



AFRICA

ANOTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

NORTHERN RHODESIA'S
FINAL YEARS AND
ZAMBIA'S NATIONHOOD

ANDREW SARDANIS

ETHNOS

Africa: Another Side of the Coin

Northern Rhodesia's Final Years
and Zambia's Nationhood

Andrew Sardanis

I.B. TAURIS

LONDON • NEW YORK

Africa: Another Side of the Coin

Published in 2003 by I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd
6 Salem Road, London W2 4BU
175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010
www.ibtauris.com

In the United States of America and in Canada distributed by
Palgrave Macmillan, a division of St Martin's Press
175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010

Copyright © Andrew Sardanis, 2003

The right of Andrew Sardanis to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by the author in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in a review, this book, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

ISBN 1 86064 926 2 hardback

ISBN 1 86064 945 9 paperback

A full CIP record for this book is available from the British Library
A full CIP record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

Library of Congress catalog card: available

Project management by Steve Tribe, Andover
Printed and bound in Great Britain by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin

CONTENTS

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Map of Zambia (Northern Rhodesia)</i>	<i>x</i>
Introduction	1
PART I	
1. Cyprus, island of ‘beauty and longing’	7
2. Northern Rhodesia, land of the bwanas and... ‘boys’	19
3. ‘The roots of heaven’	27
4. The officers and... clerks	36
5. The rider mounts the horse	45
6. Strikes and boycotts	52
7. Governor Benson’s ‘democracy’	59
8. Colonies in revolt	67
9. Signs of change	73
10. The horse bucks...	79
PART II	
11. Dancing the Isaiah and the Chachacha	87
12. The ‘boys’ woo the bwanas	94
13. Back to the roots	101
14. A vital election	107
15. The reluctant candidate	113
16. Celebrations and intimidation on the hustings	117
17. Dashed hopes?	127
18. Harry rises to the occasion	130
19. The black coalition	136
20. ... and the rider is thrown off	143
21. ‘One Zambia, One Nation’	155

PART III

22. The first steps	161
23. Development or contingency planning?	167
24. Hostages to the Rhodesian sanctions	173
25. Development and dissent	182
26. UNIP in turmoil attacks the Chief Justice	190
27. Rhodesian spies and intimidation	204
28. Economic awakening	212
29. Mixing business with government	222
30. The mines under government control	229
31. Confusion and pressures	240
32. Moving on	247

PART IV

33. In King Tiny's court	255
34. 'One-party participatory democracy'!	261
35. A costly mistake	266
36. Hunted	279
37. A gentlemen's coup	285
38. Paralysis and stagnation	292
39. A rude awakening	303
40. Taking stock	308
Epilogue	321

<i>Appendix: The mining agreements</i>	326
--	-----

<i>Select bibliography</i>	333
----------------------------	-----

<i>Index</i>	334
--------------	-----

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The Church of Haghia Eirene	8
2. Maria, in later years	13
3. 'A Mining Town' by Petson Lombe	24
4. Welensky with Huggins	46
5. Sir Arthur Edward Trevor Benson	60
6. Kenneth Kaunda	62
7. With my mother and father at Bellapais Abbey, near Kyrenia	68
8. The crowning	88
9. Iain McCleod	90
10. Reginald Maudling receiving Kenneth Kaunda	93
11. Governor Hone with senior PA officials	104
12. A cartoonist's view of Tshombe	112
13. A cartoonist's view of Welensky	126
14. Butler's announcement of the Federation's dissolution	126
15. 'Super Ken' takes on ten Welenskys	126
16. Welensky breaks his oar	126
17. On the hustings, Chingola	126
18. Governor Hone, with Kaunda and Nkumbula	134
19. Danae holding Stelios	143
20. Kaunda and Nkumbula with Butler and Hone	145
21. The Princess Royal and Governor Hone	157
22. At the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Mines	223
23. Kapepwe announces the formation of the UPP	262
24. Kenneth Kaunda with Oliver Tambo in New York	286
25. Kaunda with John Vorster	287
26. President Nyerere chairing a meeting of the Frontline States	288

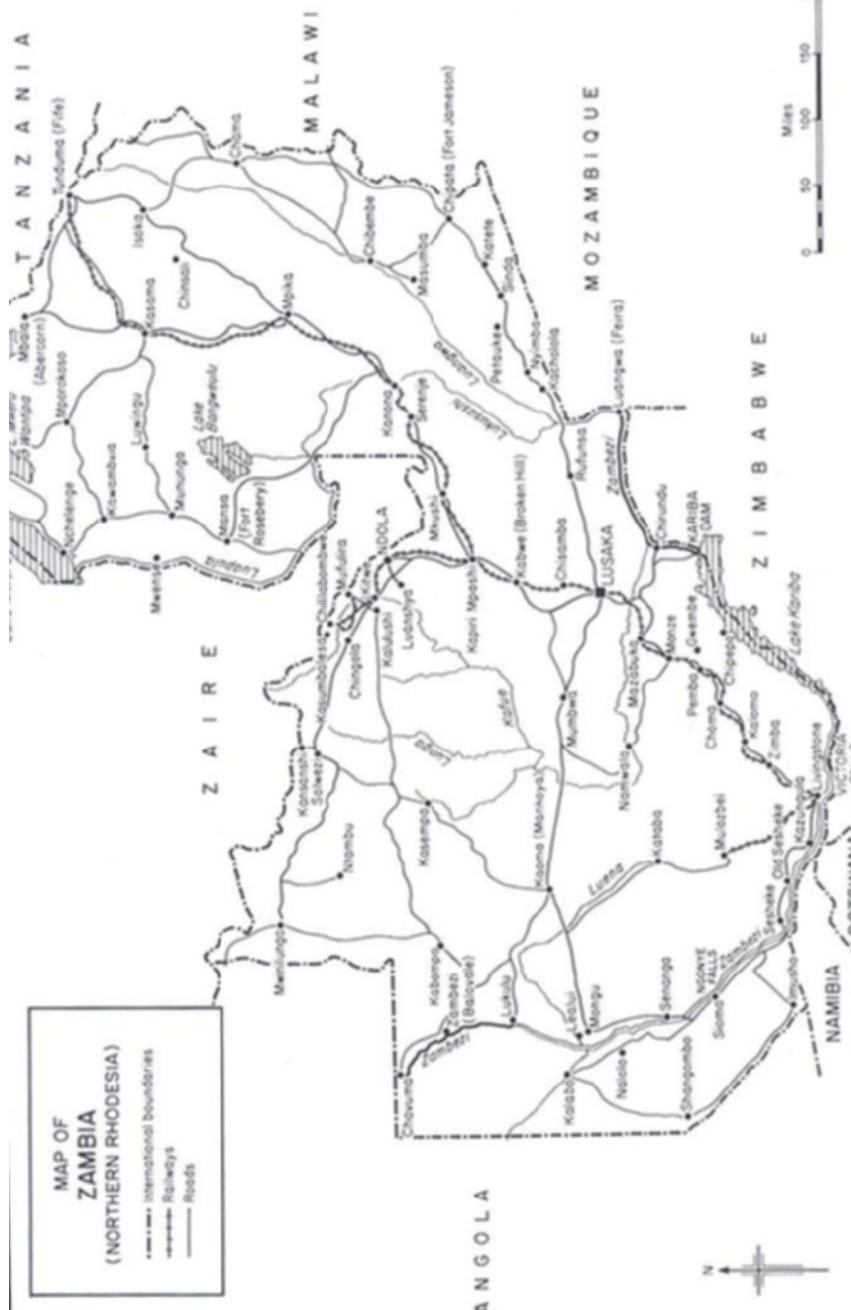
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go first to Danae for pushing me. Without her insistence this book might not have been written. Also, posthumously alas, to Tim Holmes, a friend, author and poet, who read the first draft and gave me valuable advice. And to Maybin Chisanga, a political scientist and researcher in Zambian history, for his indefatigable efforts in rummaging through archives and records to prove the brilliance or inadequacy of my memory.

Last but not least to the many visitors of Chaminuka, who in their quest for the details of Zambia's early years jogged my memory.

MAP OF
ZAMBIA
(NORTHERN RHODESIA)

--- International boundaries
--- Railways
--- Roads



*To Danae, who shared it all with stoicism and love
and
To the Lunda, the Luvale and all the people of the North Western Province, who
initiated me into life in Zambia.*

Since my life was always extremely simple people considered it dangerously complicated. No matter what I said or did, they attached a different meaning to it, always trying to divine what was hidden and undivulged.

Nikos Kazantzakis, Report to Greco

INTRODUCTION

‘Africa is a lost cause.’ This is the cynical view of the West and many other parts of the world. The old colonial powers lament the deplorable state of their ex-colonies, the misadministration, the corruption, the poverty, the famines, the wars and the unstoppable spread of AIDS. Many, some Africans included, look back to the colonial period as the golden age of Africa and regret its passing.

I do not subscribe to this view and it is naïve to glorify colonialism. But I am not about to malign it either, though it committed many crimes. I view all that as water under the bridge and accept it as a historical imperative. Basil Davidson highlights the disruption of the natural evolution of African societies as the main cause of many of the ills that followed. Not only did colonialism disrupt the old order; it also did its best to subvert the evolution of a new order in Africa. But the other side of the coin is that it accelerated the transition from the old Africa to the new world. In this sense it has played a useful part. The questions that this book attempts to explore are: how did colonialism behave in its twilight years, what was the state of Africa at independence, how has it fared so far and is there light at the end of the tunnel?

Africa: Another Side of the Coin is a memoir that covers the expiring years of Northern Rhodesia, the birth and travails of Zambia in its early years of independence, its fitful progress and the current state of the nation as seen through my eyes and personal experiences and interpreted from my point of view. Along the way, I make comparisons with the current state of other African countries, again based mainly on my own experience – over the years I have had close contacts and visited all sub-Saharan African countries, with the exception of the Horn of Africa, Guinea Bissau and Lesotho.

Today Africa consists of 53 independent countries. Not many remember that in 1956, less than half a century ago, it comprised a mere three independent countries and vast tracts of colonial empire,

which had been mainly shaped by the European powers at the Berlin conference of 1884 in order to serve their own interests, without regard to ethnic cohesion. The great majority of African countries have been nations for some 30 or 40 years only. This factor is crucial in understanding the political and economic developments on the continent. And so is the state of preparedness of the various countries at independence.

It is not my intention to discuss the early colonial adventures, or their inequities. My story is based on my personal experiences with end-of-empire colonial administrations and their unpredictable and often capricious and damaging behaviour. The colonial regimes cannot pose as examples of good governance. They were uncaring, arbitrary and dictatorial, giving colonial governors draconian powers, which some of them exercised recklessly. As a result, nearly all first-generation African leaders were 'Prison Graduates' who, in time, would not hesitate to mete out to their opponents the treatment they had received from the last governor.

Development in the colonies did not follow coherent patterns. It was haphazard, geared towards the support of metropolitan companies engaged in the exploitation of natural resources; trading companies protected against competition from non-metropolitan goods; and, in East and Southern Africa, the large numbers of white settlers. The colonial administration provided the infrastructure to service them, but cared little about the rest of the country. The peasants, sometimes pushed to the far corners of their countries, were left to fend for themselves in their age-old methods. Peasant agriculture was not a colonial priority.

Education was neglected too. Universal education was not on the agenda; secondary schools were rare and universities were rarer still – only a sprinkling of them in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. Skilled jobs were performed by imported personnel who made sure that locals remained untrained as a safeguard against competition. Similarly, the administration was entirely in the hands of metropolitan civil servants assisted by local clerks who had no prospects of rising up the administrative ladder. Right to the end, colonial societies consisted of well-to-do white urban communities and impoverished black workers with the vast majority of the local population eking a living at subsistence level in the countryside.

Nationalist movements were taboo and ruthlessly persecuted until independence became inevitable. Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice

Lumumba moved almost directly from prisoner to Prime Minister. Many others had left prison only a couple of years earlier.

That was the background of the newly independent nations. And yet expectations were high. New nations in the making in the second half of the twentieth century would surely catch up with the rest of the world in no time. Inexperienced politicians were expected to perform like statesmen, untrained civil servants were expected to run efficient government machines, unprepared and ill-equipped societies were expected to perform to standards the majority of their members had not encountered before and their economies could not possibly support. The new nations were placed on a pedestal and their every movement was watched. Naturally they did not measure up to expectations.

Most new leaders coveted their positions of power and wanted to keep them for life. They forgot that they were elected to serve their countries. Gradually they became their countries' 'big men' and applied their energies to remaining in power. One-party states, military coups and dictatorships followed. Greed replaced service to the nation and corruption permeated down to all levels of society. Public treasuries were raided for unproductive megalomaniac schemes or personal gain. Civil wars broke out and many are still raging.

National economies began to stagnate, a condition that was aggravated by the oil-price explosion of the early 1970s, which led to the collapse of the prices of primary commodities. Hardships, famines, crime and many other evils followed. The decades of the 1970s and 1980s are viewed as the dark age of post-independence Africa.

Yet those two decades were not a wasted period. It was during that time that nationhood emerged. The amalgam of disparate groups put together by the Berlin conference turned into nations. Education and training blossomed. Societies acquired self-confidence and economic nationalism evolved. Gradually locals were taking over and an indigenous middle class, non-existent at independence, formed. In time it would stand up to the arbitrariness and the excesses. And it was during the same period that we saw the first successes in the struggle for the liberation of southern Africa with Zimbabwe gaining independence in 1980. I view the travails of the 1970s and 1980s as a necessary nation-building process.

Change started in the 1990s. New constitutions were introduced and democratic elections took place. New thinking emerged. Institutions were liberalized, cumbersome controls were abolished, and economies

opened to private investment, willingly or under pressure from international institutions. Progress is agonisingly slow and there have been many reversals. But the indications are that the people have learned from the mistakes of the past.

No doubt, more mistakes lie ahead, some of them more serious perhaps, but the African societies are now wiser and more articulate and better able to cope.

Part I

1. CYPRUS, ISLAND OF ‘BEAUTY AND LONGING’*

Everything around me was permanent and would last a thousand years, when I was growing up. Or so it seemed. Cyprus was small and sparkling and beautiful, peaceful and stable and sleepy. Karavas was sleepier still. A small village of a couple of thousand people, wedged between the mountain and the sea. Small and quiet. People walked, or rode bicycles, the farmers on donkeys. No other traffic around, except the buses, which left in the morning for Nicosia, the capital 25 miles to the south, and returned in the evening. In between, the narrow streets turned into our playgrounds.

I still remember the beautiful clear light in the spring, the blue colour of the sea and the deep yellow of the *spalathi*, a thorn that blooms in February, which is early spring in that part of the world. The colours of February, the blue sky, the dark wet soil, the new green grass, the yellow spalathi, the blue sea, all are still vivid in my mind.

Later, I would find the ‘colours of February’ in Balovale, in the north-western corner of Zambia, on the banks of the Zambezi River, during the same month. There was an added element of magic in Balovale: the light blue smoke that sieved through the thatched roofs rising slowly to the sky in the heavy atmosphere that follows a tropical downpour. There is no sea, but the Zambezi is always in flood in February and it has the same blue colour, which mirrors the deep blue of the African sky.

Sunday church service was the norm, though the family was not religious. My father, when he was around, always went to church on Sundays but my mother never did. She was the Christmas, Easter, weddings and funerals type of person. I went to church most Sundays, but very seldom to our neighbourhood church. It was new and big and empty and cold and impersonal and, now that I can make a

*From Euripides’ *Bacchae*

judgement from memory, it was plain ugly and inhospitable. I always went to Haghia Eirene (Holy Peace or more probably Saint Irene – there have been a number of Irenes in the history of Byzantium and the Orthodox Church), which was a mile or so away, on a small hill at the foot of the mountain.

**I. The Church of
Haghia Eirene: 'Small
and dark, it smelt of
incense and echoed
with Byzantine chant.'**



It was not a big mountain, a couple of thousand feet high, but it rose steeply up the small valley that separated it from the sea. Haghia Eirene was on the first foothill. I do not know how old it was but it was small and dark, smelt of incense and echoed with Byzantine chant. It had a very large door looking over the valley all the way to the sea and that is where I always stood during church services. It had very few pews and children were never allowed to use them. I stood there because I could gaze outside and I do not think I paid too much attention to the service. Yet I still remember an amazingly large part of the liturgy, especially the hymns and the chanting, during Lent and the Holy Week vespers, which are beautifully poetic, even though I stopped going to church after the age of 16, except for weddings and funerals.

It was a secure and happy childhood. My aunt lived across the street and so did my cousin, with her daughter who was a couple of years younger than I. We were the pets of the family.

My father was a teacher and, as far as I could tell, he must have taught just about everybody in the village at that time. Later, before I reached my teens, he was promoted to headmaster and was transferred

elsewhere. The family stayed in Karavas and my mother would visit him from time to time. We, my two older sisters and I, stayed at home in the care of the aunt across the street.

He came home during the long school holidays of Christmas, Easter and the summer. He was a restless sort of person. No village coffee shop, backgammon and small talk for him. He would go for long walks to the sea and the mountain, alone. When I was old enough he would take me along. He spoke very little, but he knew a great deal about the trees and the thorn bushes and the grass and the crops and the soil and the wind and, sometimes, he would talk to me about them. He probably was just talking to himself, but aloud, as if he was talking to me. I was too young to care and I found those walks long and tiring, their main attraction being that I was with him. But I do know now that he passed on to me his love for nature.

Schools closed for summer in June and did not open again until the middle of September. Summers were very hot, but that did not seem to worry us. We spent most of the time swimming in the sea. The competition amongst us boys was how many village landmarks we could spot from the sea. The village was spread on the slopes of the mountain, so in order to see the lower parts we had to swim a long distance from the shore, maybe a couple of miles, which meant quite a few hours. The sea is warm in the eastern Mediterranean and even though we stayed in the water for hours, I do not remember ever feeling uncomfortably cold.

I 'met' King Farouk during one of those jaunts. His yacht was anchored outside the Kyrenia harbour and we swam to it. He was in the sea, swimming with his friends and his sister, who had the most beautiful emerald green eyes I have ever seen.

At 12, my father sent me to the same school where he had been some 30 or so years earlier, an old-fashioned classical Greek Gymnasium. Ancient Greek from day one with Latin added after the second year. From Aesop's fables, to the Orators, Xenophon, Aristotle, Thucydides, Homer, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Sophocles, Plato. The history of the ancient world, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Greeks, the Romans. The Byzantines, the Arab invasions, the crusades, the Knights Templar, the Lusignians, the Genoese and the Venetians, who followed Richard the Lionheart to Cyprus and left behind so many monuments and much of their language in the Cyprus dialect. And afterwards the Turks and the history of

Europe and the Renaissance and the Reformation and the French Revolution. And, of course, the Arts and the modern thinkers and all the usual subjects that go with a good old-fashioned school. We learned English, as much as we learned French, but we learned more about France and Europe than we learned about England. England and its history did not feature in the curriculum of our school, another form of protest against the British occupation, I suppose.

When I think back on the curriculum, I am amazed that we managed to cover so much. It was during the Second World War. Teachers were scarce and very old and classes were big. Fifty to 55 boys was the norm. And yet we learned and were educated. Lessons lasted from early morning to two in the afternoon, Monday to Saturday. And afterwards we spent long hours in the School and the Public Libraries, or, the athletically inclined, at the playgrounds.

It was a self-supported school and my father must have allocated a large portion of the family income to keep me there. The alternative was the English school; government subsidized, much cheaper, lessons mainly in English – sure to make you pass matriculation, the British high school exam of those days, which, in Cyprus, guaranteed a career in the civil service. But the English school was sneered at by self-respecting patriotic Cypriots like my father. His view was that boys who went to such schools passed exams but did not get educated.

Cyprus was a British colony but it was administered more like India than like the African colonies I came to know later. The economy was in the hands of the Cypriots. The British were the ruling class. They were very few, just enough to control the Government. They held all the top posts. They very rarely mixed with the Cypriots, except the token few they appointed as their advisors. That was their way of keeping in touch and hearing what they wanted to hear, a condition I later encountered in the Provincial Administration of Northern Rhodesia, the colonial name of Zambia.

No political movements were allowed and no elections. There was no Legislature. The highest Cypriot civic bodies were the half-dozen or so municipalities. The mayors were appointed by the Governor and so were the councillors.

Talking about *Enosis* (union with Greece, the bee in the Greek Cypriot bonnet), was taboo when I was growing up. In October 1931, Sir Ronald Storrs, the then Governor (who became Governor of Northern Rhodesia after Cyprus), had dissolved the Legislative Council

and sent most of its members, and two bishops, to exile in Greece. The reason was that the Legislative Council refused to pass his budget because it included heavy taxation measures. The Cypriots had only been relieved from paying the 'Turkish Tribute' a couple of years earlier. They took it very badly when they were confronted, in 1931, with heavy customs duty increases and a levy on the salaries of government officials, which Sir Ronald devised in order to balance the budget, without having to call for a contribution from the British Government.

A Turkish tribute had been imposed on the Cypriots since 1878 when the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire 'assigned' Cyprus to Britain as its reward for an undertaking to defend Turkey against possible Russian occupation of its Asian territories under the 'Convention of Defensive Alliance'. It amounted to £92,799 11s 3d per annum – a very large sum for an impoverished island in the nineteenth century. The irony was that the tribute was never paid to Turkey but to the bondholders of the 1855 Ottoman Loan, which the British Government had guaranteed and on which Turkey had defaulted. The payment of the tribute continued even after the annexation of Cyprus as a Crown Colony in November 1915, despite repeated protests from the Greek members of the Legislative Council. Britain may have used the Turkish alliance with Germany in the First World War as the excuse to annex Cyprus, but conveniently carried on collecting this 'Turkish Tribute' thus reducing its own liability under the guarantee it gave to the bondholders.

The Greek members of the Legislative Council, despite their strong feelings, would not, normally, have been able to block the passing of the 1931 budget. The Composition of the Legislature had been ingeniously devised so that its 12 Greek members were balanced by nine officials and three Turks, who, as Storrs says in his memoirs (*Orientations*), were always relied upon to vote with the officials. As the Governor, who presided, had a casting vote the Government was always able to carry the day. However, in 1931 one of the Turkish members (Storrs contemptuously calls him a 'token' Greek) voted with the Greeks and the budget was defeated. It was imposed later by 'Order in Council', which caused protests and demonstrations, followed by riots that led to the burning of Government House in Nicosia and the District Commissioner's Office in Limassol. A state of emergency was declared, accompanied by the usual measures that were later to be imposed on colony after colony until the final dissolution of the British Empire. (In Cyprus apart from the usual curfew, these measures provided that the

Greek flag should no longer be flown and that church bells should not be rung without the permission of the District Commissioner!)

Greek Cypriots were not allowed to talk of Enosis or fly the Greek flag. But everything we learned at school made us proud to be Greek, the Greeks had laid the foundations of Western civilization and surely, one day soon, Greece would be restored to its rightful position in the world with Cyprus at her side. In any case the British would soon be thrown out of Cyprus – Hitler would see to that, we believed.

And then, in October 1940, Greece rejected Mussolini's ultimatum to surrender – the first European country to stand up against the Nazi-Fascist alliance of Hitler and Mussolini. Patriotic feelings took a 180-degree turn. Great enthusiasm and national pride followed the early military successes of Greece against Italy in Albania. The British felt sufficiently embarrassed to allow free expression and the free flying of the Greek flag. We were now allies after all. Surely the British would do their duty after the war and allow Enosis in appreciation of Greece's heroic stand against the Axis.

It did not come to pass. For reasons typical of their thinking at that time the British considered Cyprus important to their strategic interests in the eastern Mediterranean and announced that they would never part with it. Sure, they allowed municipal elections immediately after the war – there is no need to mention that all the appointed incumbents were defeated. They also allowed the bishops to come back and to elect an archbishop to replace the one who died while they were in exile. But that was that. No constitutional reforms. No Legislature. Rule by the Governor in Council – a Council of British Civil Servants and a few convenient Cypriot appointees.

There was no Greek-Turkish problem then. The two races got along. They intermingled; they did business with each other. Intermarriages rarely happened and they were more than frowned upon, because of the fundamental differences between the two religions – Christianity and Islam. Karavas had no Turks, but Turkish produce vendors visited regularly. In the summer they slept in the open, at the market.

Probably 20 per cent of the population of Nicosia was Turkish. They had their own mosques and schools, because of their different religion and language. But we attended the same football matches, went to the same cafes, tea salons and promenades. We went to their *baïrams* (religious fairs) and they came to ours. We mixed with Turkish boys. They were circumcised; we were not. We compared notes.

I graduated in 1948, at the age of 17, the second-best boy in class. Cyprus had no university and my father could not afford to send me abroad. I had to earn a living and started applying for jobs. I was interviewed by Barclays and was asked why I had chosen banking as a career. I responded that I did not want to be a banker – I just wanted a job to save enough money to go to university. Not surprisingly I did not get the job. On the recommendation of Maria, my guardian and mentor since I moved to Nicosia, and my good results, I got a job with a Greek-language newspaper whose title translates to 'New Cyprus Guardian'.



2. Maria, in later years.

Maria was an extraordinary woman, particularly for Cyprus in those years – attractive, self-confident and arrogantly unconventional with sparkling wit and intelligence. She was connected to my family through her first husband, Yangos, a music teacher. They used to spend part of the summer in Karavas staying with my uncle whose wife was Yangos's sister. Maria was very fond of me, from when I was very small. I must have been only five or six years old when she sent me on an errand, to carry a message to a neighbour. I found the reply so pretentious that I mimicked it word for word, when I returned. Maria loved it and often talked about it in later life.

She used to paint as a hobby in those early days, and many a time she took me along to carry her colours and keep her company. The light in Karavas can be too bright in the summer and I remember her frustration when one day she forgot to take her sunglasses off while painting a landscape near the sea. The beautiful blue of the sea had turned into a bluish grey. Years later when she took up painting seriously, she exhibited that piece and we had a good laugh when an amateur art critic writing in one of the newspapers referred to 'the unusual, for Cyprus, grey sea'. Unfortunately, that painting has now been lost. It was burnt, together with her house and all its contents, during one of the inter-communal bouts of violence in the 1960s. The pity of it is that the painting depicted an ancient lighthouse, near a jetty in Karavas. The jetty and the lighthouse no longer exist. They were blown up by the Army during the war, together with all other coastal facilities that might have facilitated a German invasion.

Her marriage did not last long. When I moved to Nicosia she was going through the Byzantine divorce process of the Cyprus Orthodox Church. She was living alone and I used to spend most of my spare time at her home. It was an extraordinary house: an old, Ottoman-style *konak* (mansion) furnished with entirely local furniture, divans and embroidered cushions, reed chairs and peasant tables, some of them collected, others made to her design.

She was an avid collector of everything Cypriot. From ancient pottery to local handicraft, chests, silverware, bronzes, embroidery, folk clothes, everything she could lay her hands on. She inherited from her father a family estate in Tymbou, a village about 15 miles east of Nicosia, where she spent a lot of time. I guess that Tymbou provided most of her income then, which could not have been much. (She later subdivided her house and rented the bottom part.) But, income apart, Tymbou was an inexhaustible source for her collection. The village was half-Turkish and she made friends with most of the Turkish farmers, who used to bring to her every item of antiquity they stumbled on when ploughing their fields or digging wells or foundations for one building or another.

Maria had a striking presence. She chose only raw silk fabric weaved on village looms for her dresses, which she modelled after her own version of Greek 'pure' style, a mixture of ancient, Byzantine and modern. As the colour of raw silk is off-white, she always wore a red scarf – 'to give her face some colour' she used to say. Needless to say, she never made up, but she washed her face only with rosewater. Her

circle of friends was very small – mainly artists, particularly amateur painters, all much younger than she. She was in her mid-thirties then and the people around her were more than friends, they were her acolytes.

Her second marriage was a perfect fit. She married Neoptolemos, an architect, some years her junior. Neoptolemos, also an amateur painter, had an insatiable curiosity and thirst for knowledge. He had a very sharp mind and unbelievable powers of observation. He used to lament that people have eyes but most of them do not see. Maria was more cynical. She used to quote from *Oedipus Rex* that most people are 'blind of the eyes and of the ears and of wit'. Their interests were the same and they kept exploring and re-exploring Cyprus. They became an authority on all remote churches and monasteries, their architecture and their frescos and mosaics, and on small remote villages and their architecture, their way of life, their crafts and their products. In later years, Neoptolemos founded the Organization of Cyprus Architectural Heritage, initiating the documentation of many of these activities and publishing a number of remarkable booklets on the subject. One of these booklets illustrates and explains the crafts and the craftsmen and their tools that made those small communities completely self-sufficient.

In the early 1980s they visited us in Chaminuka, our Zambian home. They were like children on a picnic. They marvelled at everything they saw: the villages, the markets, the bush, the wildlife, the birds, the people. And last but not least Chaminuka, my very own 'folly', conceived, designed and named after a village in the Kabompo District of Zambia that I loved when I was young. I have heard many praises of Chaminuka over the years, but their approbation was the most gratifying.

Neoptolemos approved of Chaminuka because it fitted perfectly into his architectural philosophy. Like all Zambian villages, Chaminuka fits into its surroundings and becomes part of it, as much as everything around it is part of Chaminuka. And the landscape, the horizon and the sky above, are all an extension of the interior. The African village fascinated him. He observed that the huts are not houses but bedrooms and that people spend most of their day under the sky or in the *insaka*, the covered area which has a roof but no walls and where people sit and chat on rainy days or when they have nothing else to do. This arrangement, combined with Zambia's mild climate and beautiful sky, made Zambian peasants one of the luckiest people on the planet, Neoptolemos declared. He was particularly impressed with the

ingenuity of the construction of the roofs of the insakas, which he examined in detail. In villages, the roofs are built with poles selected to end in a hook. The poles are then hooked together and tied with bark ropes. A fine grass thatch completes the structure, which becomes watertight and durable.

Neoptolemos and Maria are both dead now. They bequeathed their home and all their collections, which include all Maria's paintings – she exhibited frequently but refused to sell, she only gave some to favourite friends – to a foundation under their name, which is now a museum in Nicosia.

But back to my first ever job with the *New Cyprus Guardian*. Owner and managing editor: a near-deaf septuagenarian. Editor in chief: his son-in-law. Those two and Petros, one of the best journalists in Cyprus at that time, comprised the entire editorial staff of the four-page daily broadsheet, with me, the trainee, all of 17 years old. Being thrown in at the deep end helps – if you can manage to float. Everybody had to do a little a bit of everything. We gathered local news by going around on a bicycle. That was mainly my job. There were no automatic telephones in those days. You had to ring the exchange and give the number to an operator who connected you. That meant that the girl at the exchange could listen in on the conversation if she felt curious. So telephones, which were few in any case, were used with caution. There were no backup gadgets either, like there are today. You had to concentrate and get the story right the first time. If you missed something you were lost. You had to learn to focus and improvise – qualities that helped very much in later life.

The paper was fiercely nationalistic and very rightwing. I was then, as I am now, an unrepentant liberal by birth and by my father's and Maria's influence. But somehow I got along. My seniors liked me and allowed me a lot of initiative. Even when I jubilantly announced in banner headlines that Makarios was the favourite to win the election for Archbishop and more than insinuated the paper's approval of his candidacy in my reporting, I did not get a reprimand. I got a lecture instead on how the newspaper should remain impartial in its reporting and not show that it was supporting one candidate over another. It was up to the editor to do that. I knew that what the old man was saying was correct, but I felt that he might be lukewarm towards Makarios. I wanted Makarios to win, I was young and enthusiastic and I had been alone putting the paper to bed the night before.

I enjoyed my two years with the newspaper. It gave me the opportunity to penetrate and comprehend life in Cyprus. Social turmoil had started after the war. The trade union movement became very strong and very militant. The leftwing parties they supported won most of the municipal elections. That, and the civil war that was raging in Greece at the time, with the Greek communists trying to seize power, emboldened them to embark upon exorbitant wage demands and other privileges.

There were strikes and unrest and acts of sabotage against employers. These were followed by arrests and trials and I remember spending days on end in the High Court. All senior judges were British, with the exception of one Greek Cypriot. Trials were conducted in English and the interpretation process made the sessions long and tedious, but as my English was not very hot I could not complain. In any case it gave me time to write my piece while the translation went on.

Where I got into trouble was when I attended the hearing of a Habeas Corpus application by Jewish immigrants en route to Palestine. The British navy used to intercept their boats and force them to land in Larnaca, where they were held in camps, until the major powers decided what to do with them. The court proceedings were conducted only in English. No Greek interpretation was necessary. The language was beyond my range; the legal argument was completely above me. I was in despair. During one of the breaks I confessed my predicament to the Reuters correspondent. He was very kind and gave me a summary, which saved the day.

It was a good life even though working hours were irregular. Apart from our main office in the town centre, we had a small office in the printing works, where we worked until after midnight, when we finalized the front page and the presses started to roll. The foreign news, from Reuters by cable, were delivered by special messenger two or three times during the course of the evenings and subjects had to be selected and translated. We also listened to the Athens radio and the BBC Greek broadcasts for details of the Greek civil war, which was raging at the time. The first BBC broadcast in Greek was at 8pm, and it became the signal of the evening vigil at the printing works.

Working in the evening was always hardest during summer, when Cypriots live mainly outdoors. My friends would spend their evenings at open-air restaurants and cafés while I was sweating in the stifling heat of the office. I joined them one evening on my way to work. It was early and I had enough time for a quick ouzo, the aniseed

smelling, milky-looking drink, which is served with *meze* (titbits) in that part of the world during summer. I got to the office in time for the first broadcast. But halfway through, I fell asleep. Petros sent me home. I have never touched ouzo since. The smell of it is enough to make me sick.

Together with Petros we started a monthly satirical magazine. It was a kind of extension of a weekly satirical column I ran every Friday in the *New Cyprus Guardian* under the pseudonym 'Ichnelates', which would translate into 'tracker' as it applies to tracking animals by their footprints in African safaris. I do not now remember the name of the magazine or how many pages it was. My mother kept copies at the family house in Karavas, but they were all lost after the Turkish occupation in 1974: the house, my books and sadly my father's library. But I do remember the front page of the first edition.

The Government of Cyprus was making a song and a dance about the successful completion of their campaign to eradicate malaria from Cyprus. Our front page was covered by a cartoon showing the map of Cyprus with 'Enosis' as a mosquito flying over it and the British Governor screaming, in badly accented Greek, at the head of the official eradication campaign, who was standing sheepishly in front of him: 'You have not managed to exterminate this mosquito.' The amusing thing was that our cartoonist, as well as the head of the official eradication campaign, were Turks.

I was not earning very much, but I had many privileges. Because of my job, I attended almost all important events and functions. I was up to date with everything that went on. I had free access to the theatre and I attended many remarkable performances given by major Greek theatre groups, which used to visit Cyprus in those days. Maria and her artist friends were still around. I had access to important people, I felt important. I joined one of Nicosia's top clubs. I had many friends and I was well liked.

But I became restless...

2. NORTHERN RHODESIA, LAND OF THE BWANAS AND... 'BOYS'

The plane landed in Fort Jameson (Chipata), the Capital of the Eastern Province of Northern Rhodesia, on 29 October 1950. It was mid-afternoon. The door opened and the intense October heat hit me in the face as I came down the stairs. I was the only passenger to get off at Fort Jameson. I looked around me and saw that we had landed on a grass strip. Until then I thought that planes could land only on paved runways. I looked for the terminal and saw a thatched hut. I panicked. I was now 4,000 miles away from home in the middle of nowhere. I felt lost and abandoned. I wanted to get back on that plane.

By the time all this had sunk in, the door had closed and the pilot was starting the engines. I saw a flame coming out of the rear of the engines and rejoiced. Surely they had to abort the flight and all of them come out until the plane was repaired. I would go with them to Salisbury (Harare) and make my way back to Cyprus. But the flame died instantly and the plane took off.

I picked up my bag and went to the hut. A Northern Rhodesian police inspector was carrying out the duties of immigration officer. He stamped my passport and I asked him where I could get a taxi to take me to the railway station. His eyes almost popped out with astonishment. He explained that there were no taxis in Fort Jameson and that the nearest railway station was some 350 miles away, at Lusaka, the country's capital, a couple of days' bus ride, which he did not recommend.

I was on my way to visit my sister who had married the year before and moved to Northern Rhodesia, where her husband had settled just before the war. They lived in Chingola, a mining town on the Copperbelt and they had just had their first child. Stelios, my brother-in-law, had talked of the high salaries paid by the mines. Surely if I worked for a couple of years in Northern Rhodesia, I could save enough money to go to university, I thought.

The family bought me the tickets and gave me money for the journey. First leg: Nicosia-Khartoum, some eight hours flight in a Cyprus

Airways Dakota. I was to catch the BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation) Argonaut for Nairobi the next day, but the plane did not arrive from London. I had a good time in Khartoum. I made friends with the crew of Cyprus Airways, who spent a couple of days there before their return. They were familiar with the city and we explored the area. I still remember the colonial splendour of the hotel Nile, overlooking the river, where we stayed.

The Argonaut arrived two days late, so I missed my connection from Nairobi to Ndola, the capital of the Copperbelt, where the airport serving the province was located. That was my destination, some 70 miles away from Chingola, where my relatives would be waiting to meet me. There were no scheduled flights between Nairobi and Ndola and nobody knew when the next flight would be. BOAC put me up at the Avenue Hotel and promised to get in touch as soon as they heard of a plane going to Northern Rhodesia.

Nairobi was a very small town in those days. The town centre was only a few blocks and after I explored them on foot there was very little to do except sit on the veranda of the Avenue hotel and read. How long would this last? A couple of days later BOAC phoned to say that a plane would be going to Salisbury, the capital of Southern Rhodesia, via Fort Jameson, which was described to me as a town in Northern Rhodesia. I had never heard of Fort Jameson, I do not think that the travel clerk had heard of it either. He showed it to me on the map. I was anxious to get to my destination. 'Surely I could catch the train to Ndola, from there,' I said. He agreed!

The airstrip police inspector gave me a lift to Fort Jameson's Crystal Springs hotel. An elderly English couple was running the place and I immediately confessed that I had very little money left. But I was sure that if I phoned my sister, I could have it remitted the next day. Phone? There were no telephones in Fort Jameson. And in any case, the bank operated only on Thursdays, when a clerk flew on the Beaver, the ancient single engine plane that flew from Lusaka in the morning and flew back in the afternoon.

I arrived in Lusaka on the Beaver. The elderly couple, whose names I am ashamed to confess I forget, not only took care of me in their hotel, but they also lent me the money to buy an air ticket to Lusaka where another cultural shock lay in waiting. Lusaka had no sewer system in those days and at the Grand Hotel, where I spent the night, the

toilets were disgusting, old fashioned 'night soil' buckets. What had I got myself into? Another set of doubts about my move.

Chingola was a bustling town in the making. Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines Ltd, the mining company, part of the Anglo American group, was about to start surface mining at the Nchanga Open Pit. The method involved excavating the 'overburden' in order to reach the ore body from the surface instead of digging the traditional mining shaft. The Nchanga Open Pit was expected to produce 200,000 tons of refined copper a year for 50 years. As the ore body lay underneath the settlement, the entire Commercial Centre and European township had to shift to a new location.

It was a developer's dream-come-true. There were roads to be built, shops, offices, houses, schools, warehouses, everything that makes a town. But as there were no developers or contractors everybody tried their hand. Bricklayers and carpenters became building contractors. Mechanics turned to transporters, their fleets of dilapidated trucks bought at public works or army surplus auctions. A whole new class of entrepreneurs and chancers was in the making.

They were all white of course, English, Greek, Italian, Yugoslav and some South Africans, though the South Africans worked mainly on the Mines. The shopkeepers were all Jewish from various parts of the Diaspora: Lithuanian, Russian, Polish, Sephardic and even Cockney. Chingola was an Indian-free town then, but later the Solanki family managed to build a number of shops in the first-class trading centre. The town had two shopping centres set a couple of miles apart. They were euphemistically called first and second-class shopping areas, instead of white and black or African and European. Blacks were not allowed inside a shop in the first-class shopping centre. They could buy from there, if they wanted something specific, but they were served from the back yard, through a hatch in the wall. Some years later, a black friend, Robinson Puta, paid for a bed at the hatch and refused to go inside to collect it. He insisted that it be given to him through the hatch where his money had passed. But that was in the late 1950s. No such cheek in the year I arrived.

Stelios was in the transport business. He was in partnership with his uncle and stepfather, both motor mechanics. Their company was called Northern Transport and their main income came from woodcutting. Cutting down the trees was a thriving industry that destroyed the forest in order to supply firewood to the mine for electricity generation. It

was done with the approval of the Northern Rhodesian Government and under the 'blind' supervision of the Forestry Department. It employed, in Chingola alone, some 7,000 black workers. With their axes, they cut the trees to uniform size logs to feed the furnaces. Four or five years later the Anglo American Corporation, the owners of the mine, started importing coal from the Wankie (Hwange) colliery in Southern Rhodesia and this activity came to an end. But the forest never recovered.

Woodcutters, like all black workers, were earning 17 shillings and sixpence for 30 completed working days. If they worked without interruption they earned a bonus of two shillings and sixpence on top. In other words a black worker earned £1 (\$3) every five weeks. In addition he received one pound of maize (corn) flour for every day he worked. This was distributed every Friday and it became one of my tasks when I took up my new job.

The community of Chingola was complex. For a start, there were two distinct administrative entities: Nchanga and Chingola. Nchanga was the name of the mine and the town where all the miners lived, and was administered by the mining company. Chingola was the civilian town, so to speak. It had its own district commissioner and its own management board, appointed, I believe, by the Government of Northern Rhodesia.

Each town was subdivided into black and white areas separated by huge tracts of no man's land. In a corner of Chingola's no man's land there were a few houses for the 'Coloureds' – people of mixed blood. Some years later when the Solankis, the first Indian family who came to live in Chingola, bought a house in the European township, the residents of the street petitioned the Town Management Board not to allow them to live amongst the whites. The whites of Northern Rhodesia did not like the Indians and the whites of Chingola saw the Solankis as the vanguard of an Indian invasion. They wanted them to live in a separate area as happened in other towns with large Indian communities. But the Solankis, being the only Indian family then, stayed amongst the whites and the other Indians that followed did the same.

In the late 1950s, when the Government decided to build the first black secondary school in Chingola near their quarters, the Coloureds were up in arms. They did not want black boys and girls around them. Aaron Milner, their leader, who spearheaded the protest, later became a very prominent nationalist politician and held various important ministerial portfolios in the first black government of Zambia.

There was complete racial separation between blacks and whites. They met at work, the whites as masters and the blacks as servants. But in everything else they had a separate existence. African shops, European shops; African schools, European schools; African hospital, European hospital. For entertainment, the whites had a huge mine club complex with restaurant, bar, ballroom and library. It was surrounded by playing fields: tennis, cricket, football, rugby, hockey and bowling greens. In another location they had a golf club reputed to be amongst the best in southern Africa. All built and supported by the mining company.

The Nchanga Mine Cinema remained in the old town for some years until the company built a new one near the Mine Club. It was for Europeans only and in those days the performance would end with the British national anthem, everybody standing to attention. In the late 1950s, the Coloureds were allowed to use it, but they were allocated seats right in front of the screen. A few empty rows formed a 'cordon sanitaire' separating them from the Europeans. This caused amusing incidents. John, the Cypriot baker of Chingola, was very dark as some Cypriots can be. He discovered that whenever he bought tickets for the cinema, he and his wife would be sitting with the Coloureds. He solved the problem by sending his wife to buy the tickets. She, unlike most Greeks, was very blonde and could not be mistaken for a coloured.

For the blacks the mining company built welfare halls, beerhalls and a football stadium. I do not remember a football match between blacks and whites. But the beerhalls for blacks – mainly open sheds – were always full. People drank a lot of opaque beer, made from corn flour. It was heavily advertised as 'food and drink'.

These were not the only differences. The houses where the whites lived, also built by the mine, were spacious bungalows on plots that were close to a quarter of an acre. They had hibiscus hedges, bougainvillea, manicured lawns, flowers and shrubs and fruit trees. Many had vegetable gardens. The large families of black workers were crammed in one or two-room shacks. These have since been demolished and replaced. But in my memory they had no windows. They had no electricity, or water. Women and children had to fetch water from communal taps. Ablution blocks and toilets were also communal.

In Chingola, the whites built their own homes. The blacks lived in Chiwempala where the Town Management Board built houses for them in the same style as those of Nchanga. It also appointed the Location Superintendent, who had absolute authority over the way they lived.