newspaper articles and letters from the Marampa period. One former employee had even compiled a DVD in which he reconstructed the mining adventure of the Austrians.

A very important part of the discussions/meetings was the joint viewing of photographs and other documents, a process that shed light on seemingly forgotten stories and helped my respondents to (re-)connect with their past. In many cases, photographs have provided essential information, often exceeding that provided in either oral accounts or other documentation. Throughout this thesis, photographs and other visual documents will be used to complement information from archival research and interviews.

1.2 Justification

The absence of a 'canonical' or institutional historiography for Marampa mines between 1980 and 1985 posed a particular challenge. Apart from two articles by the company's former CEO (Neubauer 1982; 1983) and a short section in the publication *Geschäfte mit der Entwicklung. Österreich und die Dritte Welt* (Pohl et al., 1986 - *Business with Development, Austria and the Third World*, my translation) the events from 1980-1985 appear to be neglected in the available literature on both Marampa and Austrian-African relations. On many levels, however, the period in question marks an important historical moment. On a global scale, a depression in the international market for steel (late 1970s - early 1990s, see OECD 2009) coincided with the rapid increase in the world market price of crude petroleum to influence events at Marampa; while in Sierra

Leone the years between 1980 and 1985 marked the final years of Siaka Stevens' one party rule, which preceded the outbreak of civil war in 1991. Also, at the same time, in Austria, the departure of chancellor Bruno Kreisky in 1983 saw the decline of the welfare state and state-owned industries.

Clearly, these events impacted on the Austrian intervention at Marampa mines, whereas at the same time, the Marampa project and its currents played their part in these historical developments. Marampa was one of a few large-scale state-led industrial projects Austria embarked on in Africa during the late-1970s and early-1980s. None of these projects has been thoroughly scrutinised. Indeed, in Austria a distinct discourse on Africa complicates, if not prevents, discussions about the country's involvements in such so-called 'overseas' projects, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 4.

Evidently, a mining site's story could and should be told from a range of perspectives.³ The present study is told from an Austrian perspective, which will be reflected against the backdrop of Austria's 'official' absence from the European overseas colonial projects of the 19th and 20th centuries, and the resulting 'anti-colonial' attitude, which this history encouraged within the Austrian state.

1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this project is a contemporary reconstruction of the Marampa mining site, using archival material and photographs, and by eliciting and discussing memories of former Austrian workers at the mines. Its specific objectives are:

³ In the recent mining literature this comprises categories such as place, capital, nature, development, identity and networks as used in Arturo Escobar's seminal work on the southern pacific region (Escobar 2008) or the increasing range of additional mining stakeholders as introduced by Ballard and Banks: NGOs, financial intermediaries, lawyers, business partners, and consultants (Ballard and Banks 2003: 304).

- To provide a thorough and multifaceted account of Austria's engagement at Marampa.
- To establish a framework for the analysis of Marampa's cultural heritage, which still lingers in 'other' times and spaces in Austria as 'memory'.
- To situate the Austrian mining project in Marampa within the context of wider Austrian-African relations; and
- to thus contribute to the underdeveloped historiography of Austrian-African relations.

1.4. Organisation of the Thesis

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 introduces Marampa and its 40-year history of production under DELCO management. In Chapter 3 I introduce a conceptual framework for the present study using the literature linking globalisation, mining, popular culture and memory and highlight their relevance for the present study. Subsequently, I introduce distinct literature on the case study and my research sources and methods, which are inspired by visual anthropology, 'performative ethnography' and discourse analysis. Chapter 4 focuses on the background to the Austrian venture in Marampa, by looking at Austrian-African relations from a historical and socio-cultural perspective. The brief history of Austrian intervention in Marampa is presented in Chapter 5, based on archival records. Chapter 6 is devoted to the oral and visual sources for, and constructions of memories of Marampa. General conclusions are drawn in Chapter 7, which also contains suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2

MARAMPA MINES

Marampa, located in the Port Loko district in Sierra Leone's Northern Province (Map 2.1), over the last 90 years, has been strongly marked by large-scale iron ore extraction by a variety of multinational enterprises. Iron ore, however, has only been one of a range of minerals produced in Sierra Leone. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the Sierra Leonean mining sector and to locate Marampa mines both geographically and historically, by introducing the mines' different locations and giving account of the colonial/postcolonial iron ore production of the British company DELCO.

Map. 2.1 Sierra Leone / Locations of Marampa Mines



Source: Google Maps (2012)

2.1. Mining in Sierra Leone

For many decades, mining has been the key-sector of Sierra Leone's export-oriented economy (Cleeve 1997: 4). Before the civil war, which took place between 1991 and 2002, mining generated around 20 per cent of the country's GDP, 90 per cent of all registered exports and about 20 per cent of fiscal revenues (NACE 2009: 5). In recent years, with the 2009 *Mines and Minerals Act*⁴ (Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources: 2013a), new mining regulations have been put in place, with the aim to strengthen the Sierra Leonean government's position in the mining sector. In 2010, the mining industry in Sierra Leone accounted for almost 60 per cent of all exports, but for only 8 per cent of the government revenue (Dan Watch Report 2010: 3).

The country's mineral sector consists of three sub-sectors, specialising in: (a) large-scale production of non-precious minerals, such as bauxite, rutile, and iron ore; (b) large scale production of precious minerals, such as diamonds and – increasingly – gold; and (c) artisanal and small-scale production of precious minerals: diamonds, and - to a much lesser extent - gold (Ministry of Mines & Mineral Resources 2013: 1).

Bauxite deposits in Sierra Leone were first recorded in 1920 and 1921. The mineral has been mined from the mid 1960s onward at Gbonge-Mokanji (Schwartz 2006: 30, Vimetco 2013). Further deposits are located at Port Loko, Krim-Kpakan, along the Freetown Peninsula, and in the areas of Kamakwie and Makumre in northern Sierra Leone (Sierra Leone Ministry of Mineral Resources: 2013). Currently, Sierra Minerals runs the only bauxite mine in Sierra Leone and produces around 1.2 million tons per annum for export (Vimetco 2013). Sierra Leone accounts for approximately 25% of the

4 The act constitutes 'the fiscal and legislative framework for mining in Sierra Leone and contains regulations for health and safety, protection of the environment, community development and distinct regulations regarding transparency, royalties and income tax at the part of the mining companies' (Dan Watch Report 2010: 8). Recent mining contracts, however, are not always in accordance with these regulations (ibid: 3).

world's annual supply of natural **rutile** (Cleeve 1997: 51). Rutile mining originally started in Gbangbama (Bonthe District). *Sierra Rutile*⁵ began to mine there in 1962 until 1995, when operations were suspended due to the civil war. Production was officially resumed in 2005 (Sierra Rutile 2013). In recent years Sierra Rutile has been heavily criticised for the destruction of soil, water pollution and generally insufficient mitigation (NACE 2009: 15-17; Moody 2007: 32-33).

Iron Ore was found in the Marampa area in 1926, where the British company DELCO had a monopoly position from 1930-1975 (see Chapter 3.1). From 1981 to 1985, the Austrian company *Austromineral* mined iron ore at Marampa. Production was interrupted from 1985 until 2005, when *London Mining* started to rehabilitate the area (see Chapter 2.2.2). Another deposit of iron ore is located at Tonkolili. The Tonkolili iron ore project has been initiated by *African Minerals* in 2009 and is considered one of the largest exploration programmes in Africa. The project has an identified hematite potential of approximately 800 million tons (African Minerals 2013).

Diamonds were first discovered in Sierra Leone in 1930. From the 1930s onwards, the *Sierra Leone Selection Trust* (SLST) was granted a lease covering the entire country (Swindell 1975: 181).⁶ The main diamond mining areas are located in the Bo, the Kenema, and the Kono Districts along the drainages of the Bafi, Mano, Moya, Sewa, and Woa Rivers. *Koidu Holdings*, the country's only large-scale kimberlitic diamond miner which began operations in 2004, has recently been criticised for the environmentally destructive and socially disruptive impacts of its activities (NACE 2009: 5). To date, **gold** mining has been limited to small scale and artisanal mining. The main known gold deposits occur around the Lake Sonfon area, Kalmaro, Makong, Baomahun and

⁵ *Sierra Rutile* and *Sierra Minerals Limited* are both owned by Titanium Resources Group (TRG), which produces bauxite from several deposits in the country (NACE 2009: 15).

⁶ with the exception of the DELCO reserves around Marampa.

Komahun (Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources 2013: 12). Gold exploration and its large-scale production are on the increase.

Most of Sierra Leone's diamonds stem from production by artisanal miners⁷ (NACE 2009: 5). Artisanal mining usually comprises an agreement between a licensed miner and so-called 'supporter'⁸ who sells the diamonds to a dealer who again sells the minerals to an exporter. Sierra Leone also has a small-scale alluvial gold mining industry, predominantly in the Tonkolili, Bombali, Koindugu and Kono Districts (Ministry of Mines and Minerals 2013: 12).

During the war, diamonds mined by small-scale miners financed the activities of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rendering the country synonymous with 'conflict diamonds' or 'blood diamonds' (NACE 2009: 5; Maconachie 2008: 5). The role of illicit diamond mining in relation to the war has been widely discussed (see for example, Smilie et al. 2000; Richards 2003). Two years after the end of the war, the *Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS)*, was implemented in 2003, with the aim to set out a global control system⁹ in order to stem the trade in conflict diamonds. Scholars such as Roy Maconachie (2008) or former BBC Journalist Nicolas Long (2007) have been scrutinizing the effects and effectiveness of the KPCS. In 2011, the NGO *Global Witness* stated that 'the scheme was failing effectively to address issues of non-compliance, smuggling, money laundering and human rights abuses in the world's alluvial diamond fields' (Global Witness 2009, cited in IRIN 2009)¹⁰. Diamonds still form the most significant mineral commodity in Sierra Leone's economy (Soto-Viruet 2010: 35).

⁷ Figures vary from 100,000 to 400,000, meaning 2-8 per cent of the population (NACE 2009:5).

⁸ Often a supporter is at the same time a dealer or even an exporter (Hilson 2003: 187).

⁹ See <http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/web/kimberley-process/kp-basics>

¹⁰ For similar reasons, Ian Smilie, one of the founding members, left the scheme in 2009 (IRIN 2009).

2.2 Marampa

2.2.1 Locating the Mines

The iron ore-mining site of Marampa is located in the tropical forest zone about 55 miles east of Freetown in the Port Loko district of Sierra Leone's Northern Province (Jarrett 1956: 153). Marampa is the name of a small village and an ever-expanding mining site (Fig. 2.4) currently covering about 319 square kilometres. The area is shaped by two hills, Masaboin and Ghafal (Fig. 2.4), both composed of blue grey hematite iron ore. Marampa mines are among the oldest on the African continent (Swindell 1967: 335) and have been operated on a large scale for approximately ninety years.¹¹ Until 1985 the layout of the British colonial setting had prevailed, consisting of the mining site itself, featuring a powerhouse, the concentration plant, the railway station and a senior staff compound (Fig. 2.1). The different Locations of the Marampa mines as established in the early 1930s (Maps 2.1 and 2.2) are still on display in contemporary maps such as the ones by the company currently producing at Marampa (see, for example London Mining 2013a).

Fig. 2.1 1960s (?) Postcard showing Marampa compound



Source: Archive AM12M/R

¹¹ The mines have been in operation from 1933 onwards with an interruption of a few years from 1975 to 1981 and another for almost 35 years between 1985 and 2009.

Map 2.2 Detail, Marampa area 1929 (Detail)



Source: Sierra Leone Development Co. (The National Archives T 161/1383: 1929)

The mines' infrastructure comprises the following areas:¹² The mining town **Lunsar** (see Appendix 1 for a more detailed map of the area) is situated about 2 miles from Marampa mines. The original name of the mining town was *Ro-Sar* translating as: 'Where the stones are'. Lunsar was a small village consisting of six 'taxable houses' when Marampa mines were established in early 1929. Migration had turned Lunsar into a city of 12,109 by 1963 (CSO 1963; cf. Swindell 1967: 343), where mineworkers and their dependants lived (Jarrett 1958). Its size has been swelling and falling with the fate of the mines. In 1982, when Austromineral started production, it had grown from 21,500 in 1974 to 31,765 (CSO 1986; cf. Cleeve 1997: 99). Today, it is the headquarter town of Marampa Chiefdom and counts around 24,730 inhabitants (World Gazetteer: 2013). A large part of the population is composed of members of the Temne group. The majority of Lunsar's inhabitants have been, however, migrants¹³ from across the country and the

¹² Although these sites remain the core sites of the mine, these locations have recently been refurbished and are currently being rebuilt. They were, in great parts, destroyed during the civil war. The following descriptions draw upon the settings established under DELCO and during the Colonial era, which were still prevailing during the mid-1980s.

¹³ Ethnic groups in Lunsar: Limba, Lokko, Mende, Fulbe, Mandinka, Susu, Koranko, Sarahuli, Sherbro, Creoles and Lebanese.

capital Freetown (Swindell 1967: 342). Over time Lunsar developed as a cultural nodal point (see Kaniki 1972; Jarrett 1958; Nicolson 1974; or Gamble 1963). During the early 1930s, Marampa became connected to the port of **Pepel** (Fig. 2.2) by a cargo railway line (Fig. 2.5) passing through the towns of Lunsar, Rogberie, Moria, Borup and Lungi Loi.¹⁴ The railway was in use until 1985. From Pepel, a 19 km dredged channel leads to the Freetown harbour (Neubauer, 1983: 8)¹⁵.

Fig. 2.2 1960s (?) Postcard showing Pepel iron ore supplying port



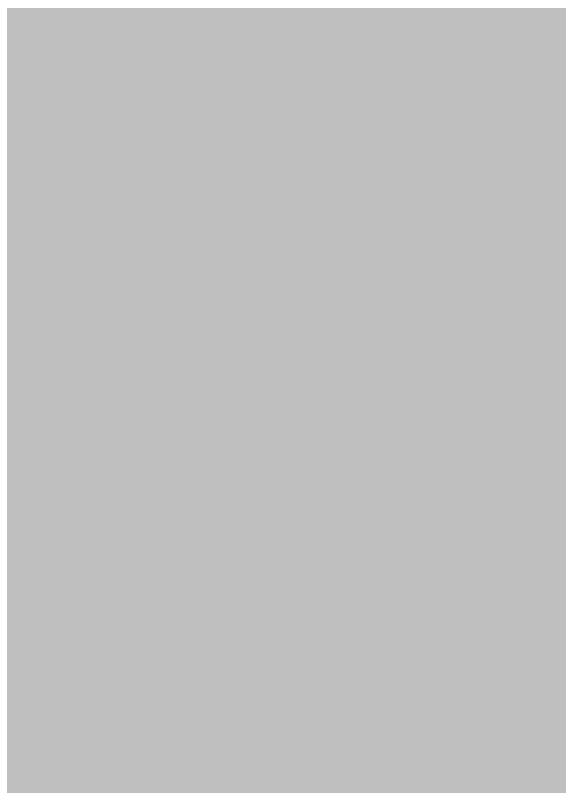
Source: Archive AM12M/R

The first iron ore shipment from West Africa (Swindell 1967: p. 333) is reported to have left in September 1933 when the 'Hindpool' sailed from Pepel to Glasgow with 8,000 tons of iron ore (Derbysulzers 2011). Until 1985, covering both the early British and Austrian periods, Sierra Leone's capital **Freetown** was the centre of the mines' Administration at DELCO House.

14 The cargo rail line connecting Marampa and Pepel is not part of the most recent exploitation schemes.

15 For the impact on the Freetown harbour and its connections to the development of Freetown see Cleave 1997, for early transportation transformations in Sierra Leone, see Williams and Hayward (1973). The Harbour was accessible only at high tide. Therefore it was very important to stay in time when loading the ships. To lose time could mean that the ship had to stay in the harbour for two more days (Interview with AM3M/R).

Fig. 2.3 Postcard showing Delco House, Freetown



Source: Archive AM12M/R

2.2.2 History of Production

The history of exploitation at Marampa can roughly be divided into four periods: From 1929 to 1975, the British *Sierra Leone Development Company* (DELCO) was in charge of operations at the mines. After DELCO went into liquidation, the mines lay idle for several years until the Austrian company *Austromineral* took over. Austromineral ran the site from 1980 to 1985. During the civil war most of the mine infrastructure was destroyed or removed. In 2003 the Sierra Leonean Company *Tecsbaco* secured an exploration license and refurbished the port facilities, but did not perform mining operations. Tecsbaco's license was transferred to London Mining PLC in February 2005. What followed was a dispute between London Mining PLC and African Minerals (a subsidiary of SLDC) over overlapping concessions. This dispute was settled with the

Sierra Leonean Government assigning London Mining a license for Marampa and African Minerals one for Tonkolili, with London Mining granted a very controversial deal ‘(...) breaching the 2009 Mines and Minerals Act (see 2.1) in different ways, most notably by London Mining’s exemption from paying royalties’ (Akam 2010, see also NMJD 2010: 10). From 25 November 2009 onward British *London Mining* has been operating the mines, holding a 25-year concession. Full development of the project began on 11 February 2010 when final parliamentary approval for the operations was given. The first shipment of iron ore was reportedly exported later that month when the 'Pride of Marampa' set off for Europe (Mining Technology 2012).

Fig. 2.4 Marampa Mines area



Photos: AM5M/R (1982)

2.3 DELCO

The start of mining at Marampa coincided with the Great Depression and the establishment of the Colonial Development Fund in Britain, the idea of which was to boost economic development in the colonies in order to directly fight unemployment in Britain (Hoogvelt & Tinker 1978: 69-70; Kaniki 1972: 157). Mineral surveys began during the early 1920s. In 1926, first, iron ore and then diamond deposits were found. Shortly after, a License Agreement was signed with the Northern Mercantile and

Investment Corporation (later known as DELCO 'Sierra Leone Development Company') for establishment/exploitation of the Marampa Iron Ore Mines. Iron ore was monopolised by DELCO, which gained a 99-year-lease at the mines from the local authorities for an annual fee of £250. DELCO began to mine in 1930. In the same year, a private railway was built to connect the iron ore - mining site with the harbour at Pepel. Most of the ore shipments from Marampa fed Britain's steel industry (Lanning & Mueller 1979: 440) and DELCO 'could rapidly accelerate and multiply production, operating with ongoing structural help of the protectorate government' (Hoogvelt & Tinker 1978: 74), until Sierra Leone's independence in 1961. According to Hoogvelt & Tinker, during this time, more than 82 per cent of the 'total economic benefits generated by the mines' found its way back to Britain (Ibid.: 73). However, extremely low wages and maltreatment of workers (Wyse 1990: 102) led to workers strikes and their brutal suppression, eventually resulting in unionisation. Mining unionisation in Sierra Leone took place under the influence of Siaka Stevens, later president (1968-1985), who had started his professional career at Marampa.

Fig. 2.5 Delco railway connecting Marampa and Pepel (left) and train refurbished by Austromineral (right)



Sources Delco railway: DELCO, Iron Ore from Marampa, cover page, 1960s (Archive JM Hauser); Source Austromineral refurbishment: AM5M/R (1982)

Following a period of early growth, the DELCO project had become unprofitable by 1975. The company reduced production and kept asking the Sierra Leonean government for loans to keep the mine in production. In December 1975 DELCO went into liquidation 'putting the mine out of operation, making thousands of workers redundant, dissipating an experienced workforce built over the years and creating a sharp drop in Sierra Leone's export earnings' (Lannig & Mueller 1979: 441). According to *Awareness Times* (2008), 'Folklore has it that an irate Siaka Stevens gave DELCO officials a mere 48 hours to pack and leave Sierra Leone'. All machinery and equipment were left behind at Marampa and Pepel. There are several sources which see DELCO's departure as an imperialist manoeuvre after Siaka Stevens' 1972 announcement of state acquisition of a 51% share of the mines (Cleeve 1997; Hoogvelt & Tinker 1978; Lannig & Mueller 1979; Stevens 1984). Other sources suggest that the depletion of readily available and relatively cheap iron ore deposits had caused the decline of DELCO's production (cf. VOEST Alpine 1984).

Attempts by the Sierra Leonean government to attract new investor companies failed,¹⁶ and the government nominated a 'caretaker team' for the mines, consisting of about 120 people. In 1979 the Austrian Company Austromineral started its cooperation with the Sierra Leonean government, with the objective 'to avoid a second Delco calamity' (Neubauer 1983: 7). The company's entry into mining at Marampa however meant a confrontation with the mining site's history, and thus the heritage and memories of DELCO times, which had been shaping the discourse in place. In the next chapter I will introduce a conceptual framework of mining sites as nodes of discourse and introduce the literature in use throughout the thesis.

¹⁶ The most promising partner, *Bethlehem Steel*, eventually did not take over.

Chapter 3

LITERATURE SOURCES AND RESEARCH CONCEPTS AND METHODS

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of the sources and methods used in this research and give an introduction to the relevant background literature for this project. I will introduce a general framework of mining sites as hermetic yet permeable nodes of discourse. In order to do so I am going to draw upon publications from the fields of mining and globalisation, popular culture and – last but not least – memory, art and historiography. Subsequently, I will provide an overview of the distinct literature related to Marampa and the mine's history. The second part of this chapter will be devoted to the distinct sources and methods I have used in the course of undertaking archival and qualitative research.

3.1 Conceptualising Mines

3.1.1 Mining and Globalisation

Mines are the first completely 'inorganic environment' to be created and lived in by man (Mumford 1934: 69). From today's perspective, mineral processing and mining appear to be inextricably related to human history and global capitalism (Ibid.: 75). The sites of production, however, are mainly located in remote areas, in ostensibly secluded realms and are usually run at the cost of both environmental destruction and human exploitation. These notions become obvious in comprehensive mining accounts approaching the field on a global scale (Lynch 1996; Young 1992). The manifold ways in which mining practice and its outcomes have had impacts on the everyday life were stated already in the very first known account of that kind, namely Georg Agricola's *De Re Metallica*, which was published in 1556 (see Hoover 2003: 12-14). In this publication, by introducing a discourse on the necessity of mining for modern progress,

the exploitation of both natural and human resources alike was officially justified¹⁷ for the first time. According to G. Agricola the benefits and profits coming from mining would outweigh any of the 'losses' (Hoover 2003:14). Today, mining publications, such as J. Young's *Mining the Earth* (1996) or R. Moody's *Rocks and Hard Places. Mining and Globalisation* (2007), in citing different surveys and reviews¹⁸, vividly demonstrate the ways in which mining, on a global scale, does not 'pay' at all (see Moody: 2007:16, Young 1992: 6). In particular Moody's 2007 publication draws upon examples from the global mining industry showing how the prices for south-based mineral deposits have been 'driven down' by both the mining industry and the World Bank (Moody 2007: 25). J. Ferguson, in *Global Shadows. Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (2006), particularly examines 'Africa's participation in "globalisation"'. When capital entered Africa in recent years, Ferguson argues, it has been 'overwhelmingly in the area of mineral-resource extraction', where it has been 'concentrated in secured enclaves and with little impact on the wider society'.

These enclaves however can be regarded dense 'contact zones' (Pratt 1991: 33), in which overlapping and contradictory discourses emerge in the 'interactions between local, national, and expatriate workers and management, which span cultural, spatial and temporal divides' (Ballard & Banks 2003: 294). This means that mining sites, as much as they appear inextricably bound up with actual place and physical materiality, are at the same time socially constructed and constituted by aggregating activities of discourse. Discourse here is understood in terms of its definition in the discourse-historical approach within *Critical Discourse Analysis* - as a form of 'social practice', which, as Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 258) have put it:

17 In the same era, also the exploitation of human workforce in favour of mining production became officially acknowledged in Potosí (Peru) when forced labour ('mita') was seen as the only solution to keep the mines productive, which were 'believed to be essential to the economy' (Lynch 2004: 49).

18 such as the 2001 *Extractive Industries Review* launched by the World Bank

is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between individuals and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and to reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it.

At the same time, discourses are perceived as 'shared ways of apprehending the world' (Dryzek 1997, cited in Cline-Cole 2007).

3.1.2. Transformation/Aggregation

Mining sites are conceived as temporary projects; their establishment, however, is synonymous with irrevocable social and physical *transformations* in place. The most common - and dramatic - transformations of this kind are manifested in the dislocation of existing settlements in areas where mineral deposits are discovered. The establishment of mining infrastructures, such as road or rail construction, or the pollution of the surrounding environment, represent further examples. Thus, after an area is considered a mineral deposit, manifold processes start to affect landscapes and livelihoods in the respective region. Such processes may generate, alter and destroy structures in a given area, while at the same time connecting it to a range of other places. Hence, these sites sometimes appear 'more connected to the outside world' (Young 1996: 33) than to the local vicinity, and thus are 'shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (Giddens 1990: 64, cited in Keily & Marflet 1998: 3). Social relations are shuffled at various scales, combining very specific settings of actors whose various backgrounds are now connected through the shared reality of the mining site (Kaniki 1974). In recent literature, the involved individuals and groups have been summarized as 'mining stakeholders' comprising the *state*, the *corporation* involved and increasingly, local *communities* (Ballard & Banks 2004: 189, my emphasis). Clearly, this 'triad stakeholder model' (Howitt et al. 1996a: 25, cited in Ballard & Banks 2004) cannot

fully explain the complex relations emerging in connection with the establishment of a mine. This is owing to the complexity within these groups of stakeholders, the involvement of a range of different actors (see Ballard & Banks 2004: 209) and a general rhetorical looseness regarding the term 'stakeholder' itself¹⁹ (Moody 2007: 170). Given the deep transformations connected to the establishment of such sites the relations between different groups and actors 'have often been characterized by conflict, ranging from ideological opposition and dispute to armed conflict and the extensive loss of lives, livelihoods, and environments' (Ballard & Banks 2004: 289).

Rather than emphasising the difference between these actors/stakeholders I would like to describe the emerging and *aggregating* types of discourse in place as 'interculture'. Interculture, according to Mark Terkessidis (2010: 10), is understood as a culture-*in-between*. It operates as an organising principle and is an ever changing discursive process that embraces both differences and common grounds, thereby fostering the establishment of new connections and inter-relations.

3.1.3. Preservation/Transgression

When newly assigned mining areas become isolated from their surroundings, often 'protected by private armies and security forces' (Ferguson 2006: 35), a resulting 'remoteness' may have a twofold effect: on the one hand, appearing as hermetic and secluded, for decades, mining sites give 'rise to recurrent patterns of population dynamics, labour recruitment practices, and political organization' (Godoy 1984: 205). As such they represent the *preservation* of discourse, often as memory of historical events and reiteration of practices in place. I believe that this notion does strongly apply in the case of locations of resource extraction in the 'global south', so often rooted in

¹⁹ Moody pointed out the recent recuperation of putative opponents as so-called 'stakeholders' by the mineral industry.

colonial times. Artist Sammy Baloji, in his work cycle *The Beautiful Times* (Fig. 3.1), looks at the preservation of such discourse and memory in a series of montages of (archival) colonial imageries applied onto contemporary photographs of the industrial ruins in the abandoned mining areas of Katanga (former Shaba).

The geographical boundaries of mining sites, on the other hand, are physically trespassed by numerous individuals and groups and by means of communication modes²⁰, leading to a *transgression*²¹ of their physical and discursive boundaries. While in-migration contributes to both prevailing and altering discourse inside the mines²², out-migration exports the experienced realities of mining sites to sometimes very remote places. Notable accounts regarding this phenomenon are to be found, for example, in Coplan's examination of the Basotho mining migrant experiences in South Africa (1987: 29), where the dynamics of mining migration resulted in the production of so-called 'defela', i.e. biographic songs. Due to the miners' constant change of locations the songs reflect miners' experiences in either place, both the location of the mine and the miners' homes in Lesotho (and in between). Further examination of cultural manifestations of discourses and memory connected to mining can be found, for example, in Higginson (1989: 10) and Fabian (1996; 1990). All these sources testify to the cultural impacts mining sites have – sometimes also in other, ostensibly

20 Over the last decades, the modes of mining representation have changed. While, during the Austrian production period at Marampa, it was almost impossible to transmit information other than by physically leaving the place, globalised media has enabled dramatically different modes of communication, which change the ways mines are represented in public, but not necessarily the ways in which memories and accounts of social encounters are perpetuated and preserved *outside* the mining sites.

21 I have chosen the term 'transgression' in a sense of 'border transgression', describing both a physical and a discursive movement. I chose this term over other, seemingly similar denominations, such as *dispersion* or *transmission*, in order to acknowledge the existence of boundaries in place, which are maintained and have to be overcome before dispersion or transmission can take effect.

22 One of the reasons for preserving nature of mining sites might well be seen exactly in the permeability of their discursive and physical boundaries: Hence, newly arriving individuals and even groups at the mines, in their isolation from their previous norms, preferably cling on prevailing habits or individuals who already know the environment (Kaniki 1978, Gamble 1958).

disconnected locations in time and space, where aggregating forms of discourse within mining sites manifest as memories and materialise in different ways.

Fig. 3.1 Sammy Baloji 'The Beautiful Times'



Source: Jewsiewicki (2010: 24-25)

3.1.4 The Manifestation of Memory

In his discussion of collective memory, Jan Assmann (2008) explains the manifestation of memory as a two-fold phenomenon, distinguishing between *communicative* and *cultural* memory. *Communicative memory*, in his view, appears dynamic and fleeting as it derives from social interaction. This form of memory, according to Assmann, is never institutionalised. *Cultural memory*, on the contrary, appears as a 'kind of institution in itself' and embodies 'traditions, transmissions, and transferences'. It is 'exteriorized, objectified, [...] stored away in symbolic forms' and thus rendered 'stable and situation-transcendent' (ibid: 210-211). This way, memories become 'externalized' (Rochatz 2008: 267) and further perpetuated within different discourses. *Collective memory*, Assmann (2008) states, emerges from a combination of both *cultural* and *communicative* memory.

Johannes Fabian has been highlighting the importance of collective memory for both historiography and ethnography in numerous accounts. He assigns an equal significance to subjectivity and a resulting 'historical inaccuracy' and canonical academic historiography. His approach of a '*performative ethnography*' (1990a: 11) comprises oral, written and visual accounts, along with their examination. While *performance*, in Fabian's work, is understood as 'giving form to', his inclusive approach probably most explicitly manifests in *Remembering the Present* (Fabian 1996). For this project, Fabian commissioned the popular painter Tshibumba Kanda Matulu, to produce a painted history of the Congo, resulting in a 100 piece series. The paintings combined historical facts, individual and collective memory with assumptions, popular meaning and interpretations²³.

Baloji's photographs and Fabian's multifaceted historiography show a simultaneousness of different discourses precisely within the context of (former) mining areas, in embracing the visual, circling around popular culture, memory and oral history. Both these projects provide inspiration for my own study, in which I try to 'give form to' the memories and reminders of the sojourn of Austrians at Marampa, while looking back to that time from a contemporary perspective, but also looking at the heritage the Austrian company was facing at the place known as Marampa.

3.2 Literature Sources on Marampa

For the general historical, political and economic background to the Austrian venture in Sierra Leone, I consulted historical sources, most importantly, perhaps, the work of Zack-Williams (1995; 1999) and Thompson & Potter (1997) for Sierra Leone; and

23 Within Fabian's inclusive historiographic and ethnographic account, the *ukumbushu* (the 'reminder') is seen as a distinctive and intentional function of Congolese painting, in which the fusion between past and presents becomes evident, with memory forming the link between them (see, for e.g., Fabian 1996: 195-96).

publications by Tinbergen (1977) and Summer (1987), for Austria. For Austrian-African relations, Sauer (1996), Neugebauer (1992), Lennkh & Freudenschuss-Treichl (2010) and Pohl et al. (1986) proved to be relevant.²⁴ Ruth Wodak has produced a body of work around the themes of Austrian history-consciousness, memory and xenophobia, which proved very useful for my research. Out of the field of Critical Discourse Analysis, Wodak, in her writing, closely examines Austrian post WWII culture and the increasingly hostile climate towards foreigners in post-1989 Austria (Wodak & Matouschek 1993 and Wodak & Reisigl 1999). Moreover, she has conducted extensive research on national identity (De Cillia, Reisigl & Wodak 1999) and memory politics and discourse (Wodak & De Cillia 2007).

Regarding the history of Marampa Mines and production under DELCO management, several sources are to be found in the literature. In this context I would like to mention *Africa Undermined* (Lanning & Mueller 1979) and Hoogvelt & Tinker's (1978) article, 'The Role of Colonial and Post-Colonial States in Imperialism – a Case Study of the Sierra Leone Development Company'. Both sources are dedicated to DELCO's decision to cease production in 1975. Further accounts of the DELCO period are to be found in *Colonialism, Class Formation and Underdevelopment in Sierra Leone* by Mukonoweshuro (1991), who focuses on early class formation and the emergence of unions. Additional information about labour conditions and unionisation can be found in Stevens (1984) and Wyse (1990). Kaniki (1972) depicts the economic and social climate in Sierra Leone from 1929-1939, which covers the period of the inception of large-scale iron ore mining in Sierra Leone and the impacts this had on the economic

24 Regarding the perspective of individuals and groups in the Marampa area Dawson carried out a two-part study on intergroup relations during the 1960s (1964, 1965), indicating ethnic tensions among the inhabitants of the Marampa area and depicting a rather difficult relationship with Europeans in general. Given the difference in time frame I have decided to use this source rather as background information than to incorporate it into the present study.

and social climate inside and outside the Marampa area. Kenneth Swindell (1967) looks at the area in the context of iron ore mining in West Africa generally and more specifically regarding mining workers (1974, 1975). H. Jarrett (1958) and D. Gamble (1963) have as well examined the mining town of Lunsar (1963). Throughout the literature about Marampa, the extent to which the exploitative nature of DELCO's performance is represented varies, depending on the period covered and the perspective taken. As such, authors who were actually involved in early unionisation, such as A. Wyse (1990), might deliver more drastic accounts of DELCO's performance than Africanist M. Kaniki (1972) who, by drawing comparisons to other West African countries at the time, depicts the same time periods in a far more moderate way. Writings covering later periods (Swindell 1972, Jarrett 1956), with only rare exceptions (Neubauer 1983), usually credit the company with a relatively good performance. Building an essential background to this research, these sources focus on the realities of Sierra Leonean mineworker and migrant existence outside the project's timeframe. In addition, extensive archival material on the earlier DELCO period (1929-1961) can be found at the *National Archives* at Kew Gardens.

3.2.1 Literature Sources: Memories of Marampa

On the literature devoted to DELCO two non-academic sources deal with the memories of that time. The first one is *The Tent and the Simbek* (Nicolson 1974), an autobiographical and non-academic account by the Scottish geologist James Nicolson, who describes his experiences and encounters when travelling in Sierra Leone's Northern Province. As an employee of the British mining company DELCO at Marampa, his task was to explore the boundaries of proven iron ore deposits outside the mine. The author, in this account, describes his increasing engagement with both the area around Marampa, and even more, his local co-workers.

The second source, Stevens (1984), is an autobiographical account by Siaka Stevens, then president of Sierra Leone, whose professional career had started with DELCO, where he began in the railway department and later emerged as a very important figure in early unionisation. His presidency lasted until 1985, and thus included the years of the Austrian venture at Marampa.

3.2.2 Literature Sources: Austria at Marampa

To date there are only limited sources covering the period in question: two articles by Walter Neubauer (1982, 1983), the former CEO of Austromineral, provide details about the general approach, thereby embedding Marampa in a wider discourse of iron ore supply. Both papers were written when the project was still in progress and depict the project as an overall success. From a very different perspective the topic is approached in *Geschäfte mit der Entwicklung. Österreich und die Dritte Welt* (Pohl et al. 1986). Here, *Austromineral's* venture at Marampa is discussed in the context of Austria's general economic relations with the 'global south' during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The authors critically situate the Austrian economic venture within both a framework of global exploitation practices and a range of 'overseas' industrial projects conducted by the Austrian state at the time. Relevant additional sources are to be found in the public archives of voestalpine in Linz (Austria) and, to a lesser extent, in the Bruno Kreisky Archives and the National Library in Vienna. Last but not least, personal accounts and private archives represent crucial sources of information on the Austrian period at Marampa mines. The use of photo documentation, newspaper articles, meal menus and other artefacts and objects obtained via these sources for use during this study will be examined later in this chapter.

3.3 Research Sources and Methods

When I embarked on archival research and established contact with a range of former employees of Austromineral at Marampa and other informants as part of my research, a process, which I would like to describe in Johannes Fabian's words as a 'series of events' (Fabian 1996: 221), was set in motion.

I engaged in in-depth conversations/interviews with 10 former Austrian employees at Marampa and, in some cases, had the opportunity to speak to members of their families who had accompanied them to Sierra Leone. In the course of our conversations, my open questions always followed a linear thread, covering the period of my informants' stay in Marampa from beginning to end. However, this role attributed to my respondents changed over time. Initially, they provided almost all of the first-hand information on the Austrian period at Marampa, but once I was able to access the archives at Linz, I had information from a different source, which I could use to qualify and compare with that provided by interviewees. Conversations took place mostly in the homes of respondents (Fig. 3.2).

Fig. 3.2. Nest from Marampa on display in an Austrian home (left) and going through a respondent's Marampa archive (right)



Photos: JM Hauser (2006/2011)

This enabled me to get an impression of their lived realities and rendered each interview unique. On one occasion I would find myself in a villa in the Viennese outskirts surrounded by artifacts, such as tusks and other memorabilia, of a person who had spent a lifetime travelling and successfully working abroad. On another occasion, an old acquaintance from Sierra Leone would visit my respondent after 30 years during my interview. On yet a further occasion, I would find myself in the garden of a family who had been at Marampa when my family was there, evoking shared memories, or I would find myself – not to forget – having a drink at Marampa Pub.

My respondents all own more or less extensive photo albums²⁵ or slide collections, documenting their respective stays at Marampa and surrounding areas. These albums represented sources of memory (cf. Collier 2009: 28; Barthes 1977: 39-41) and helped my respondents (and myself) to identify persons, and places and to recollect anecdotes and other (hi)stories. I never left these occasions empty-handed. On the contrary, I acquired photo albums, copies of newspaper articles, music and even a jar filled with Marampa iron ore. The combination of different sources in one place helped me to literally establish a bigger picture of the lived realities at Marampa mines and the manifold ways, in which this Austrian-African shared history manifested in Austria. In the next chapter I am going to look at the Austrian-African relations, which can be seen as a precondition to the Marampa project itself and also to the ways the Austrian expatriates remember their stay there.

25 Generally, photographs depicted the homes and domestic lives of employees and, depending on how widely they travelled beyond the boundaries of the mining camp, records show impressions and images of the beaches of Freetown and other areas in the country. Two incidents appear to have been extensively photographed: the opening ceremony marking the start of Austrian involvement in Marampa and an 'exorcism ceremony' carried out by local Sierra Leonean employees and attended by the entire mine workforce, which was designed to 'banish the devil from the mines', and which took place toward the end of the 'Austrian phase' of Marampa's history. In the thesis I use these images and photographs, along with other archival and qualitative accounts, to provide a linear visual historiography of Marampa.

Chapter 4

AUSTRIAN-AFRICAN RELATIONS

4.1 Historical Background

The political and economic relations between Austria and Africa during the late 1970s and early 1980s need to be looked at in the light of Austria's distorted self-image regarding its minor role in the European imperial overseas colonial projects of the 19th and 20th centuries. The fact that Austria never officially established large overseas colonies has figured in a historiographic tendency purporting an alleged lack of interest in colonial expansion and portraying this lack of interest as voluntary and 'characteristic' of the country. Indeed, this notion of 'uninterest' was used as the basis for claiming that Austria's lack of colonies was the product of a deliberate 'anti-colonial' stance. This is of course to conveniently overlook the fact that Austrian officials had tried to obtain overseas colonies in different ways (see, for example, Mutombo 2010: 190; Sauer 2002: 17). These phenomena are closely examined in Walter Sauer's edited volume *'k&k kolonial – Habsburgermonarchie und europäische Herrschaft in Afrika*²⁶ (Sauer 2002). Here, the author states that 'certainly, the Austrian Monarchy had not been a colonial power, however it was not an *anticolonial force* either' (Sauer 2002: 18, my translation). Following Austria's re-establishment as a sovereign state after World War II, a new Austrian identity was created, based on its new status as a neutral state separate from the emerging blocks of the Cold War. When, during the 1960s, most of the African colonies gained independence, Austria regarded its neutrality as especially important in the light of expected disputes between former African colonies and their erstwhile European colonisers (Neugebauer 1996: 22). Although these disputes had

26 The Habsburg Monarchy and European Rule in Africa (my translation)

still not been played out in the late 1970s, the idea of Austria's lack of colonies as a deliberate moral choice came to be included in the annual *Foreign Policy Report* published by the Austrian Foreign Ministry: 'Austria, in the expectation of ongoing disputes as a country without a colonial past and *without any imperial interest* for the young states of the Third World, is a relatively unencumbered and attractive partner' (Foreign Policy Report 1979: 206; quoted in Neugebauer 1996: 11, my translation, my emphasis).

However, over the intervening decades, a clear idea of Africa and Africans had been established among Austrians (Mutombo 2010: 190), even without any direct colonial experience of the continent and its people. In this context, the highly appreciative uptake of *human zoos* by Viennese audiences of the early 20th century might be worth mentioning (see Schwarz: 2010). These included African exhibits, such as the 'Ashanti' village in several shows around 1900, preceded by a 'Nubian' Show 1876 and two 'Singhalese'-shows (Schwarz 2010: 156-170). Similarly, caricatures of the African as 'Bloßfüßiger' (trans: 'barefoot' and, simultaneously, 'poor and naive') and other caricatures or colonial stereotypes shaped children's songs, cartoons or stories in Austria (see also Esterlus 2002), and have since been perpetuated in popular media (see Chapter 5.1.2).²⁷ I imagine that, in a sense, the lack of a 'official colonial history' in Austria has contributed to a lack of scrutiny of language and image use. Within foreign policy, economic and diplomatic discourse, knowledge of and interest in Africa have been widely lacking in Austria (see Neugebauer: 1996). As such, during the early 1980s, as Hödl points out, a discursive emphasis was put on the topic of debt (Hödl

27 See the ongoing discussion about the removal of deprecatory labelling of food products and restaurants in Austria regarding, for example, a certain type of chocolate with nuts, called 'Negerbrot' ('Negro/Nigger bread'), a traditional Austrian dessert called 'Mohr im Hemd' ('Blackamoor in a shirt'), similarly 'Mohrenbräu', a type of beer (see Haar 2012). It has to be noted however, that these debates are not limited to Austria but also prevail in Germany (see Heine 2012).

2004: 176). Within the public imagination, causal analysis was widely dismissed in favour of decontextualized descriptions about African political, economic or demographic phenomena.²⁸ The hunger crises of the early 1980s in parts of Ethiopia shaped another strand of the Austrian discourse on Africa at that time (Hödl 2004: 176), through establishing a notion of ultimate poverty in Africa as a 'shame for mankind' (Protocols, National Assembly XVI.GGP/144, 11.6.1986, p. 206, quoted in Hödl 2004).

Thus, during the early 1980s, a discourse on Africa, simultaneously embracing anti-colonialism, 'second-hand' colonial stereotypes and humanitarian solidarity or sympathy prevailed in Austria. It is notable that these different attitudes towards Africa and Africans emerged in a climate of distinctly little contact between Africans and Austrians. Migration from African countries to Austria was quite rare during the early 1980s. At the level of the individual Austrian, knowledge about and familiarity with African states were almost non-existent. On an institutional level, diplomatic and economic relations were only rarely maintained with African states south of the Sahara (Neugebauer 1996).²⁹

4.2 The Contemporary Situation in Austria

In recent decades, migration from Africa to Austria has increased. Austrian-African relations experienced a shift in 1995 after Austria joined the European Union and therefore adopted the respective policies and agendas, including the Lomé Treaty. The relations with Africa were further intensified when Austria was elected to the United Nations Security Council in 2009 and 2010. Following an increase in anti-migration

28 including '[...] hunger, malnutrition, acute poverty, serious balance of payments and debt problems and continuing erosion of terms of trade' (Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, quoted in Hödl 2004: p.177)

29 Current Austrian President Heinz Fischer was the first Austrian President to travel to Africa in 2008 and an Austrian military contribution to the EUFOR Mission in Chad can be seen as a rather exceptional event and as the first Austrian participation in a mission to Africa in 40 years. (Lennkh & Freudenschuss-Treichl 2010: 25).

populism during the 1990s, Africans in Austria are facing ongoing discrimination (Lennkh, Freudenschuss-Treichl 2010: 25, my translation). In 2010, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) stated that 'in Austria, black people are especially vulnerable to racism and discrimination, notably in the fields of employment, housing and access to public places and in their dealings with the police. They suffer from being associated, in the minds of some, with drug trafficking, prostitution and abuse of the asylum system.' (ECRI 2010: 8).

In comparison to the 1980s (see Mutombo 2010), then, the contemporary climate in Austria has become more hostile. In their analysis of polls carried out in Austria during the early 1990s, Wodak and Matouschek (1993: 237) point out that 'it was precisely among responders with the least direct contact to foreigners that fear and hatred were most pronounced'. 'This dissonance', the authors continue, 'between actual experience and negative attitude is known to be the most fertile territory for neo-racist prejudices against ethnic minorities' (Ibid.). Given the discursive background sketched out above, and the seeming lack of a shared history between Austrians and Africans, it is important, I believe, to establish records of shared historiographies beyond '(neo-) colonial' stereotypes on both sides.

4.3 Austria's Industrial Overseas Projects

We don't have a lot to do with all this. Austria doesn't hurt anyone, is neither interested in overseas regions nor in anybody's exploitation. Starvation and violence are not our fault. On the contrary: We provide development aid, donate for those suffering, our exports foster the development of poor countries. Often the ones who receive our aid aren't even worth it. Because in fact, we are under threat ourselves: of multi milliard heavy sheiks, who shut off our oil supply [...] and exotic terrorists, who of all places want to enact their jungle-wars in our country, or of ruthless creditors, who laugh up their sleeves with our money.
(Pohl et al. 1986: 9, my translation)

This rather polemical depiction of the Austrian self-image of the 1980s is taken from the 1986 publication *'Geschäfte mit der Entwicklung. Österreich und die Dritte Welt'* (Pohl et al. 1986) where such prejudices are heavily scrutinized along with Austrian industrial projects in the majority in the 'global south'. During the early 1980s the export of machinery and equipment to 'overseas areas' was common practice, and was often seen as a form of development aid (ibid.: 12). During the 1960s and 70s a new economic strategy was promoted by international organisations such as the World Bank: mining revenue would be used as working capital for industrialisation. Hence the production infrastructure would be erected/rehabilitated on credit to be repaid with the respective product's export revenue. Steel producer VOEST Alpine, as well as other 'more or less' state owned companies, adapted to this business strategy in the hope of making profit from the transactions involved (ibid.: 121). Projects of this kind involved, for example, a cellulose factory in Cameroon (*Cellucam*), production of alcohol in Kenya, a steelworks in Zimbabwe and a refinery in Mauritania (Lennkh & Freudenschuss-Treichl 2010: 25). Although some of the projects were actually successful, the bulk of these ventures have been regarded as failures (Pohl et al. 1986: 123; Austromineral 1984). Hence for example, the cellulose factory in Cameroon, erected at the cost of EUR 300 million (public money) actually never even went into production, whereas a glass fibre phone project at Cabo Verde is said to have paved the way for modern information technology on the island (see Lennkh 2011).

The emergence of such projects during the late 1970s and early 1980s must however be seen in light of postwar Keynesianism. In line with prevailing policies of Western industrialised countries at that time large-scale industry in postwar Austria was state

owned³⁰ and backed by the very influential federation of trade unions (Gewerkschaftsbund). Chancellor Bruno Kreisky of the Social Democratic Party was famed for his policy of full employment (see Grünwald 1993) and his declaration that he preferred to see the state run up huge debts rather than see people unemployed. In the course of his 'Austrokeynesianism', then, Kreisky tried to provide employment through state-owned industries. His general international orientation was that of the so-called North-South Dialogue established together with Willy Brandt³¹ (Chancellor of West Germany, 1969–1974, and leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, 1964–1987) and Olof Palme (Swedish Prime Minister, 1969–1976 and 1982–1986), and denoting a series of attempts to develop and improve relations between industrial and developing nations.³² When, however, in the elections of 1983, the Austrian Social Democrats lost their absolute majority, Kreisky stepped down as chancellor in favor of his party colleague, Fred Sinowatz. Various scandals had hit the Austrian Social Democratic Party by the end of the 1970s and also, state-owned industries saw a heavy decline during the first half of the 1980s. In particular, during the early 1980s, steel producer VOEST Alpine recorded enormous losses and was hit by one scandal after another (see Summer 1987; Pohl et al. 1986: 120-125, *Wir stehen vor einem Trümmerhaufen* 1987). The fortunes of the Marampa project under review in this thesis undoubtedly both contributed to, and reflected this economic decline.

30 Around 1980 Austrian state-owned industries comprised the following companies: VOEST-Alpine AG (with Vereinigte Edelstahlwerke AG as subsidiary), Vereinigte Metallwerke Ranshofen-Berndorf AG (VMW), Elin-Union AG, Simmering-Graz, Pauker AG, Österreichische Mineralölverwaltung (ÖMV), Chemie Linz AG, Wolfsegg-Traunthaler Kohlenwerks AG (WTK), Bleiburger Bergwerksunion AG (BBU), Siemens AG Austria. (AEIOU 2012)

31 During the early 1980s the 'Brandt Report' (Independent Commission on International Development Issues 1980) became famous as a comprehensive analysis of global development politics, aiming at the reduction of the gap between the global north and the global south.

32 This program was conceived in cooperation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Development Committee of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Regarding an Austrian-African shared history an ambivalent discourse seems to unfold, circling around 'anticoloniality', colonial desire and sympathy. The following Chapters are dedicated to Austromineral's venture in Marampa, which will be looked at in the light of the ambivalent relations illustrated. In the next chapter I will provide a linear narrative of the project's course from its early beginnings to its premature end. This account will be based on the archival material found at Austrian archives, which will be supplemented by the outcomes of my qualitative research, comprising memories of Austrian employees and other persons involved in the project.

Chapter 5

AUSTROMINERAL AT MARAMPA MINES, 1980-1985

This Chapter is dedicated to the events at Marampa during the period 1980-1985. The Austrian Marampa project was conceived and managed by the company Austromineral, a subsidiary of the (then) state-owned VOEST Alpine Stahl GmbH, the biggest steel producer in the country. Planned to last for at least 15 years, the project was conceived 'at a difficult time, with the world steel crisis being at its worst for many decades' (Neubauer 1983: 9) and faced difficulties almost from the start, culminating in Austromineral's premature departure in 1985.

5.1 Preconditions

The business venture at Marampa was conceived as part of efforts to secure raw mineral supplies for Austria which, at that time, imported around 3 million tons of iron ore per year, mostly from Brazil, Canada, Sweden and the USSR (Neubauer 1982: 169). Austromineral was founded in 1971 as a 99.96% subsidiary of the state-owned VOEST Alpine (see ÖAMG, GB 1971) with the purpose of securing mineral raw material supply for Austria.³³ During the 1970s and 1980s Austromineral participated in projects all over the world.³⁴ The Bong Mine, a state owned German-led iron ore mine in Liberia, probably served as a model for the Austrian project at Marampa (Interview with AM3M/R, December 2010). Bong was established in 1958, with operations beginning in 1965, and following which, it supplied German industry with raw material,

33 Apart from that, Austromineral's tasks included: raw materials policy (decision-making tool for governmental legislature), raw materials supply concept for the VOEST Alpine AG, raw materials potential in relation to environment protection in Lower Austria. (Source: Booklet Austromineral, Archive AM1M/R)

34 Including in Canada, USA, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Burma, Indonesia, India, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Phillipines and Thailand. In Africa they were present in Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zambia (Ibid.)

in addition to being destination plant for German machinery exports (Huffscheid 1966: 41). Production was interrupted in Bong in 1990, however, when fighting during Liberia's civil war (1989-1996) extended into the area (see Hütten 1977; Kranz 2008). Unlike Germany at the inception of mining in Bong in the 1950s and 1960s, the state of Austrian industry in 1980 did not allow for the commitment of high risk capital in new mines in places like Africa. A solution thus seemed to lie in the rehabilitation of smaller mines with already existing infrastructural facilities (Neubauer 1982: 169). Marampa fit the bill. Here, and for the first and only time, Austromineral would act as manager of an entire mining project. From a Sierra Leonean perspective, the closure of the mines by DELCO in 1975 had left about 3000 people unemployed. The reopening of the mines was thus of prime political and economic importance. Not only would this mean a boost for a rapidly declining economy, but on a social level, Marampa mines was also closely linked to president Siaka Stevens' own life and history (see 3.3.1) and, as such, with the wider social history of Sierra Leone (see Kaniki 1972, Wyse 1958). Furthermore, located as it was in northern Sierra Leone, Marampa was in the heartland of traditional support for the APC, the president's party. In a sense, Siaka Stevens would become the 'Father of Marampa mines' (see p. 62, Fig. 6.3 opening ceremony).

5.1.1 Situation in Sierra Leone

In their information sheet for employees Austromineral described Sierra Leone as 'politically stable' during the early 1980s (Austromineral 1982: 2). In fact, at that time, Stevens' retirement was already reportedly 'eagerly awaited' by those 'who dream of a more democratic Sierra Leone' (New African 1982: 25). His autocratic one party rule, characterised by the suppression of political opponents, often with the help of the Special Security Division (SSD) paramilitary force, which was answerable directly to him, and which was 'used to strike terror into the populace, particularly during general

elections' (Fyle & Foray 2006: xli), was already highly contested by student groups and workers unions, resulting in major political upheavals, and their brutal suppression, in the late 1970s. During the 1980s, government corruption reached peak proportions with a very powerful and highly centralized party bureaucracy 'demanding obedience to the pernicious doctrine of personal greed and unjust enrichment' (Thompson 1997: 149). The economy had declined throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Zack-Williams 1999: 145) and a severe economic crisis made for the highest levels of unemployment in the country's history (Africa Now 1983: 74). Hence, at the start of the Marampa project, Sierra Leone was already heavily indebted and politically volatile.³⁵

5.2 Beginnings

The beginnings of this Austro- Sierra Leonean shared history can presumably be located in Kenya. There, in 1979, Austromineral was conducting groundwater exploration in Tsavo Park and the Mombasa Coastal Belt. At this time, Abdul Khanu, Associate Professor at Fourah Bay College in Freetown, held a UNESCO Fellowship at the University of Nairobi. According to different sources, he was responsible for convincing Austromineral's CEO, Walter Neubauer, of the viability of the abandoned mines at Marampa (see Modu 1983: 4 or Davies 1983: 88). Subsequently, in June 1979 an 'Austrian mission' of members of Austromineral visited Freetown and Marampa to 'investigate the resumption of mining operations at the Marampa iron ore open cast, closed since 1975' (Austromineral 1979: 2). After inspection of the facilities, 'calls were paid' to the Minister of Mines, Mr. Conteh, and the Department of Mines and the

35 Part of this debt had been due to the quadrupling of crude petroleum prices on the international market. Sierra Leone, which did not have any coal or oil reserves of its own, imported all the fossil fuel needed to satisfy the country's energy needs. The other part owed to the OAU-Summit at Freetown and the enormous amounts of money invested in the events (Hirsch 2001: 147). It is interesting to note in this context that Austromineral inherited 3 of the houses inside the OAU-Village (Austromineral 1982: 3).

Geological Survey. Eventually, President Siaka Stevens 'received the mission for a brief discussion' (Ibid.). An overall project concept was established and proposed to the Austrian parent company VOEST Alpine. In May 1981 Siaka Stevens visited Austria (Neubauer 1981a: 1) and met with the political representatives, President Rudolf Kirchschräger and Chancellor Bruno Kreisky (Fig. 5.1).

Fig. 5.1 President Siaka Stevens and Austrian president Rudolf Kirchschräger



Photo: Archive AM4M/T (1981)

5.2.1 Project Structure

After negotiations in both Austria and Sierra Leone, 'the government of Sierra Leone offered Austromineral a contract for turnkey delivery of all the equipment and machinery required for the rehabilitation [...], the project study and the entire engineering tasks' (Ibid.: 11). The government of Sierra Leone established a new 100% state-owned corporation, Marampa Iron Ore Mining Company Limited (MIOMC), which 'was formed with a paid-up equity capital of Le 6 million (USD 2.4 million), all controlled by the government' (Neubauer 1983: 7). MIOMC would subsequently conclude a management and marketing contract with Austromineral. The Austrian Export Credit Agency Oesterreichische Kontrollbank (OeKB) secured an export credit of total ATS

243,140,000 (USD 18,830,044) with a G4 export guarantee, covering the political, but not the economic risk (OeKB 1981)³⁶. Repayment of the loan and its interest was to be guaranteed by the Central Bank of Sierra Leone (Austromineral 1979a: 17). Credit redemption, however, would be ensured from the proceeds of the iron-ore sales. Hence, the overall idea was to carry out a 'self-financing' project (Neubauer 1982a: 3). The contract with the Sierra Leonean Government was signed on 20 March 1980³⁷. On 23 January 1981, Austromineral signed a supplementary agreement, in which Austromineral committed itself to the following objectives (VOEST Alpine 1983a: 3):

The Manager's respective commitment to sell annually not less than 1 Million tons of saleable iron ore shall continue throughout the lifetime of the project, i.e. for not less than 12 years. [...] The Manager warrants that the price for the iron ore concentrate to be sold is the world market price [...] under best possible conditions.³⁸

This supplementary agreement had far reaching consequences. Austromineral had committed itself to production goals that would prove impossible in the course of the project.

5.2.2 Technical Conception

In terms of technical conception, Austromineral had access to reports of previous prospective surveys of the Marampa area. Of these, the one by Bergbau and Exploration (the company active at Bong Mines) was regarded as promising. That was

36 This export guarantee covers in the following cases: 1) War or war-like Incidents, 2) insurgence or revolution 3) administrative measures which hinder the transfer or the return-service 4) Other political incidents preventing the fulfilment of contract. Economic risks, however, such as the failure to meet the expected market success, bankruptcy or currency devaluation in the respective host country are not insured (OeKB 2011: 3). In these cases Austromineral/VOEST Alpine was accountable for any losses.

37 The contract was signed based on an assumption that funding would be provided by the Austrian state, but even before formal confirmation of this had been received (VOEST Alpine: 1980), something which evoked 'justified disgruntlement' at the Austrian Export Credit Agency (VOEST Alpine 1983: 1).

38 According to Austromineral this commitment reflected claims by the IMF and the Export Credit Agency who insisted on the 'self financing' nature of the project, since for the export credit the loan repayment guarantee of Sierra Leone's central bank was not regarded as reliable (enough) (Austromineral 1983a: 2).

based on the principle of re-processing the iron ore leftovers of DELCO (so-called 'tailings') from the former dressing plant.³⁹ To ensure the profitability of the mines a feasibility study was carried out by Austromineral in May 1980, allegedly two months *after* the first contract with the Sierra Leonean government had already been signed (VOEST Alpine 1984: 1). The project's viability was neither examined externally nor by experts of VOEST Alpine' (Ibid.). Confirming the company's previous expectations, it showed promising results. According to the study, all in all, the production target of 1 million tons per year (tpy) of concentrate of sinter-feed of iron ore containing 64-65% Fe appeared feasible. In general, the study focused mainly on the 'Austromineral Tailing Pond Scheme' and did not comprise detailed surveys on open cast gains (VOEST Alpine 1984: 1). Later, also the production of 'primary ores' became integrated in the production scheme, following Austromineral's discovery of around 13 tons of – seemingly – easy accessible iron ore deposits, and the hope of improving the general ore quality by mixing primary and secondary ores. Above all however, new tests had suggested that the old equipment would not sustain the sole reprocessing of the 'tailings' towards the annual production goal of one million tons.

5.2.3 Project Management and Staff/Remuneration

The Sierra Leonean company MIOMC consisted of a seven-person administrative board (including three persons from Austromineral). Abdul Khanu was appointed General Manager of MIOMC. The Austromineral board would give all directives relevant for plant and company management to the General Manager and Department Heads in Sierra Leone (Fig. 5.2).

³⁹ The other reports available were a report by the Indian governmental consultants of 1975 and a Report by LKAG, AB, Sweden. A further UN study is mentioned but was not accessed by the company at that time. These reports, which addressed the possibility of a continuation of open cast mining, 'came to rather discouraging results', which also involved the 'major obstacle' of 'high investment costs' (Austromineral 1979: 3).

Vienna based Austromineral was in charge of defining production targets, carrying out investments and recruiting personnel. Decisions of this kind were imposed on the management at Marampa. This led to tensions – especially in later stages of the project – when, for example, the responsible department heads at Marampa could not identify with production goals or insufficient investment and resource (VOEST 1985: 20; see Reichmann 1985: 33).

Fig. 5.2 Management of Marampa Project



Source: VOEST Alpine (1985: 3)

Over the course of the project, there were between 30 and 45 expatriates across the different departments,⁴⁰ around 30 of whom were from Austria. According to my respondents, there were also a few British employees working at Marampa and Pepel, especially in the shipment department, although it is unclear how many of them had been involved in the DELCO project before the arrival of Austromineral. According to the staff plan for 1983 and 1984 the local staff was projected to consist of around 350 white collar company employees (around 10-15 in senior positions) and about 1000-

40 The different departments were located in Marampa and Pepel respectively and included mining; pumps and pipes; railing; production; shipment; accountancy, housing, powerhouse and repairing (Interview with AMM/R, 31.8.2011).

1500 blue collar mineworkers (Austromineral 1983d: 4). The bulk of the local staff had worked for DELCO previously. Austromineral considered the local workforce exceptionally 'cheap'. (see Table 5.1. for expatriate and local staff remuneration). Local mine workers were paid Le 2-3 (USD 4.1-5.6) per day, in addition to receiving a bag of rice/month (Interview with AM5M/R, 31.8.2011). The contracts of local workers allowed for their easy termination, without explanation or prior notice, due to their 'non substantive' status. This was something which Austromineral regarded as an advantage (Neubauer 1983a: 45), particularly as a three-year agreement between the company and the mining union, prevented the renegotiation of these terms until the end of 1984 (Ibid.: 45). This rendered the local staff very vulnerable and, with hindsight, built a breeding ground for social unrest (see Pohl et al. 1997).

Table 5.1 Remuneration Local and Expatriate Staff (1983)

LOCAL STAFF
Worker: USD 4.1-USD 5.6 (Le 2-2.8) / day
Mechanic: USD 7 (Le 3.5) / day
Operator: USD 8 (Le 4) / day
Shift Foreman: USD 360 (Le 180) / month
Supervisor: USD 300-600 (Le 150-300) / month
EXPATRIATE STAFF
Average Salary: USD 5000-6000 (Le 2500-3000) / month [USD 160-200 (Le 80-100) / day]

Source for local staff remuneration: Neubauer (1983a: 46), my translation. Conversion factor applied as used in the document. Source for expatriate staff remuneration: Contract 1983, Archive AM8M/R.

5.3 Production Period

5.3.1 Rehabilitation

As Austromineral had inherited the old DELCO infrastructure, the first two years were dedicated to the reconstruction and renovation of old mining installations and structures. At both Marampa and Pepel offices, entertainment facilities and houses were refurbished. Water and power supply were installed for the mines. In order to ensure transportation to the Harbour at Pepel, the 52 km rail tracks to Pepel established by DELCO in the early 1930s were repaired (including trains, see Fig. 2.5, p. 17) and the port infrastructure at Pepel (including vessels) was refurbished. Furthermore, most of the open pit equipment was rehabilitated or repaired. For example, inside the Marampa power plant the two remaining diesel generators were repaired, and a new heavy caterpillar was purchased since recovered equipment did not prove fit for heavy-duty work. For the 'tailing ores' a suction dredger was assembled. A new concentration plant was erected, and a processing system comprising a set of Reichert Cones and a High Gradient Magnetic Separator were installed (see Austromineral 1979, Neubauer 1982a). It soon became evident, however, that the condition of the old infrastructure was worse than first thought. Corrosion and the difficulty of repairing machinery on the spot led to the need for spare parts, or even new machinery, which came at significant monetary cost, in addition to delaying the start of production. Other obstacles, such as the siltation of the shipment channel, had been 'overlooked' (Interview with AM12M/R, 28.12.2011) but, over the course of the project, would turn into a regular matter. Furthermore, overseas experts were needed to ensure satisfactory progress with the refurbishment programme. The more critical obstacles to the Austrian venture at Marampa, however, would only become evident after production had begun at the mines.

5.3.2 Production

While the rapid rate of depreciation of existing equipment and the cost of new parts exceeded previous estimations by far, the quality of the iron ore produced did not reach required concentrations. This proved especially difficult in the light of the global iron ore crisis, resulting in declining prices, increasing competition and a reluctance to accept newcomers in the market. Following new investment in the processing plant by the end of 1983, the quality of ores was enhanced but, at the same time, the quantity of ores produced decreased, leading to an even lower output than before (VOEST Alpine 1984: 4).⁴¹ Furthermore, the assumption that recovering ore from tailing ponds would work out at only about a third of the costs of mining primary ore proved wrong (Ibid.: 11). In reality, producing secondary ore was much more expensive than mining primary ore (Ibid.: 5).

Indeed, it had become evident by the end of 1983 that the production target of one million tons per annum was not going to be reached, following the export of only 370,000 tons in 1982. This meant that Austromineral had broken the contract, in which it had granted to produce and sell not less than one million tons of iron ore per annum (Austromineral 1980: 6; Austromineral 1979a). As a consequence, the company tried to renegotiate the contract in favour of a lower production target. The MIOMC Board informally agreed to a reduced production target of 800,000 tons per annum, but resisted the move to formally amend the contract (VOEST Alpine 1984a: 1). Meanwhile, the Austrian parent company VOEST Alpine reacted to both the quality of the ore and the low market prices of iron ore by showing reluctance in taking 500,000 tons of the

⁴¹ According to the production schedule the ratio of primary (open cast) to secondary (tailing ponds) ore was to be around 1.5:1. In fact, the ratio hit 8:1. The most striking phenomenon however was that the average output of January and February 1984 showed a higher iron ore concentration in the new tailings than the Fe-content of the primary ores before the secondary ore had been added. This meant, that the secondary ore was concentrated at the cost of the primary ore and suspended as residue (VOEST Alpine 1984: 4).

ore for their own use and, instead, agreed to take only 80,000 – 85,000 tons (see VOEST Alpine 1983b). At that time Marampa iron ore proved much more expensive than the ore VOEST Alpine obtained from, for example, Sweden (Ibid.).

5.3.3 Social Situation

While the technical side of the project appeared more than difficult, social problems had also increased. Violent demonstrations, alleged military coups and the deteriorating health of Siaka Stevens made for a generally tense political climate in the country, which also extended to the mines. There, Austromineral's 'administrative measures' for cost reduction involving the dismissal of large parts of the local workforce (Anon 1984, Neubauer & Werneck 1984, see also Appendix 2) proved very difficult in the climate of rapid economic decline in Sierra Leone: 'Marampa as a new enterprise in the area became increasingly subjected to the local struggles for power and political "survival"' (Austromineral 1984a). The inception of Austromineral's

austerity program unintentionally worsened the economic situation of many and as such fed into general destabilisation in the country. Under these circumstances, 'theft, fraud and acts of sabotage [increased], which however were not aimed primarily at the Austrian Management and the Austrians (Austromineral 1984: 2, my translation).

The worst incident during that time was an alleged act of sabotage in the processing plant leading to a halt in production of 2 months and the loss of two shiploads of iron ore (Ibid.). One of the most popular incidents of that time can be seen in the so-called 'Die Man Racket' marking an event in which the former leader of the caretaker team was accused of paying an estimated Le 1 million to non-existent staff. It was followed by his, and other senior staff members', public humiliation by the Sierra Leonean workforce. The incident was followed by violent strikes (Austromineral 1984d: 2; A. Khanu 1984: 2).

Significantly, staff members from the previous caretaker team, some of whom were suspected of involvement in sabotage,⁴² had 'had to be' integrated into the workforce by Austromineral as this was specified in its contract (Neubauer 1984: 2-4; see also Austromineral 1979a). Within the increasingly difficult social situation, MIOMC's Managing Director, Abdul Khanu, emerged as a figure who divided opinion: his loyalty was reportedly questioned by the president and his authority allegedly undermined by the caretaker team but some accounts maintain that he continued to occupy a very powerful, if increasingly difficult, position (Neubauer 1984c: 2-3, Austromineral 1984: 3, Beelitz 1984). Although he was under heavy scrutiny both internally and outside the mines, he retained the backing and support of the Austromineral management (Interview with AM2M/R, September 2011). Following strikes and unrest at the mines (see section 5.3, Table 5.1), Austromineral and MIOMC asked Siaka Stevens to visit the mines (p. 52, Fig. 5.3), address the workers and calm the situation (S. Khanu 1984: 2). During his discussions with the Mine Workers Union and their president, Mr. Barrie, Stevens' personal connection with Marampa was emphasised (Shaki ends Industrial Crisis At Marampa 1984). Stevens paid tribute to the achievements of Walter Neubauer and Abdul Khanu. Regarding the disgruntlement of the Marampa workforce, he stated that 'differences in culture and other factors' made problems inevitable. 'He thanked the expatriate staff for devoting a part of their lives to educate people' [...] but also 'advised the expatriates to listen and take cognisance of the advice of their Sierra Leonean counterparts' (S. Khanu 1984a: 2).

More and more, also Austromineral's CEO Neubauer's doings had become increasingly criticised, particularly by the parent company VOEST Alpine's financial department heads.

42 In a paper on 'Social Unrest at Marampa Mines', Austromineral's CEO voiced suspicion that a secret society, 'Wakale', had been responsible for the problems at the mines (see Neubauer 1984).

5.3.4 Financial Situation

From a financial perspective, the Marampa project proved disastrous. The Sierra Leonean Government lagged behind in its payments, leading to arrears of USD 2.4 million by the end of 1982 (Voest Alpine 1983b).⁴³ By the end of 1983 Sierra Leone government arrears had reached around USD 7.5 million. At the same time, total production costs for 1984 were around four times higher than previously estimated. An overall production loss of over 50% was reflected by a cost reduction of only less than 7% (Ibid. 10). On 7 July 1984 VOEST Alpine stated in a letter that it would stop to finance further losses of the project (VOEST Alpine 1984).

5.4 Decline of the Project

Although Austromineral sketched out several scenarios for the salvation of Marampa mines (Austromineral 1983: 6), exit scenarios were discussed more and more openly, always at the instigation of VOEST Alpine, which was going to be liable for any project losses. Austromineral found itself caught between the distinct desire of the parent company to end the project as quickly as possible and a Sierra Leonean government interested in keeping the mines going for as long as possible. In a letter to newly elected Austrian Chancellor, Fred Sinowatz, Siaka Stevens wrote:

I would like to tender my personal plea and that of my government to exercise all possible influence on its state controlled industry to avoid resignation of Austromineral as the "Manager" and an Iron Ore sales agent in consequences of their difficulties to sell the iron ore at the actually depressed world market. (Stevens 1983: 2)

In Austria (with or without the desperate influence of Austromineral), the political importance of keeping Marampa Mines open was emphasized, most conspicuously by Hans Harrer, the Austrian General Consul for Sierra Leone (Harrer 1983), who

⁴³ According to Austrian law, MIMCO would already have been virtually bankrupt by the end of 1982, when company accounts showed a total financial loss of USD 43 million (Le 21.5 million), alongside an equity capital of USD 44 million (Le 22 million) (VOEST Alpine 1985: 11).

expressed serious concern about the potential damage which Austria's general reputation in West Africa would suffer if Marampa was closed. Also, the threat of political turmoil in the case of its closure was emphasized on several occasions (see Neubauer 1984: 4).

The decline of the Austrian Marampa project continued, and Austromineral/VOEST made a desperate attempt to report alleged acts of sabotage and other incidents (see Table 5.1) as 'political risk', in the hope that this way the company would be able to leave the project while not being legally liable for the losses in regard of the export credit given (see Section 5.2.1).

Table 5.2 Incidents, Accidents, Strikes and alleged Acts of Sabotage

Feb 2 nd to 3 rd 1983 ship loader at Pepel failed
May 83 motor of the new dredge burnt after only a few months of operation
July 1983 theft of a caterpillar shaft
Nov 15 th 1983 STRIKE Die Man Racket
Dec 10 th -12 th 1983 STRIKE
Mar 21 st 1984 attempted derauling of train due to missing panda clips
May 5 th 1984 fire in processing plant
May 15 th 1984 fire in oilbarge engine - commutation of electrical cable in generator switchboard
Jun 1 st 1984 water pump was sunk
May 5 th 1984 altered switch (discovered in time)
Jun 1984 subsidence of vehicles in the mud
Jun 19 th – 23 rd 1984 STRIKES
From March 1984 above average theft

Source: Neubauer (1985a)

From a juridical viewpoint, however, the incidents did not show either any systematic pattern indicating sabotage or enough incontrovertible evidence of sabotage (Austromineral 1984a, VOEST Alpine 1984b: 2-5).

Finally, a so-called Memorandum of Understanding was drafted by Austromineral in order to secure the repayment of loans by the Sierra Leonean government and to amend their own production targets (Juvancic 1985: 2). For reasons, which remain unclear the document has never been signed by the Sierra Leonean government (VOEST Alpine 1985: 1). On 22 December 1984 Austromineral delivered a notice of 'Resignation as Manager for economic reasons' (Neubauer & Werneck 1984a, Juvancic 1985: 2) to MIOMC. And, despite the latter's refusal to formally accept the withdrawal, on 4 February 1985, the MIOMC Board of Directors was informed that Austromineral would withdraw all employees from all the Marampa locations (VOEST 1985a). The project was handed over in the week starting 11 February 1985, and Austromineral rapidly withdrew its team of employees from the mines and, with the exception of 4 staff members, rushed all the employees out of the country with unseemly haste.

In a sense, history seemed to have repeated itself, as the Austromineral story, at least its denouement, was strangely reminiscent of the infamous and earlier DELCO episode.

Fig. 5.3 Siaka Stevens' visit to the Mines



Photos: AM6M/R (1984)

5.5 Aftermath

With a total loss of ATS 575.4 million (USD 29.7 million) of public money in the project, newspaper coverage in Austria portrayed an unflattering image of the Austrian performance at Marampa (see *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten*: 1985, Reichmann 1985). Austromineral went into liquidation two years later. At Marampa, production continued for another three weeks, before the mines were definitively closed (Neubauer 1985). In the elections of 1 October 1985, Joseph S. Momoh was installed as Siaka Stevens' successor. Also, the situation in Austria was transformed after the 'Austrian Father of the Mines', Bruno Kreisky, had stepped down in 1983 and an unstoppable decline in the fortunes of VOEST Alpine, Austromineral's parent company, became evident. Hence, in the same year, VOEST Alpine crashed due to its

constant exertion of political influence, the misuse of the company as a national labor pool, changes in international framework conditions, the erosion of individual companies, failures in diversification, in foreign projects and in finished products as well as enormous losses (and scandals) of the trading subsidiary VAIT (Source: VOEST Alpine: 2013).

Already, in the final phase of the Marampa project, it had become clear that almost all Austrian industrial projects in Africa underway (see Chapter 4.3) at the time had proven unprofitable, and that new investments in African countries should be regarded with caution (Austromineral 1984). Thus the Marampa project marked an end to the implementation of large-scale projects in Africa. The 1987 Foreign Policy report stated that the former 'positive asset', hence the fact that Austria had never had colonies, also 'meant a lack of experience and relations that would still have to be painstakingly established' (ABP 1988: 206; cf. Neugebauer 1996: 12, my translation).

From an economic perspective, the Austrian project at Marampa failed due to a combination of global phenomena and national and local politics in both Austria and

Sierra Leone, as well as a lack of experience and project mismanagement. The fate of the Marampa project can be closely traced in the documentation archives of VOEST Alpine at Linz.

According to Assmann (2008), sources like the archival records cited in this chapter can be regarded as part of 'cultural memory', which manifests in documents, is stored away and institutionalised. These documents very vividly mirror the communication between the governments of Austria and Sierra Leone, Austromineral, MIOMC and VOEST Alpine in most parts. It would be wrong, to consider these sources of information as objective or neutral. Clearly, most of them are biased by their respective authors' (or even readers') intentions. This shows impressively in the comments and marks on documents or emotional (written) negotiations such as between the financial department of VOEST Alpine and Austromineral's CEO Walter Neubauer, including the latter's manifold attempts to save 'his' project at Marampa (Fig. 5.4).

The enfolding discourse has been carried out in remoteness to the spot. It clearly influenced however the everyday life inside the mining compound. The next chapter is dedicated to the memories of former expatriates, who, in most cases, experienced mine life on a daily basis.

Fig. 5.4 Detail, Archival record

chaftliche Entwicklung des Landes und für die politische
stabilität des jetzigen Regimes alle Möglichkeiten von
pressionen ausgenützt werden.

*↳ Bredt⁴ Österreich muß doch einen
mit S. Leone aushalten -/5*

Source: Austromineral (1984) VOEST note on Austromineral handout:
'Austria should sustain a "quarrel" with S. Leone' (my translation).

Chapter 6

MEMORIES OF MARAMPA 1980-1985

In this chapter I am going to look at the ways in which the Marampa project is perceived today. After giving account of the story of Austromineral at Marampa in the use of (foremost) archival company records I am now looking at examples of 'communicative memory' (see Assmann 2008) of former Austrian employees at the mines. I will be drawing upon their experiences of 'Africa' at the camps at Marampa and Pepel, especially regarding their perception of the British heritage preserved on the spot. I will look at a selection of discourses emerging at work, at home, and inside and outside the mines. The Austrian's experiences at Marampa can be regarded as framed by two particular public events, which were alluded to during most of the conversations with former expatriates and their families.

6.1 Target Group and Confidentiality

6.1.1 The Austrian Expatriates

The bulk of the Austrian employees at Marampa⁴⁴ had been hired via the parent company VOEST Alpine and had come from the Austrian countryside; others had replied to job advertisements in local newspapers. The group was composed of a range of persons from very different backgrounds, for whom the mines now provided a shared source of reality. Their motivations for undertaking their sojourn in Sierra Leone varied, from financial reasons to a wish to escape their Austrian lives or a general interest in

44 In 1984 there were 45 expatriates employed at the mines, 30 of which were from Austria, three worked for Austromineral and four for VOEST. The remaining 15 expatriates came from 10 different countries (VOEST Alpine 1984). Additionally, at that time, 28 dependants lived in the 'Camp' at Marampa. (VOEST Alpine 1985: 18)

working abroad. Today, these former expatriates are for the most part between 55-65 years old and thus in most cases at the age of (early) retirement, although some (especially from the higher-ranked staff) are in their 80s. Some have maintained friendships over the last 30 years and there are regular 'Marampa' meetings held in Vienna. The memories provided in the individual interviews, I believe, have thus been partially shaped through such ongoing socialisation, as 'communicative memory' long after the actual experiences.

6.1.2 Confidentiality and Language

As already stated in this thesis (see Chapter 1.1), given the small number of expatriates involved, the identities of interviewees have been protected and their responses anonymised.⁴⁵

The interviews were conducted in Austrian German, and comprised a variety of dialects from different parts of the country. Some of the linguistic specifics being explained, one topic however, needs to be addressed separately within Austrian-African relations, namely the denomination of black people within the accounts given. During the 1980s it was very common practice in Austria to call black people '*Neger*'⁴⁶ (see also Chapter 4.1). Especially among the older generation, there is an ongoing debate about 'political correctness' and the fact that the term is 'not being allowed anymore'. In my interviews, some persons would use the term whereas others would not; yet others were uncertain regarding the current status of the term ('now it is also forbidden to call them 'black, or?'). In order not to repeat the term, I have replaced it wherever it appears in citations.

45 KEY: 1-11 (numbering arbitrary); M-male; F-female; AM-Austromineral; R-regular; T-temporary.

46 For etymological reference and use of the term in Austria see Reisigl & Wodak (2001: 64).

6.1.3 Arrival at Marampa

Only a few of the employees had any first-hand experience of Africa or Africans prior to their Marampa posting. Africa/ns did not represent a very noticeable presence in Austria in the 1970s and 1980s, when it was unusual to even see a black person in the street. Indeed, the kind of 'spectacle', which accompanied their appearance in public was mirrored by the finger pointing and 'objectification' to which Austrians were subject on their arrival in Marampa in the early 1980s. They were called *o-porto* (the term for whites in the local Temne language) and, often for the first time in their lives, were confronted with their own 'otherness'.

Although they came on temporary contracts only (VOEST Alpine 1984), most of the Austrian expatriates had, in moving to Marampa, experienced a notable upward shift in status, reputation and responsibility. In the context of work, the task facing them at Marampa was to rehabilitate and build a whole mining infrastructure in collaboration with a local workforce of about 1500-2000 persons (see Chapter 5.3, table 5.1). Often from a working class background themselves, they found themselves in positions of responsibility and authority, for which they were handsomely remunerated. Marampa also represented a highly male-dominated environment (see Ballard & Banks 2003: 293), in which most Austrian spouses and partners were assigned the (new) role of housewives. These transformations reinforced particular masculinities in both public/professional and private/domestic spheres. In the latter sphere, for example, Marampa was considered 'a land of milk and honey for a man'. (Interview with AM1M/R, 7.9.2011). Austrian expatriate identities were thus shaped through actual immersion in, and experience of, mine life.

6.2 Beginnings

6.2.1 Settling in the DELCO Heritage

Although arrival at Marampa signalled a change in the lives of the Austrians involved and – according to most stories I was told – came with a pioneering feel, their new home had a distinct history:

At Lunsar, there was an airport from the times of DELCO – our boss once went to Freetown from there [...] But in 1975 Delco departed from that airport. From one day to the next - they had not told anyone. One fine day [...] two aeroplanes arrive, everyone [gets] on board, WROOM, Delco has stopped [production]. Who is going to pay? No one is, anymore! (Interview with AM9M/R, 31.8.2011)

The story of DELCO's sudden withdrawal was well known to the Austrians and can be seen as a point of departure for their own self-image. Thus not only was 'the work of Austromineral in Sierra Leone 'motivated by economic considerations but also by an awareness of a moral obligation to *help where others stood aloof or failed* [...]' (Neubauer 1983: 9, my emphasis); but there were also more explicit claims of distinctly *not* having come to Marampa with the 'eye of the colonial master' (Interview with AM4M/T, 13.4.2011). For the Austrian employees the intervention at Marampa was perceived as a humanitarian development project rather than a purely economic venture.⁴⁷ However, when Austria launched its Marampa venture in 1979, the company was stepping into the footsteps of DELCO - not only by reprocessing iron ore leftovers from the DELCO era – and their arrival certainly generated local expectations. 'When I first visited Marampa with a Government Convoy, little children followed us shouting "work is coming back!"' (Interview with AM4M/T, 13.4.2011). Indeed, the reopening of the mines attracted large numbers of former Sierra Leonean DELCO workers, who had been dismissed in 1975.

⁴⁷ The Austrian Marampa project was carried out as a purely business-oriented enterprise, even though in its later stages there were suggestions that losses could be funded through the Austrian government institution for development assistance (See Austromineral 1985: 3).

For the Austrian project, the main office at Marampa was fully rehabilitated and provided with all office facilities (Austromineral 1982: 13). The British office equipment was still in place: 'In the office there was this dusty desk, with open folders, everything - still from the British...' (Interview with AM9M/R, 8.9.2011), but also

old archival books, records and even a Lloyd register, Queen Elizabeth was already in there! [...] Everything was piled up, stored in some closets, [...] a huge amount of treasures; measuring devices. [...] In a sense, the British heritage was very important for us *since it provided information* (Ibid, my emphasis).

We can see an ambivalence here, with the Austrian expatriate staff distancing themselves from the DELCO heritage, while depending on the memories, which were preserved in the DELCO archives to make up for lacunae in their experience and expertise. Simultaneously, the experience of the Sierra Leonean workforce proved invaluable already from the very beginning of the project.

In both Pepel and Marampa, former DELCO compounds (Fig. 2.1) were cleared of overgrown vegetation, and bungalows and houses (Fig. 6.1) reserved for senior staff were repaired and refurbished (Austromineral 1982: 13). On arrival, and depending on their social situation, senior staff members were accommodated in either furnished apartments or bungalows⁴⁸ (Austromineral 1982: 3). For these expatriates this meant settling in an environment built under old assumptions, such as local staff compounds being situated away from expatriate staff camps in order not to 'endanger the health of the European camp owing to the direction of prevailing wind' (Sierra Leone Development Co Ltd.: 1944). These fenced and heavily guarded compounds, and their associated infrastructure left behind by DELCO, constituted the basis for domestic, professional and community life, and the space around which the daily routine of expatriate staff revolved for the most part.

48 The bungalows were equipped with air-conditioning, mosquito nets, basic supply of crockery and household goods, refrigerator and cooker left over from DELCO days.

Inside the expatriate compounds community facilities were refurbished. Senior Staff Club houses were renovated, including kitchen and entertainment facilities (Austromineral 1982). 'The British must have been very much into games, there were so many games [there]: a large snooker table, cards, darts, tennis courts, swimming pool and the golf court at Marampa' (Interview with AM9M/R, 8.9.2011).

Fig 6.1 Bungalow, Marampa 1960s (?) and 1983



Sources: Archive AM6M/R

The main clubhouse functioned as a communal meeting point, especially the swimming pool, where wives and children would spend most of the day. At night it functioned as a meeting point, as did the Golf Club Bar and was also used for celebrations such as that marking the reopening of the mines on 10 December 1982 (see 6.2.2) or the festival of Saint Barbara, the early Christian patron saint of mining. According to the signs on its wall, the Club House was for Senior Staff only (Fig 6.2).⁴⁹ The Austrians were inclined to keep rules like that. The 'Marampa Golf Club' was founded anew by a group of Austrian employees and the Golf course was refurbished.

⁴⁹ There was a rumour that the British allowed access to the club only to persons wearing a tie. This would have elegantly and automatically excluded ordinary workers or persons other than senior staff members without stating a plain racial or class divide (Interview with AM1F/R)

... *of course* the heritage was very present, the whole camp there, you really had the impression to live a bit in that time. And yes I think it was a lot about the setting, I had no idea before [...] so swanky, these gatherings and parties, a little bit the upper class thing, you were someone and the ordinary folk was somewhere below (Interview with AM2F/R, 20.8.2011).

Fig. 6.2 Senior staff club house, Marampa



Photo: AM6M/R (1983)

The British heritage in the mining compounds provided a certain way of living and shaped the structures in which the Austrians maintained their lifestyle. Despite their preservation, they remained a strange and, initially at least, unknown setting for the Austrians, and one to which they adapted in different ways.

6.2.2 The Opening Celebration

The official re-opening of the mines at Marampa took place on December 8, 1982. Apart from all the Paramount Chiefs of neighbouring chiefdoms and Austrian (and also British) officials President Siaka Stevens took part, arriving in a helicopter (Interview with AM8M/R, 23.10.2009). The first Austrian iron ore-train to Pepel was personally dispatched by Siaka Stevens, (Fig. 6.3) who had started his own professional career in the railway department at DELCO (see Section 3.2.1). He was wearing a uniform and a

signalling disc provided by Austromineral (Interview with AM4M/T, 13.4.2011). In this way Stevens' own history with DELCO was reiterated - and this history would become reiterated once more when Stevens visited the mines again in 1984 (see Chapter 5.3.3).

Fig. 6.3 President Siaka Stevens, opening ceremony, Marampa

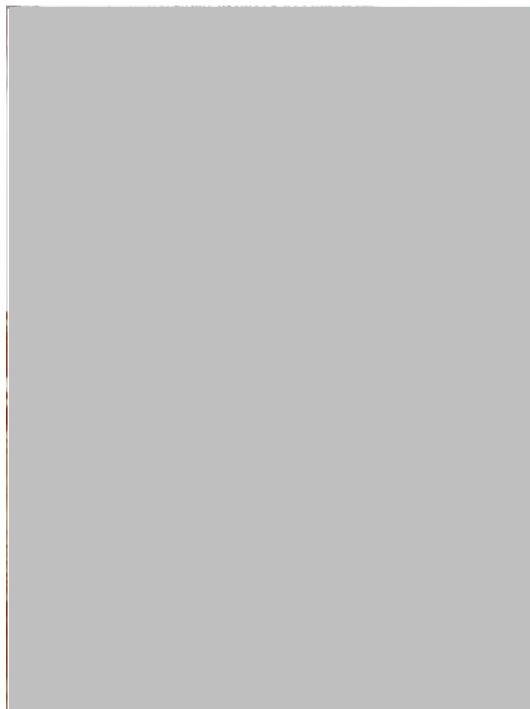


Photo: AM4M/T (1982)

The opening ceremony, according to one respondent has been 'unforgettable', it was 'very impressive, and it was *authentic*, you know' (Interview with AM2F/R, 20.8.2011). It included the representation of groups including the Marampa Market Women (Fig. 6.4), the brass band of the Sierra Leone Police Force (Fig. 6.5) playing the national anthems of both Sierra Leone and Austria, various groups performing (Fig. 6.6), although 'sometimes we were told to leave single performances, they were not for us Europeans, we were told' (Interview with AM8M/R, 23.10.2009).

Fig. 6.4 Marampa Market Women, opening ceremony, Marampa

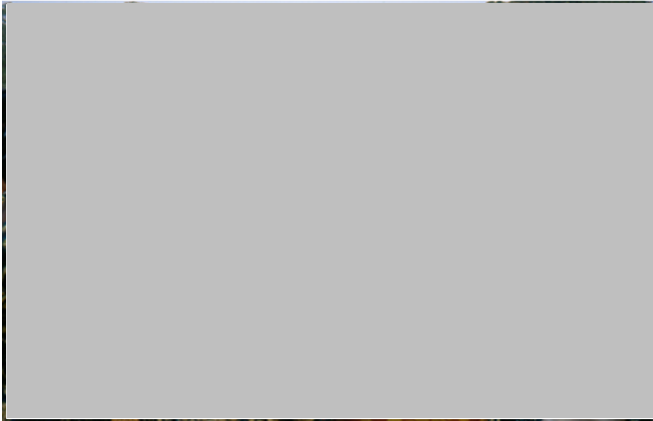


Photo: AM5M/R (1982)

Fig. 6.5 Brass Band, opening ceremony, Marampa

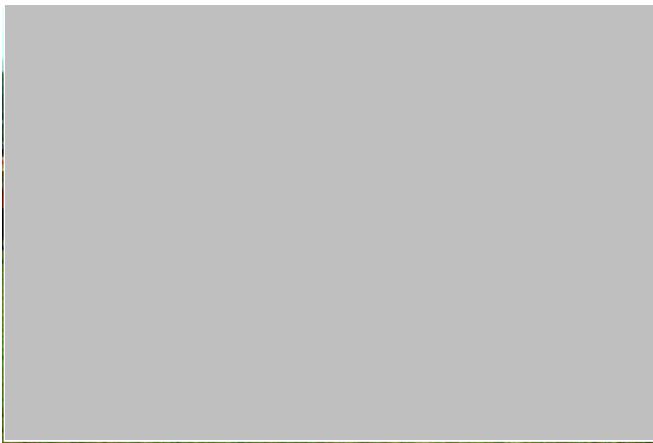


Photo: AM5M/R (1982)

Fig. 6.6 Performance, opening ceremony, Marampa

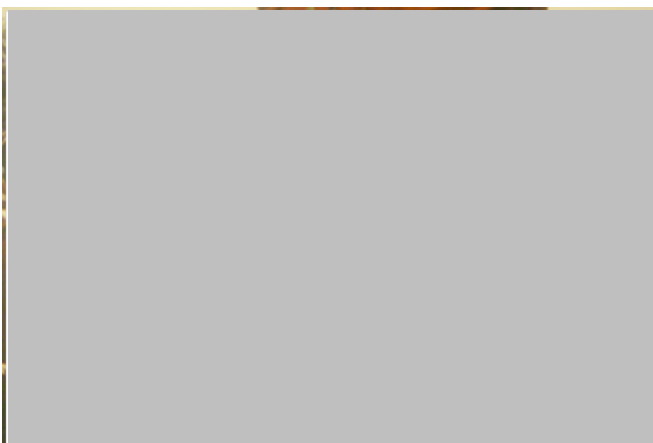


Photo: AM1M/R (1982)

Many memories of the event, however, seem to revolve around food: ‘There was great food, Austrian and slightly international cuisine [...] they were very creative, so they had the most delicate caviar [...], Sacher cake, Malakoff cake (Fig. 6.7), incredible, it was huge’ (Interview with AM5M/R, 12.1.2012). However, ‘we got ourselves some starters, the main course and the dessert, but *they* mixed it all together in one plate, soup and schnitzel and cake, so that many [of the expatriates] said: “Look how they are eating like pigs ...”’ (Interview with AM6M/R, 31.8.2011). This distinct observation came up ever so often during the conversations. Despite this being one of the most documented and remembered events among Austrian expatriates, one aspect of the ceremony/celebrations elicited rare comment:

See this abundance of food being served and out there, behind – you can’t see it in the photo – all these people were clinging onto the fence for food. And I thought, my god, we pile up these huge amounts of food and they have absolutely nothing ... (Interview with AM1M/R, 7.9.2011).

Evidently, aggregating existing and new discourses in place played out in the setting of the Marampa mines opening celebration, so proudly organised by the Austrian company.

Fig. 6.7 Buffet, opening ceremony

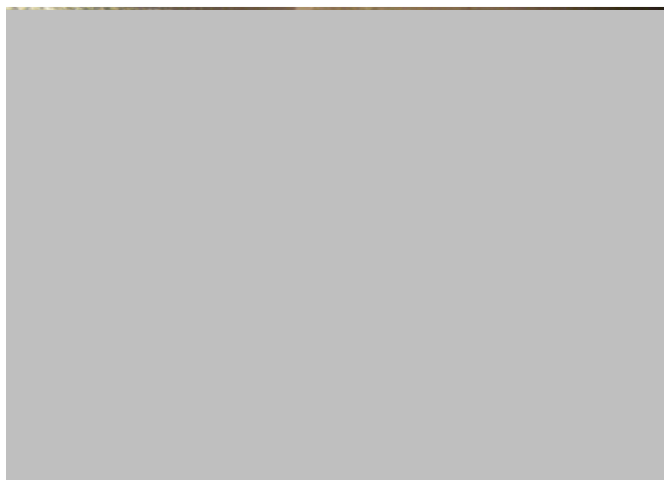


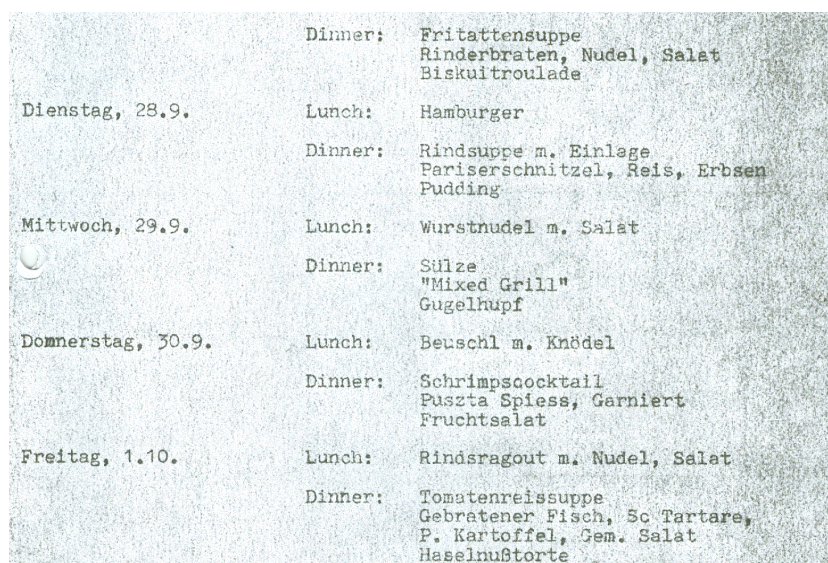
Photo: AM1M/R (1982)

6.3 Inside 'The Camp'

6.3.1 'Austria' at Marampa

To grant the Austrians a pleasant stay at the Sierra Leonean Mining site, there were attempts by the Austromineral management to render the place 'Austrian' so that the expatriates could feel 'at home'. Hence, portraits of the Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky were put on display in official buildings at Marampa and Pepel, such as the Marampa Senior Staff clubhouse. Additionally, an Austrian cook and a teacher were hired at Marampa, positions which were created to attract long-term commitment on the part of the Austrian families. Hence, at the Marampa Senior Staff Club (Fig. 6.2) expatriate employees and their families could enjoy Austrian cuisine on a daily basis (Fig. 6.8) and they could send their children to a separate school. This certainly fostered a community feeling among the Austrian expatriates, whose backgrounds were very diverse. Thus, in between their first experiences with Africa and Africans, the preserved British heritage and attempts to retain an Austrian lifestyle, the Austrians established relations within their new home and its surroundings.

Fig. 6.8 Detail, menu, senior staff club Marampa



	Dinner:	Fritattensuppe Rinderbraten, Nudel, Salat Biskuitroulade
Dienstag, 28.9.	Lunch:	Hamburger
	Dinner:	Rindsuppe m. Einlage Pariserschnitzel, Reis, Erbsen Pudding
Mittwoch, 29.9.	Lunch:	Wurstnudel m. Salat
	Dinner:	Sülze "Mixed Grill" Gugelhupf
Donnerstag, 30.9.	Lunch:	Beuschl m. Knödel
	Dinner:	Schrimpscocktail Puszta Spieß, Garniert Fruchtsalat
Freitag, 1.10.	Lunch:	Rindsragout m. Nudel, Salat
	Dinner:	Tomatenreissuppe Gebratener Fisch, So Tartare, P. Kartoffel, Gem. Salat Haselnusstorte

Source: Archive AM8M/R (1982)

6.3.2 Domestic Life

It was in the private realm where the Austrian expatriates established their first connections with local persons. This was because senior staff members were allocated paid stewards (or 'houseboys') at company expense.⁵⁰ Most Austrian staff members were confronted with domestic workers for the first time in their lives:

Shortly after our arrival some guys knocked on our doors and offered their services. During the first two weeks we kept telling them, "no thank you, we don't need that", but then we realised that it was not us but them who needed it. Hence we gathered information on the average salaries, so that we would not pay too much or too little, and then we hired a person and paid, I think, around 2 Leone [USD 4] per day (Interview with AM5M/R, 31.8.2011).

Frequently living with their expatriate employers in so-called 'boys quarters' attached to individual bungalows, these (mostly male) domestic workers (Fig. 6.9) were testimonials, and sometimes allies, to the Austrian way of adapting to their new life in the mine compound. In the developing relation with their new household members the Austrians would be confronted with further aspects of the unevenness of their relationships:

... one had to get used to this [...] you just had them, it was the usual procedure and especially with our first houseboy it was more a coequal relation I think. His successor was in a very different position, he acted much more like a servant and we could not really connect (Interview with AM2F/R, 20.8.2011).

The relationships established between the Austrian expatriates and the Sierra Leonean houseboys ranged from a natural assumption of supervisory roles on the side of the Austrians to the establishment of friendships between the Austrian expatriates and the local domestic workers. One expatriate family, for example, immediately organized a 'service uniform' for their domestic staff. For 'his' houseboy, another expatriate arranged his bicycle to be 'shipped' from Austria to Sierra Leone, while others would

⁵⁰ Department Chiefs would be provided a steward 'for free'. Wages for a 'boy' was around Le 40-60/month, and a bit more, about 60-100/month, for a cook or a steward (Austromineral 1982: 3). Although difference between houseboys, stewards and cooks were spelled out in the document in use I have never spoken to an Austrian expatriate who would have employed a cook or a steward. Instead all the respondents spoke of houseboys, who, at times would also prepare meals for them.

take bags of rice out of the camp⁵¹ in order to support the houseboy's family. Others integrated the domestic staff into their household and declared them family: 'I came there alone - hence I was only given a single quarter at the clubhouse. Later I insisted on a house, for I had my own family, I said, my girlfriend, my houseboy and my garden boy' (Interview with AM1M/R, 8.9.2011). Coined for the purpose of acquiring bigger accommodation, an attitude like this however challenged the boundaries of the hierarchical or, at least, distanced relationship between Austrian expatriates and their domestic personnel.

Fig 6.9 Domestic worker, Marampa



Photos: AM1M/R (1982)

6.3.3 Working Life

At the mines, when the Austrians embarked on the rehabilitation project at Marampa they soon realised that the difficulty of that task had been underestimated. Equipment needed to be located, inventoried and assembled. New parts and equipment were

⁵¹ Due to checkpoint orders at the gate of the fence surrounding the camp it was impossible for the local workers to leave the camp with goods from inside the camp. Hence, the respondent in question decided to bring bags of rice to the respective houseboy's dependants (Interview with AM5M/R, 31.8.2011).

ordered from Europe and fitted to, or used in the assembly of existing units in what was later described as a 'patchwork' approach (Pohl et al. 1986: 125)

In principle it worked. What did not work was the dimension, for example of the processing system, which crashed ever so often, however, this still would have been the smaller problem. But the mixture between the old structure and the old junk and the little bit we invested, the catastrophes we had
(Interview with AM3M/R, 28.12.2011).

The Austrians were confronted with the heritage they were taking on other ways as well. Although the information sheet for employees stated that English was the official language in Sierra Leone, (Austromineral, Information Sheet for Employees, 1983, private archive) some of the Austrian team members had little or no English. It had not been easy to find trained Austrian personnel who were both able to speak English and willing to travel abroad (Interview with AM4M/T, 13.4.2011). One of my respondents told me that in his job interview he had stated an intermediate knowledge of English:

This was not the case. When I entered my workplace I was suddenly confronted with a very strange situation: I had to give orders to a group of 30 workers with whom I could not communicate. Hence I had to look up all the correct words in front of them, but it worked. Through sign language and the workers' ongoing support I could in the end give them orders and our team got along really well.
(Interview with AM1M/R, 8.9.2011)

Thus in the course of such a general, rather unprofessional, approach an almost coeval climate sometimes emerged. Awkward situations did, however, occur in the workplace, when, for example, 'some of the Styrians⁵² used to call the black "Åbrennde"⁵³ ... and they understood "operator": "Oh, yes sir, I am operator!"' (Interview with AM4M/T, 13.4.2011). I was told different things about the Sierra Leonean workforce during my interviews. Some people emphasised a really good relationship with their staff, whereas quite often the Sierra Leonean workforce was mocked and ridiculed, accused of theft or

52 Styrians: Inhabitants of Styria, one of the nine federated states of Austria, situated in the southeast.

53 Term in Austrian dialect. Literal meaning: 'Something/somebody burnt down'. At the same time the term denotes somebody who is 'stony-broke'. Hence the term refers to both blackness and poverty.

a lack of a work ethic. In the mines, underpaid local workers (see 5.2.3, Table 5.1, p. 45) were appointed for twelve hour-shifts and the most dangerous and harmful tasks. On the part of the Austrians the adoption of British practices regarding payment modalities and work organisation was noticeable: 'In the end not so much has changed, the British had used physical coercion, the Austrians did not but they had enough means to put them [the Sierra Leonean mine workers] under heavy pressure' (Interview with AM5M/R, 12.1.2012). Cases of alleged sabotage and incidents such as 'Die Man Racket' (see 5.3.3, p. 48) fostered mutual distrust.

The climate at work was also shaped by ethnic conflicts and disputes among mining migrants. Hence, another Austrian employee told me that it had been impossible for him to hire a person because of his ethnic background, since the rest of the workforce did not favour the idea (Interview with AM8M/R, 23.10.2009), another one stated that

... clearly the local workers were mocking about each other, hence the Temne was "stupid" and the Mende was a "liar" and so forth. And the Austrians believed this, certainly owing to their own lack of knowledge. So they only believed in what could meet their imagination. This was a human problem (Interview with AM5M/R, 12.1.2012).

Thirty years later, and in retrospect, one respondent questioned Austromineral's practices at Marampa:

Maybe we could have saved labour cost if we had renounced some of the white personnel in favour of the black staff. [...] They were damn good people, why didn't we assign them high-ranking positions? The reasons were that we were really afraid the black staff members would destroy our stuff. We didn't trust them. We told ourselves: "they already screwed up one time (or were at least involved in that failure) – that's why we rather want to employ an Austrian, whom we can trust" – if this was right or not ... ? (Interview with AM4M/T, 13.4.2011)

The relationships between the Austrian expatriates and the local workers took different forms. The local workforce, however, appeared much better adapted to, and knowledgeable about the place, the mines, the machines and all the equipment than the Austrians who were, in reality, heavily dependent on the Sierra Leonean workforce.

6.4 The 'Devil' Ceremony

Confronted with the seemingly unstoppable decline of the Marampa project, presumably in late 1984, a final popular event took place in form of a joint 'exorcism-ceremony' (see Fig. 6.10 - 6.12) in which the whole community had agreed on a common wish to prevent the closure of the mines. This event had been 'suggested by a group of local workers who believed that there was a devil in a part of the mines [...] where the ore was mined out. So I said, well if it all is the devil's fault, sure lets have an exorcism ceremony' (Interview with AM3M/R, 28.12.2011).

Fig. 6.10 'Devil Ceremony', Marampa Mines



Photo: AM6M/R (1984)

The 'devil' referred to in this interview cannot at all be perceived as correlating with the mythological or Biblical figure of 'Lucifer'. However, in the light of the events at Marampa mines, the devil-concept became a common denominator that spanned cultural and hierarchical divides - at least until the ceremony actually started, leaving the Austrian expatriates with disgust and amazement. After the beginning of the ceremony, which included devotional objects such as nuts, one or two boxes of whiskey, and a bag of rice

one of them slaughtered cows they threw into the crowd, where it was torn in parts. The cow disappeared in the crowd. One guy ran off with the cow's head in his hand. 10 guys [were] chasing him. Well this was ... (Ibid.)

Another employee told me:

The paramount chief said we will organise something ... and we had to bring him cows and ... god knows what .. to [...] the way they tore the animals apart, just tore them to pieces ... everyone came together that day ... all the workers had one day off for this. My god, then they killed the first cow. When it was almost dead they began to cut it ... No, this was no fun ... (AM6M/R).

Spirits and 'devils' are deeply rooted in Temne culture. On a global scale there is a strong tradition of mythical creatures with mining in general (Mumford 1934), and devils in particular (Godoy 1984, Nash 1979, Taussig 1980). With reference to the area of Marampa, a range of devils is mentioned in James Nicolson's *Tent and the Simbek* (Nicolson 1974: 36, 52-53), but none of them seems to be connected to the mines. There is evidence however of another devil incident at the mines during DELCO times when 'a powerful spirit defended an area rich in iron ore against the white man [...] in 1933, prior to the opening of Marampa Mines' in the video *The Devil Story of Marampa Mines* (1971). If and to what extent this story is connected to the event of 1984 at Marampa Mines is subject to further examination.

Fig. 6.11 Gathering, 'Devil Ceremony', Marampa Mines



Photo: AM6M/R (1984)

Although the Austrian Expatriates don't seem to have liked the way the ceremony was carried out, it still can be seen as a remarkable joint event. For community life at Marampa, however, it meant one of the final acts.

Fig. 6.12 'Devil Ceremony', Marampa Mines



Photo: AM6M/R (1984)

6.4 Outside 'The Camp'

Surrounded by a fence and guarded by security personnel,⁵⁴ 'a very particular way of life developed inside the camp, 'similar to the ways the British used to live there, a little bit secluded, separated, one did not have a lot of contact with the locals' (Interview with AM5M/R, 31.8.2011). And although 'many didn't trespass the camp's boundaries because they did not dare and did not know what to do there' (Ibid.) there were, however, attempts to escape that confinement: 'At times you really felt like GET OUT! GET OUT! Because you were constantly under pressure, 24 hours a day you spent in

54 The checkpoints had been controlled strictly, so that only expatriates could transport items in or out. Towards the end, however, these boundaries had become even more hermetic. 'Towards the end, whenever you wanted to leave the camp by car, the checkpoints were guarded severely so that I was even prevented from leaving with my tow, car-jack and caution light. It had started to get tedious by then' (Interview with AM5M/R. 31.8. 2011).

your work environment' (Interview with AM6M/R. 31.8.2011). Hence, at night some would go 'to Lunsar, to the "Big Mamma" - Bar with Ottakringer Beer'.⁵⁵ Another bar 'reminded of any provincial discotheque, just in an African way [...] with really good music [...]. At another point

there was a Christmas ceremony in one of the churches there, led by some of the missionaries from Spain. They did not have an organ so they played on an accordion, and this filled the space really beautifully! And the church was packed with people and the atmosphere was just amazing (Interview with AM8M/R, 23.10.2009).

Many of the Austrians liked to go to Lunsar or Makeni in order to buy groceries and other supplies.⁵⁶ Freetown was the preferred destination for the weekend (Fig. 6.13), where the Austrians enjoyed the beaches and 'better' hotels, always under the condition that the petrol supply allowed for this, which, during the Austrian period at Marampa, was not always the case (Interview with AM5M/R, 31.8.2011, Interview with AM6M/R, 31.8.2011).

Fig. 6.13 Lunsar roundabout (left) and sunset near Freetown (right)



Photo Lunsar: AM5M/R (1982); Photo Pepel: AM9M/R (1983)

55 Austrian Brand

56 Also, the Lebanese traders in place played an important role in the economic life within and outside the mines. According to various sources, the Austrian expatriates illicitly exchanged their salaries (paid in Dollars) to Leones. Others were trading diamonds.

Generally, however, journeys/trips outside the camp were entirely private affairs:

All you needed to do was to get on the bike and go. [...] For me these were the most beautiful experiences, riding between bushes and villages and someone approaches you, looks at you like as if he or she has never seen a white person or even a bicycle. [...] And you were welcomed in the nicest and friendliest way (Ibid.).

One outcome of interaction between the camp and its surroundings was the establishment of a local soccer team (Fig. 6.14), which recruited players from both inside and outside the mines compound, sometimes by offering employment to people 'so that they could be part of the team.

[...] We developed, became known and started to play against other teams – so that we really got around and played against teams [...] further abroad. That's how we improved and gained popularity' [...] Once, in Freetown, they did not let me play, it was too dangerous when there were 45,000 people in the stadium, who wanted to see the white guy (Interview with AM1M/R, 7.9.2011).

Building rather exceptional examples of Austrian expatriate experience at Marampa, the establishment of the soccer team, but also other stories and experiences outside the compound life, clearly also challenged and at times altered discourse inside the mines.

Fig. 6.14 Soccer team Marampa mines



Photo: AM1M/R (1983)

6.5 Life after Marampa

Their Marampa experiences shaped Austrian expatriate views and identities. For almost all the expatriates I spoke to, the Marampa experience has meant an exceptional part in their lives; for some, it meant learning and gaining

a sense of the continent and the problems Africa is facing and also for the people coming to Austria and also a certain sense of helplessness – in regard to how to solve it. I certainly do not want to miss it, although I had mixed feelings. [...] Personally I think I did not get involved enough ...
(Interview with AM2F/R, 20.08.2011).

Others '[...] learned a lot in a sense of how to live, how to lead [a] life, and how to develop on a professional level' (Interview with AM6M/R, 31.8.2011). Subsequently, this employee would work abroad much more. Another employee told me that 'you can see the team spirit as we still regularly meet up. Also we often speak about it at home' (Interview with AM6M/R, 31.8.2011). He has still maintained friendships from that time. The experience helped some 'to develop professionally [...] when you were applying for a job, people were like, oh, who is this guy?' (Interview with AM8M/R, 23.10.2009) and it was something they 'did not want to miss, with everything that went well and everything that did not. I would never want this to be outside my life. I gained an understanding of the continent [...]. For the first time I had seen it with my own eyes'. (Interview with AM5M/R, 31.8.2011). The Austrians, mostly for the first time in their lives, could see a place in Africa 'with their own eyes'. Their experiences shaped their lives and their living rooms. Their memories are very ambivalent and their attitudes towards Africans and Africa have remained diverse. Despite the different influences, prejudices and prefabricated images of Africa, in general, the story of Marampa is the story of an encounter between Austrians and Africans, a shared experience, developing on many different levels. The memories of the former Austrian expatriates have been shared in family and among friends, whereas the photos and other memorabilia, as reminders of this past, have helped to preserve this ambivalent history.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

I have been trying to show how at Marampa, the DELCO heritage was conserved and retained by Austromineral and how, within this setting, the problematic and ambivalent Austrian-African relations played out in a climate where different discourses aggregated in one place. I will now look at the reasons for failure as perceived by the Austrian workforce, and conclude this study by once more pointing to the importance of the establishment of shared historiographies. The last section is dedicated to an assessment of the research project and lines for future research in Sierra Leone.

7.1 Conclusions

In Chapter 5 the different strands leading to the decline of the project were identified. The reasons for Austromineral's failure at Marampa cannot be attributed to a single cause. Pohl et al. (1986: 125) located the reasons in a mix of insufficient infrastructure and a general arrogance on the part of the Austrians (Ibid.: 131). Apart from other, previously mentioned problems '[...] the Austrians could neither cope with the climate nor with the spirit in Sierra Leone' (Interview with AM5M/R, 31.8.2011), other opinions emphasized the little investment and the high risk: 'You cannot assume for Africa everything to run smoothly – for this is never the case, not even in our country' (Interview with AM3M/R, 28.12.2011). A very strong opinion comes from a mining expert whose assessment targets the period in which the feasibility study was conducted (see 5.2.3). 'Shortcuts are no option. If something is not right, I need to work on it until it works – otherwise I'd quit. In my opinion this did not happen. [...] I think it was not correctly planned from the very start' (Interview with AM11M/R, 11.9.2011). We

can see this notion confirmed in documents like the Corporate Audit Report (VOEST 1985). Hence, despite a wide range of discourse aggregating over the course of the Marampa project, and influencing its fate, the project was very likely doomed from the start and as such was incapable of coping with the challenges it would face.

Given the constant emphasis on the symbolic and political importance of the mines for Siaka Stevens and his government (VOEST 1982: 5), it is not surprising that *political* explanations were among the most popular reasons advanced for Austromineral's premature departure. Hence, among Austrian employees, one popular assumption was that the looming civil war (1991-2002) may have caused the end of the project, whereas another frequently identified reason was that the

... reason for the end was not the war, I had always thought the rebels were coming ... but the reason was that they [Sierra Leoneans] had thought they could do it on their own. [...] Maybe it was also because of the uneven income, a black senior staff member earned more [than a mine worker] but yet nothing compared to our salaries (Interview with AM1M/R 28.12.2011, also see Table 5.1).

That the political situation must have been tense also becomes visible in other accounts: 'At a certain point the guards were exchanged and there was talk that the president was going to be overthrown and that the military would take over'. (Interview with AM12M/R 7.9.2011). Or,

they tried to overthrow Siaka Stevens or they needed too much money. [...] the political situation at that time was different, whatever was the reason for the failure at Marampa, one does not know, but I think the civil war would have started even if we had stayed' (Interview with AM4M/T, 13.4.2011).

While there was heightened political tension and rumours of a possible military coup were rife at the time Austromineral left Sierra Leone in 1985, there was little indication of the civil war which was to follow (see 5.1.1, p. 39). Nor has any research been undertaken in the period since to establish what, if any, direct contribution the decline of Marampa mines might have made to the political turmoil in the country. At this moment

I might go only as far as to claim that the political relevance of the project had been highly underestimated by the Austrians and I will continue to argue that this was due to the limited knowledge Austrians had about Africa in general and Sierra Leone in particular. This, I think, shows much more dramatically on an institutional level than on an individual one. Hence, over the course of the project, Austromineral's parent company was informed by its subsidiary about the specifics of 'Africa', whose complexity the Austromineral CEO coined the term 'bamboo curtain' (referencing the 'iron curtain') to describe (Austromineral 1984).

The ambivalent Austrian discourse on Africa, (see Chapter 4) played out in the 'strange setting' of the British colonial heritage, which the Austrians officially dismissed. At the same time the heritage at the mines made for the assumption of hierarchical behaviour and lifestyle rooted in the colonial history of the place. This heritage had been preserved within the mines and the discourses surrounding them. While the economic and political crisis in Sierra Leone escalated over the course of the Marampa project, the political situation in Austria experienced a shift as well, when chancellor Kreisky stepped down in 1983. From then on, Austria's international orientation lost its political backing, and projects like the one at Marampa were scrutinized from an economic perspective only. In this light it became very difficult for the project to be sustained any further. Over the course of eight years the official doctrine of Austria as 'unencumbered partner' of developing countries experienced a shift, so that, eventually, a lack of experience and knowledge was acknowledged. These discourses aggregated within this specific setting and clearly influenced decision makers, whose remoteness to the spot made for difficulties as well. Different factors contributed to the premature end: facilities in place did not work as planned, and the amounts and quality of ores envisaged could not be achieved. The Austrian idea of a humanitarian project was

thwarted by strikes and other social problems, and collapsed completely when Austromineral eventually left the country literally under the cover of darkness. On an individual level, the lack of experience of the Austrian workforce acted both as an obstacle to production, but also, I want to argue, as a promising chance to challenge some of the prevailing discourse conserved within the 'contact zone' of Marampa mines.

I have been trying to establish this account against the backdrop of the small body of Austrian-African historiography. In that sense, I believe that in African-Austrian shared memories, mainly are existent as 'communicative' memory, which is fleeting and not institutionalised. As illustrated in Chapter 4 of this thesis, there is a conspicuous lack of 'first hand' cultural memory of 'Africa' to be found in Austrian institutions.

Johannes Fabian, in his article 'Memory and Counter-Memory' (2007: 103), very critically asks if a strategy such as the German post WWII 'culture of memory' (*Erinnerungskultur*) could be a potential way a post/colonial past could be approached (Fabian 2004: 103). Looking at Austria and the research carried out by Wodak et al. (2007) or Benke & Wodak (2003) on the ways the Austrian role during National Socialism has been taken and historicized, I will certainly not dare to start a comparison of these events and I am clearly aware of the different meanings the factual roles had. I believe, however, that in Austria, there are similarities, less in remembering, than in cultures of forgetting. Connerton (1989), in *How Modernity Forgets*, points to the connection between contemporary 'forgetting' and the loss of proximity to real people and real places. I hope, by the task of 'giving form to' the Austrian memories and their history at Marampa, to be able to establish a *reminder to a present*, which is informed by a past that is worth keeping in mind.

7.2 Prospects

By establishing a multifaceted historiography of Austria's mining venture in Marampa I have been trying to show how a past event is perceived in a contemporary discourse. This history comprises a range of threads, each of which deserved far more space than word limit and scope of this project allowed.

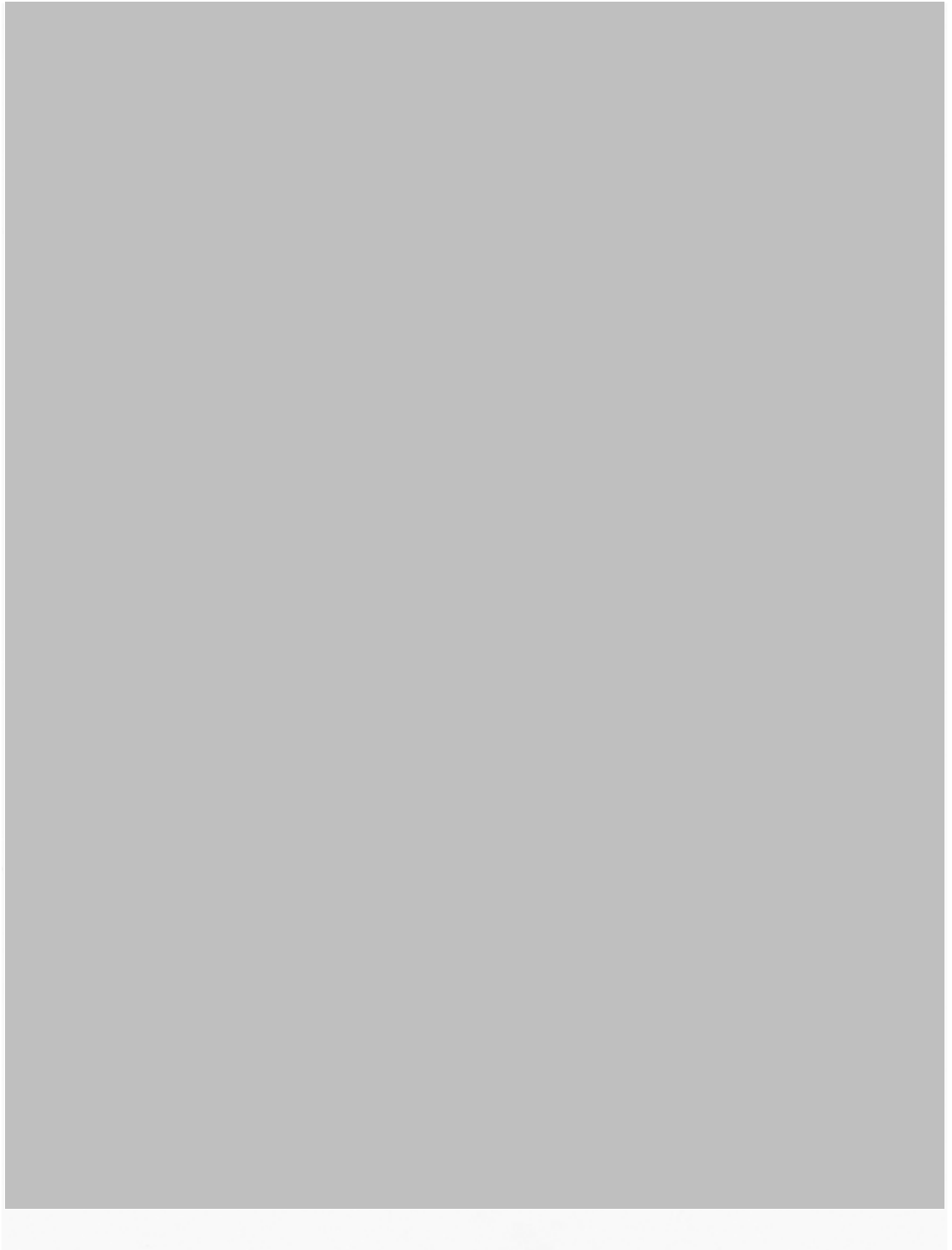
During the research, a range of new topics came up, and their examination will mark the next steps in this research project. Hence, in Austria, I was prevented from accessing archival material, told to let 'sleeping dogs lie', and had Austromineral's then-CEO assure me that there had not been any social problems whatsoever at the mines. There have been twists and turns, depending on the type of materials I could access. I was given a Sierra Leonean newspaper article from the period of the Austrian production at Marampa in which one of my key informants was accused of plain racism. On another occasion, a woman from Sierra Leone visited one of the Austrian expatriates while I was conducting my interviews. She agreed to an interview session, during which she delivered the most astonishing accounts of her perception of the Austrian venture in Marampa, which I regard as a starting point for the next stage of this research project, in which I will be aiming to deepen the topics and fields introduced in the course of this MPhil thesis.

Regarding my own position, it bears restating that my family was part of the Austrian expatriate community at Marampa and that I am myself part of the history and memories I am studying. My interest is thus both personal and academic. Interviewing former expatriates from my 'insider' position in most cases meant open doors, warm welcomes and a general openness. However, I am aware of the obstacles that come with that position. I might have evoked certain assumptions or scepticism among my

interviewees, and my own memories and experiences at the mines fed into the outcome: my own knowledge increased from one interview to the next, so that I took the role of an informant myself. Generally, I have regarded my own position with great caution, knowing that the availability of information often had more to do with my role as friend rather than as researcher. I hope with this account, to have delivered an honest, yet discreet examination of the information given.

With reference to future research on the topic the most obvious task will be the examination of the Sierra Leonean perspective, through field trips to the country, in order to conduct further research in Freetown and the Marampa area, where I aim to speak to people on the spot, particularly individuals who were involved in the Austrian exploitation project, and to identify traces of the Austrian venture in Marampa, notably in the contemporary setting of ongoing exploitation by London Mining PLC. As one methodological approach, I will, apart from the findings shown in the present study, again capitalize on existing photographs, this time by taking a selection of them to Sierra Leone/Marampa. The photographers have not always been aware of the dimension their documents were covering. Some of the facts can be found in history books, others need to be discussed with experts on the spot. Through discussing these photographs with individuals at Marampa, I hope to gain both more insight about the events depicted and a clear idea of memories and interpretations from local viewpoints. Other than that, interviews and archival research will mark further steps in my project to accomplish a broad and dialogical historiography of the Marampa project, from Delco Road to Marampa Pub – and back.

Appendix 1
LUNSAR TOWN PLAN



DELCO map used by Austromineral 1982
Source: Archive JM Hauser

Appendix 2
TIMELINE: AUSTRIA AT MARAMPA MINES

1979

June

15th - 20th | First visit of Austromineral management at Marampa

1980

March

20th | Agreement for the rehabilitation of the Marampa mines

July

★ 1st - 4th | OAU Summit in Freetown

1981

January

23rd | Supplementary Agreement signed

May

25th - 30th Siaka Stevens visits Vienna

July

1st | Official start of rehabilitation work at Marampa mines

1982

Mai

★ 1st | Elections in Sierra Leone

September

3rd | Marketing contract with VAIT

October

31st | End of assembling production plants

November

- | Dredging of Pepel channel
- 1st | Start of tests and trial runs

December

- 1st | Official start of production
- 10th | Opening
- 10th | First iron ore train to Pepel

1983

- | Plant modification (resulting in low production until March 1983)

February

- 2nd to 3rd | Western ship loader at Pepel failed
- 8th | First ship
- ★ 21st | Closure of Liberian border
- 25th | Failure of dredge motor (standstill until 6th Apr.1983)

March

First problems with magnetic separator (regular production from April 20th 1984 only)

April

Mid April | start of regular production

May

- ★ 25th | elections in Austria

July

Theft of caterpillar shaft

August

Visit of MIOMC board members at VOEST Alpine Linz (AT)

November

- Dredge motor fire
- 15th | 'Die-Man'-Racket
- 15th | STRIKE

December

- 10th - 12th | STRIKE

1984

March

20th | Train derails on its way to Pepel (Thefts of Rail Clamps)

May

13th | Main power cable fire (standstill for 2 Months)

15th | Motor of oil pump feeding one of the generators of the power station at Marampa
19th | Commencement of modifications

June

1st | Water pump was sunk
5th | Trip switch of the switch station manipulated
19th-23rd | STRIKE in Marampa and Pepel (presumably lasting for 2 weeks)

July

10th | Notification of suspension of 600 Sierra Leonean staff members

August

1st | Suspension of 600 Sierra Leonean staff members
13th | further thefts discovered
15th | End of 'Start-up and Process Optimization'
15th | Newspaper article '1600 workers "face sack"
16th - 22nd | Test period 1 week
20th | Board meeting M/M, first notification of Austromineral's withdrawal as manager
(as a 'Result of Sabotage')
30th | Visit Siaka Stevens at Marampa

October

15th - 17th | Round of discussion Austromineral/VOEST Alpine in Vienna and Linz
23rd | *Memorandum of Understanding* drafted

December

22nd | Letter: 'Resignation as Manager for Economic Reasons'

1985

January

2nd | Visit by Minister of Mines at Marampa
16th | Sierra Leone government delegation visiting Austria and meeting
Austrian Minister of Finance, Ferdinand Lacina

February

2nd | Arrival of Austromineral management team at Marampa
4th | Resignation as manager for economic reasons
16th | the last employee has left the mines

March

8th | Mine in operation by local staff
18th | Corporate Audit Report (VOEST Alpine)

June

30th | Official end of the operation

August

31st | A. Khanu: Withdrawal as Managing Director of MIOMC

October

★ 1st | Elections in Sierra Leone

21st-24th | A. Khanu in Vienna

★ not directly associated with the events at Marampa Mines

Sources: Austromineral (1979: 2); Austromineral (1980; 1983b: 2-5; 1985: 1-3); BMI (1983); Juvancic & Koch (1985); A. Khanu (1984b; 1985); S. Khanu (1984b); Neubauer (1981a: 1); Neubauer & Werneck (1984); Neubauer (1985: 2, 3, 4); OAU (1980: 99); VOEST Alpine (1983a: 3; 1983b: 4; 1984: 1); Sesay (1983:1); Sierra Leone (1982: 25); Anon (1984)

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