

Rethinking African Politics

A History of Opposition in Zambia

Miles Larmer

RETHINKING AFRICAN POLITICS

Empires and the Making of the Modern World, 1650–2000

Series Editors:

Philippa Levine, University of Texas at Austin, USA

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This monograph series seeks to explore the complexities of the relationships among empires, modernity and global history. In so doing, it wishes to challenge the orthodoxy that the experience of modernity was located exclusively in the west, and that the non-western world was brought into the modern age through conquest, mimicry and association. To the contrary, modernity had its origins in the interaction between the two worlds. In this sense the imperial experience was not an adjunct to western modernization, but was constitutive of it. Thus the origins of the defining features of modernity – the bureaucratic state, market economy, governance, and so on – have to be sought in the imperial encounter, as do the categories such as race, sexuality and citizenship which constitute the modern individual.

This necessarily complicates perspectives on the nature of the relationships between the western and non-western worlds, nation and empire, and ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’. To examine these issues the series presents work that is interdisciplinary and comparative in its approach; in this respect disciplines including economics, geography, literature, politics, intellectual history, anthropology, science, legal studies, psychoanalysis and cultural studies have much potential, and will all feature. Equally, we consider race, gender and class vital categories to the study of imperial experiences.

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Rethinking African Politics

A History of Opposition in Zambia

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To Laura, at last

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Series Editors' Foreword

We are delighted to include Miles Larmer's important new study of post-colonial politics in Africa as part of this series. Lucid and wide-ranging, it provides a penetrating analysis of the political landscape of Zambia in the years following independence. Eschewing the formalism of nationalist and reductive Marxist narratives, and drawing upon previously closed archival material and oral testimony, Larmer demonstrates an acute sensitivity to the legacy of imperial rule and the complexities of post-colonial power struggles in Zambia, but in ways which relate to the course of sub-Saharan African politics more widely.

By giving due attention to the role of opposition movements, the study helps to fill a gap in the contemporary historiography of modern Africa. Too often research has focused on the activities and ideologies of governing nationalist parties in comparison with which opposition parties are seen as marginal and, because many are based on regional or tribal loyalties, regressive, standing in the way of modernization and development. Zambia may have been governed by Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP) for 27 years after independence but the party's title belied the existence of opposition to its rule which was far stronger and more diverse than has often been recognized. In reality, the authority of the UNIP was constantly under challenge from a variety of movements which in the post-colonial moment had abandoned the rather fragile unity of opposition to colonial rule to pursue their own distinct political, cultural and economic agendas.

In Zambia, as elsewhere, colonialism had promoted modernizing impulses while simultaneously interacting with diverse societies in ways which created and sustained divisions within the nationalist movement. In the aftermath of independence notions of nationhood and national interest were new and seemingly intangible, making it virtually impossible to create a unified and unifying vision for the future. This was further complicated by the uneven development of particular regions which had empowered certain ethno-regional interests in the struggle for control of the nation. For those who assumed power, it was all too easy to view many of the opposition forces which sprang up as stumbling blocks in the path toward modernization, or tendencies which threatened to turn the clock back to a time of sectional and regional conflict based on allegedly backward and irrational ethnic and tribal belief systems, and respond with more authoritarian forms of rule. Much as Kaunda sought

to deny the legitimacy of ethnic and regional loyalties, and to stall opposition by imposing a one-party state, the UNIP was never able to speak fully in the 'national interest', and eventually fell.

Anyone familiar with the development of post-colonial Africa will recognize the more general salience of these arguments. Larmer concludes, however, with an even more challenging and intriguing proposition. If we choose to reject nationalist narratives of the political and economic development of independent African states, then what is the alternative? An acknowledgment of the greater plurality of African voices can provide a more complete understanding of the course of political struggle, but is such an approach compromised by an adherence to the same meta-narrative of the overthrow of colonial rule and its attendant chronologies? Perhaps there is need to step back a little and listen more attentively to the continuities and discontinuities found in often conflicting stories told by sections of the population within and without the artificially-constructed boundaries of African states. We await further work with much anticipation.

Philippa Levine and John Marriott

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The research and writing was completed while I held posts in the United Kingdom, in the history departments of Keele University, Sheffield Hallam University and (most recently) the University of Sheffield; each provided a supportive intellectual environment in which to pursue my research. I am particularly grateful for the granting of research leave by Sheffield Hallam University in 2007 and the University of Sheffield in 2010, the latter providing the time necessary for the completion of this manuscript.

My thanks also go to John Marriott and Philippa Levine, the editors of this excellent book series, as well as to the editors at Ashgate for their diligence in preparing this volume for publication.

Archival and interview research has been carried out in a number of countries, most particularly Zambia and South Africa. Marja Hinfelaar of the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) (and so much else besides) provided, as she has done to dozens of researchers in Zambia, a degree of support without which the completion of the research would not have been possible. She, together with Giacomo Macola, has stimulated historical research in Zambia to an extraordinary degree, specifically opening up the UNIP archives, enabling the collection of the papers of former politicians at the NAZ, and establishing the Lembani Trust, which is publishing affordable historical books for the Zambian public (http://www.cas.ed.ac.uk/community/the_lembani_trust). Intellectual exchanges and collaboration with Giacomo Macola has been vital to the development of the approach taken in this volume; I am particularly grateful to him for making primary research materials available and for allowing me to adapt our jointly written article into the chapter on the Mushala rebellion. A number of Zambians also provided vital assistance, most notably the late

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Earlier versions of the research on the United Progressive Party and the Mushala Rebellion (the latter an article co-written by Giacomo Macola) were published in the *International Journal of African Historical Studies*. An earlier version of research on the 1980 coup attempt was published in Jan-Bart Gewald et al.'s *One Zambia, Many Histories*. I am grateful for the comments and criticisms of the editors and anonymous reviewers of those publications, which have substantially improved the finalised text. Papers based on this research have been presented at conferences and seminars held at the Universities of Pretoria, Cape Town, Swaziland, Zambia, Botswana, Oxford, Sheffield, London (School of Oriental and African Studies), Leiden and Carleton (Ottawa). I am particularly grateful to those who generously offered their criticisms and ideas, which similarly assisted in the development of the ideas herein: in particular, Maxi Schoeman, Charles van Onselen, Ian Phimister, Henning Melber, Morris Szeftel, David Moore, Alois Mlambo, Ackson Kanduzza, Andrew Roberts and Ken Vickery. As must always be made clear, they are in no way responsible for the weaknesses and inaccuracies of what follows. Formal and informal exchanges with research, postgraduate and undergraduate students at various universities were equally invaluable for the development of my ideas, most importantly Laura Evans, Lars Huening, Matt Graham, Kate Law, Rory Pilosof and Daniel Spence. Rosemary Cole prepared the index with her usual accuracy and diligence.

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Musakanya, Bob Moore, Caroline O'Reilly, Neil Roos, Shalini Sharma, John Tanner, Kevin Watson, Tracey Wire and Leo Zeilig.

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Abbreviations

AMWU	African Mineworkers' Union
ANC	African National Congress (of Northern Rhodesia/Zambia)
BLS	Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland
BOSS	[South African] Bureau of State Security
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CIA	[US] Central Intelligence Agency
CIO	[Rhodesian] Central Intelligence Organisation
CONAKAT	Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga
CRC	Constitutional Review Commission
DFA	[South African] Department of Foreign Affairs
DGMI	[South African] Directorate General Military Intelligence
DGS	[Portuguese] General-Directorate of Security
DoD	[South African] Department of Defence
DPP	Democratic People's Party
DSC	Democratic Supreme Council
EAZ	Economics Association of Zambia
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia
FLNC	Front pour la Libération Nationale du Congo
FNLA	Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IANTT	Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais Torre de Tombo (Portuguese National Archives)
IFIs	international financial institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INDECO	Industrial and Development Corporation
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KPU	Kenya People's Union
MCC	Member of the [UNIP] central committee
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MINDECO	Mining Development Corporation
MMD	Movement for Multi-party Democracy

MP	Member of Parliament
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
MUZ	Mineworkers' Union of Zambia
NAMBOARD	National Agricultural Marketing Board
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NAUK	National Archives of the United Kingdom
NAZ	National Archives of Zambia
NCC	National Constitutional Conference
NEP	New Economic Recovery
NGOCC	Non-Governmental Coordinating Conference
NLM	National Liberation Movement
NRANC	Northern Rhodesia African National Congress
NSSM	National Security Study Memorandum
NUTA	National Union of Tanganyika Workers
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ONDP	Office of National Development and Planning
PAIA	[South African] Promotion of Access to Information Act
PF	Patriotic Front
PIDE	Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado [Portuguese International and State Defence Police]
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional [Institutional Revolutionary Party, Mexico]
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana [Mozambican National Resistance]
RST	Rhodesian Selection Trust
SAANC	African National Congress of South Africa
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SADF	South African Defence Force
SADoD	South African Department of Defence
SAFA	South African Foreign Affairs [department]
SAR	South African Railways
SFA	[South African] Secretary for Foreign Affairs
SPAFIF	Southern Province African Farming Improvement Fund
SWA	South-West Africa
SWAPO	South-West African People's Organisation
SYL	SWAPO Youth League
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TAZARA	Tanzania–Zambia Railway
UBZ	United Bus company of Zambia

UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UMU	United Mineworkers' Union
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UNIPA	United National Independence Party Archives
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola]
UNZA	University of Zambia
UP	United Party
UPP	United Progressive Party
USZ	United States of Zambia
VPC	village productivity committee
WENELA/	
WNLAW	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
ZANC	Zambia African National Congress
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCC	Zambia Christian Council
ZCCM	Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines
ZCTU	Zambian Congress of Trade Unions
ZEC	Zambia Episcopal Conference
ZFE	Zambia Federation of Employers
ZINCOM	Zambia Industrial and Commercial Association
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZMU	Zambia Mineworkers' Union
ZNCCI	Zambia National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ZR	Zimbabwe–Rhodesia
ZSIS	Zambian Security and Intelligence Services

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Introduction

The creation of newly independent nation-states in sub-Saharan Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s was a key event in the international history of the twentieth century. The emergence from colonial rule of hundreds of millions of African people and the establishment of (initially) democratic states was a high watermark of global optimism in humanity's capacity to overcome oppression and inequality and achieve 'modernisation' and 'development'. A brief 'honeymoon' of high hopes for African democratisation and development was followed, from the mid-1970s onwards, by economic stagnation and decline, political authoritarianism and corruption and ethnic conflict. Parallel to this, four decades of social science research on sub-Saharan Africa have been dominated by the underlying question: 'What went wrong?'

The capacity of historical research to address such questions has been hampered by the primary intellectual approaches to African history in the 1960s. The first wave of historical and political analysis of newly independent African nation-states replicated, in many respects, the faults and omissions of 'Whig' historians, who viewed the achievement of the nation-state as the apotheosis of historical progress and conceived the histories of those states as leading inexorably, inevitably and teleologically to their creation. Thus, what was judged to be historically important were the acts, dilemmas and ideas of the great men who constructed those nations, judged according to their effectiveness in playing an ascribed role in this unilinear historical trajectory.

This volume seeks to shed new light on the political history of post-colonial Zambia in particular, and to address the broader issue of how to conceptualise and understand the nature of political ideas and activities in post-colonial Africa in general. In so doing, it seeks to highlight and, to some degree, overcome the manifold weaknesses in much historical analysis of the independent African state and its relationship with wider society. In relation to Zambia, this study presents substantial new evidence regarding the realities of late-colonial and post-colonial political history which challenges the dominance of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) and the leadership of Kenneth Kaunda in that history. Opposition to UNIP rule was of a far greater magnitude and diversity than has hitherto been understood. Contrary to a well-established view, in both academic circles and 'common sense' discourse in Zambia itself, that Kaunda and UNIP remained both generally popular and largely unthreatened

for much of their 27 years in power, UNIP's effective control of Zambia was limited, consistently under challenge and frequently insecure. By shifting the focus from the leadership of the ruling party and its normative concepts of developmentalism and state-building, by focusing on dissent within UNIP and by studying legal and extra-legal opposition movements to it, the book aims to explain the various ways in which the aspirations of sections of the Zambian population found expression in post-colonial political thinking and practice. Such an approach, it is argued, provides the basis for a major revision to the way in which post-colonial political history has generally been understood.

Central to this analysis is the empirical study of the process by which 'nationalist coalitions' such as UNIP disintegrated in the post-colonial moment, as the impressive (but always fragile) unity of the anti-colonial struggle dissipated and the formidable challenge of constructing meaningful nations in new states made itself felt. The equation between national unity and party unity, the denial of difference (political, regional and economic) that such assertions of unity necessitated, and the consequent bitterness and brutality of the collapse of the ruling party as it had manifested itself for its first decade of existence all reflected the larger problematic of 'making' nations where they hitherto had not existed – certainly not in their modern form.¹

Nationalist histories and the myth of UNIP supremacy

Our understanding of post-colonial African political history has been hampered by a series of normative frameworks which have been applied to the subject over the past 50 years. Whilst these have been widely analysed and criticised, it is centrally important to identify how they have influenced not only intellectual understanding of African political change, but also the processes of African political history itself – the two have always been closely interwoven and self-referential.

As has been documented, historians sympathetic to the African nationalist project played a prominent role in constructing a new nationalist historiography

¹ It is noteworthy that the titles of earlier histories, such as R.I. Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873–1964* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), suggested that the nation-making process had been forged in the furnace of, and largely completed by, the successful resolution of the anti-colonial struggle. This contrasts with a more recent publication, B. Raftopoulos and A. Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008* (Harare and Johannesburg: Weaver Press and Jacana, 2009), which suggests that 'becoming' a nation is a process that, in Zimbabwe as in Zambia, is still ongoing and incomplete.

in the decade after independence.² In combating racist imperial myths of a 'people without a history', the new historical schools of Dar es Salaam and Ibadan sought to demonstrate that Africans had a purposive history, a history that showed a tendency to resist encroachment by foreign aggressors, to overcome local differences and subsume ethnicities into new nation-states which would take their place on the international stage. In so doing, historical writing played an important role in the creation of new nation-states and the reification of their new leaders. Such invention was necessary, of course, because popular identification with the new 'nation' was inevitably limited at the moment of independence. Most new independent territories – mirroring, as they did, the artificial borders drawn by colonialists through older indigenous polities – lacked meaningful historical unity and were divided by language, culture and the uneven impact of distinct local economic and political trajectories before and during colonialism. The hasty reification of the new nations, the literal invention of national traditions and symbols, was itself a tacit admission of the lack of popular identification with these new states.

The tendency of nationalist historical writing and research, as with its Whiggish antecedents, was to unduly emphasise heroic tales of anti-colonial resistance, to downplay examples of 'collaboration' with the colonial authorities and generally to neglect the ambiguities and complexities inherent in relations between local African societies and colonial structures. Because of their sympathy with the nation-state-building project, historians and social scientists tended to view as essentially benign the efforts of the nationalist leaders who, at independence, became the presidents and prime ministers of Africa's new nation-states. Similarly, most tended to assume that African societies were largely homogenous in class terms; ethnic divisions were acknowledged, but these were generally seen as a negative problem to be overcome. The construction of national identities, in part through state-led developmentalism which would bind disparate groups together, was regarded as an essentially progressive project. Academics therefore implicitly promoted the idea of national unity and development in their work, depicting pre-colonial political structures or early anti-colonial political movements as the logical forerunner of nationalist movements and teleologically portraying the latter as the ultimate expression

² See, in particular, C. Neale, 'The Idea of Progress in the Revision of African History', in B. Jewsiewicki and D. Newbury (eds), *African Historiographies: What History for Which Africa?* (Beverly Hills CA: Sage Publications, 1986).

of an underlying African desire for national self-determination on precisely the basis as that actually achieved.³

Later analysts rightly criticised this approach.⁴ The consequences of this nationalist historiography for the study of post-colonial Africa have not, however, been sufficiently analysed or overcome. An important aspect of this approach was to portray nationalist movements which were in fact highly partial or particular, in social, ethnic or other terms, as more representative of the new 'national' territories than they in fact were. The concomitant of this was that opposition movements, or rival nationalist movements which failed to come to power, were portrayed, not only by their political opponents but also by analysts, in pejorative terms, variously 'conservative', 'neo-colonial', or tribally/ethnically particular. This is not to deny that most such movements were indeed highly partial, nor to claim that they represented more progressive forces than those that were in power; it is simply to claim that they (like those who actually came to power) were at least partly representative of localised social forces which were and remain relevant to historical analysis.

In the years after independence in 1964, historical studies rooted in the nationalist tradition played an important role in the self-conscious construction of a Zambian identity, shaped around a nationalist meta-narrative of injustice, exploitation and struggle and culminating in the achievement of self-rule under UNIP and its leader, President Kenneth Kaunda.⁵ Kaunda's own writings utilised a particular interpretation of pre-colonial and colonial history to support UNIP's approach to post-colonial governance.⁶ In 'Humanism', for

³ See for example, T.O. Ranger, 'Connexions Between "Primary Resistance" Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa', *Journal of African History* (two parts), 9, 3–4 (1968), 437–53 and 631–41; T.O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896–1897: A Study in African Resistance* (London: Heinemann, 1967); D. Ellis, 'The Nandi Protest of 1923 in the Context of African Resistance to Colonial Rule in Kenya', *Journal of African History*, 17, 4 (1976), 555–75; J. Iliffe, 'The Organisation of the Maji Maji Rebellion', *Journal of African History*, 8, 3 (1967), 29–45; R.I. Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873–1964*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

⁴ Arnold Temu and Bonaventure Swai, *Historians and Africanist History: A Critique: Post-Colonial Historiography Examined* (London: Zed Books, 1981).

⁵ See, for example, R. Hall, *Zambia, 1890–1964: The Colonial Period* (London, Longman, 1965, 1976); D.C. Mulford, *Zambia: The Politics of Independence 1957–1964* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967); H.S. Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism*, (Manchester: University of Zambia/Manchester University Press, 1971). An invaluable corrective to such tendencies is provided by A. Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (London: Heinemann, 1976), which remains the most important study of colonial Zambia.

⁶ K.D. Kaunda, *Zambia Shall Be Free: An Autobiography* (London: Heinemann, 1962); idem, *A Humanist in Africa: Letters to Colin M. Morris from Kenneth D. Kaunda*

example, Kaunda claimed that the enduring importance of chiefly authority was representative of an authentically African model of unity and consensual and communitarian decision-making that made competing political parties not only inappropriate, but also potentially destabilising bases for tribally-based conflict. The logical conclusion of such arguments was the declaration of a one-party state in 1972, presented at the time as the ultimate expression of popular will, but in fact UNIP's desperate response to rising political opposition and its failure to meet popular expectations of social and economic change. During Zambia's era of 'one-party participatory democracy', the Kenneth Kaunda Foundation produced important historical works that nevertheless served to reinforce UNIP's own interpretation of colonial history.⁷

As this study will show, UNIP was far from being a nationally representative organisation at the time of independence. Its strength in Northern and Luapula Provinces, and its urban strongholds in Lusaka, Kabwe and the Copperbelt, was matched by significant weaknesses in Western and North-western Provinces and an almost total lack of support in Southern Province. This unevenness was the result of economic, demographic and cultural differences of the sort commonly accepted as the basis for political difference in Western societies. Yet in Zambia and sub-Saharan Africa in general, such differences were treated, by politicians and academics alike, not as an inevitable reflection of material and cultural realities, but as a threat to the fragile bindings of the new nation-state that had to be simultaneously denied and repressed.

Modernisation and developmentalism

One of the central framing devices of nationalism and its historiography was that of 'national development'. As Frederick Cooper demonstrates, what were commonly conceived of as political questions regarding the distribution of power and wealth were, in the late-colonial and post-colonial period, reconceptualised as essentially technocratic problems of poverty and development requiring particular inputs and initiatives to bring about the conditions for economic 'take-off', which would transform 'backward' societies into modern industrial

(London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1966); idem, *Humanism in Zambia and a Guide to its Implementation* (Lusaka: Zambia Information Services, 1968); and idem, *Humanism in Zambia and a Guide to its Implementation Part II*, (Lusaka: Zambia Information Services, 1974).

⁷ For example, H.S. Meebelo, *African Proletarians and Colonial Capitalism* (Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation, 1986).

nation-states.⁸ In the mid-twentieth century, the dominance of Keynesian economics and the prevalence of corporatist models led to a focus on the state as the engine of economic growth, the sole actor with the capacity to create 'take-off'. This was viewed as particularly appropriate in newly independent Africa, where the general marginalisation (and frequent victimisation) of indigenous private capital under colonialism made the new state the only force with the capacity to create the conditions for take-off.

The problems of this approach were myriad. First, it placed an enormous responsibility on state structures and actors with severely limited capacity and expertise in achieving economic and social change. Although African colonial states varied considerably, their primary role had been the preservation of order, and the British system of 'indirect rule' was generally reliant on indigenous local government (or 'chiefly authority') to deliver this. Late-colonial developmentalism significantly strengthened the capacity of such states, but their ability to achieve meaningful change remained both limited and highly contentious. 'Development', under independent government as under colonialism, was never a neutral process. Local communities frequently experienced supposedly progressive developmental initiatives as a hostile process which undermined long established ways of life, particularly agricultural practices which were at the heart of rural cultural and social organisation.⁹

Second, developmentalism often assumed that African societies were largely homogenous. Colonialism and nationalism alike perceived a lack of social differentiation in African society, excepting a recognised 'traditional' division between chiefs and aristocrats, on the one side, and commoners on the other. The significant changes that colonialism had wrought on African societies – economically, socially and culturally – were not properly understood by colonial authorities, who failed to realise that their own efforts at conserving 'tribal' societies had themselves played an important part in altering what had, in any case, never been static African societies of the sort which indigenous ethnic elites had claimed to represent to the authorities. This was by no means a passive process: sections of some African societies creatively responded to the opportunities presented by the changes brought about by colonialism to enrich

⁸ F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 222–23. The model for such development was provided by W.W. Rostow: *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

⁹ See, for example, J. Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, 1994), 437–444. On Zambia, see H.L. Moore and M. Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890–1990* (Portsmouth NH, London and Lusaka: Heinemann, 1994), 113–37.

and empower themselves; other Africans suffered a profound decline in their societal and economic security, and still others were barely touched by such processes. What was lacking, then, was any substantive consideration of the legacy of Africa's profoundly uneven development arising from the impact of colonialism and the further integration of its societies into the global economy.¹⁰

Such uneven development had a substantial impact on post-colonial political change. One of the central divides marking post-colonial politics in Zambia, as elsewhere on the continent, was (and remains) that between wealthier and poorer peoples and regions, particularly when that divide was marked by individual or communal prosperity (or its absence) arising from agricultural success (or failure). Southern and parts of Central Province were typical of many rural areas in Africa where successful indigenous commercial agriculture created support for a political party (the African National Congress), whose focus on individual entrepreneurialism was threatened by the post-colonial emphasis on state-driven developmentalism. In contrast, the inhabitants of agriculturally poorer areas such as Northern Province, following the imposition of taxes by the colonial authorities and desirous of accessing consumer goods, had engaged with the money economy largely as providers of migrant labour, particularly in the globally significant mines of the Copperbelt. The latter expected the UNIP politicians they helped bring to power to institute a progressive redistribution of wealth. This redistributive agenda, focused as it was on the reorganisation of mining revenue, led (in Zambia as elsewhere) to political conflict over the distribution of state revenue from the centre to the provinces. Such anticipated redistribution was conceived in both ideological socialistic and ethno-regional terms, but usually these were conflated into a form of regional populism in which particular provinces were perceived to be enriching themselves at the expense of others via their 'unfair' representation in central state decision-making. Such populism fed the rise of Bemba discontent within UNIP in the late 1960s, ultimately leading to the breakaway of the United Progressive Party (UPP – see Chapter 2).

Changes in post-colonial African historiography

As evidence emerged of the obvious limitations of post-colonial states' capacity to achieve nation-building and development, the nationalist approach was heavily

¹⁰ Crawford Young terms this process 'differential modernization' in his study of 'Ethnic Politics in Zaire', in *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism* (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 175.

criticised and, to a large extent, discredited. Attempts were made to develop analyses which avoided its traps, only to create new intellectual dilemmas which continued to hamper understanding of the historical problems of post-colonial states.

The first radical critique of the initial phase of nationalist history emerged in the 1970s. Influenced by Fanon's warnings of the pitfalls of nationalist consciousness, utilising a critique of 'neo-colonialism' and adopting Marxist concepts, radical Africanist political scientists criticised the accommodation made by new African governments with global capital or with Western interests in the context of the Cold War.¹¹ Some left-wing analysts supported the more avowedly Marxist–Leninist African governments which took power in the mid-1970s in the former Portuguese colonies and in Ethiopia, whilst others sought to identify the progressive class which would bring about true or more meaningful liberation, sometimes following Maoist arguments lauding the peasantry and characterising the African working class as 'labour aristocrats'.¹² Despite their useful criticism of orthodox nationalist historiography, such analysts ultimately fell into a similar normative trap as their predecessors, failing to analyse African political change on empirical terms and instead seeking to fit awkward realities into a deterministic Marxist framework in which actions were judged against an artificial ideological yardstick with little basis in African reality.

More enduring insights into particular societies were provided by sociologists and social anthropologists, whose smaller scale of analysis usefully avoided the dead-end of an artificial nationalist framework. Studies of particular African localities and workplaces shone a refreshing empirical light on the unexpected realities of the post-colonial transition. In Zambia, Michael Burawoy's study of Copperbelt mineworkers demonstrated that independence had, for them, replaced a racially-based exploitative relationship dominated by white foremen with a new class-based conflict with indigenous supervisors.¹³ Michael Bratton's study of local politics in Northern Province revealed the limited authority of the one-party state and its necessary accommodations with local elites, as well as the enduring relevance of the UPP amongst poorer sections of Bemba

¹¹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 2001), 119–66.

¹² For the labour aristocracy debate see, in particular, G. Arrighi and J.S. Saul, *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973) and its effective refutation in R. Sandbrook and R. Cohen (eds), *Development of an African Working-Class*, (London: Longman, 1975).

¹³ M. Burawoy, *The Colour of Class on the Copperbelt: From African Advancement to Zambianization* (Lusaka: University of Zambia Institute of African Studies, 1972).

society (see Chapter 3).¹⁴ Moore's and Vaughan's *Cutting Down Trees* similarly showed the ways in which post-colonial developmental discourse replicated its colonial predecessor, both in its authoritarian tendencies and in its inability to significantly alter behaviour regarded as undesirable by the state authorities but which was central to the identity of the local communities targeted for top-down change.¹⁵ James Ferguson's *Expectations of Modernity* powerfully criticised the significant mythical capacity of Zambia's modernist–developmentalist narrative.¹⁶

Indeed, in the 1980s and 1990s post-structuralism sometimes offered the most effective critique of the nationalist–developmentalist meta-narrative. The cultural turn both challenged the claims made by modernising elites and enabled the analysis of meaningful local African identities through studies of discourse and representation. Simultaneously, however, its relativist approach tended to render as superfluous direct consideration of broader questions of national and international political power and authority. The reification of diversity and locality militated against analysis of African and, indeed, wider international commonalities. Post-structuralism's lack of explanatory capacity made it impossible to explain significant political change, why it occurred at any particular time, or the social forces which those changes reflected. For example, It is noteworthy that Ferguson's research in the late 1980s did not identify the then coalescing popular forces based on the Copperbelt which, a few years later, played a central role in ending UNIP rule and bringing about multi-party democracy and the rise to power of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD).

In contrast, political scientists tended towards a more realist approach to the nature of post-colonial political change, in which the state was perforce the leading actor in a normative project of modernisation, focusing analysis on the dilemmas of strengthening the state in order to enable it to play such a role effectively.¹⁷ Although such studies provided useful explanations for the failures and weaknesses of such states, they seldom questioned the assumption

¹⁴ M. Bratton, *The Local Politics of Rural Development: Peasant and Party-State in Zambia* (Hanover NH: University Press of New England, 1980).

¹⁵ Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees*.

¹⁶ J. Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Modern Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

¹⁷ Amongst many others, see J. Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); W. Tordoff, *Government and Politics in Africa* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2003); and, more recently, R.H. Bates, *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-century Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

that state capacity was the essential problem of post-colonial rule or directly considered whether the extension of states' powers over their subjects would in fact strengthen the capacity of the latter to hold the former to effective account. *Politics in Zambia*, William Tordoff's edited collection of 1974, set the tone for Zambian political studies by documenting the *institutional* history of the First Republic. Although its contributors perceptively documented the non-primordial nature of ethnicity in Zambia's 'sectional' politics, its focus on elite decision-makers neglects the profound importance of subalterns.¹⁸ *Politics in Zambia* provides little evidence of the influence of rank-and-file supporters on the intra- and inter-party political conflicts of political parties. In contrast, Gertzel et al.'s study, published a decade later, provided a useful analysis of the transition to the one-party system, in particular identifying the weakness of UNIP's position in Bemba-speaking areas and the extent to which Kaunda's declaration of the one-party state should be understood as an expression of weakness, rather than strength.¹⁹ Inevitably, these largely contemporaneous studies could not offer an effective historical perspective on Zambia's post-colonial political development and their authors lacked access to the substantial primary sources that are now available to historians. Subsequent studies of Zambian politics have generally limited themselves to the Third Republic since the MMD's victory in 1991, and there have been few sustained attempts to draw parallels and contrasts between this period and the First and Second Republic. A recent and welcome attempt to do exactly this was weakened by the depressingly familiar tendency to regard 'politics' primarily as electoral competition and a related and (in Zambia's case at least) unwarranted belief that virtually all African politics is essentially ethnic.²⁰

Towards a political history of independent Zambia

How, then, can a political history of Africa avoid the pitfalls of teleological meta-narratives of nationalism, modernisation and developmentalism on the one hand, yet still provide a critical examination of nation-state power which also reflects the considerable importance of centre–local relations and the regional and international context? Researching and writing post-colonial political

¹⁸ W. Tordoff (ed.), *Politics in Zambia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974).

¹⁹ C. Gertzel (ed.), C. Baylies and M. Szeftel, *The Dynamics of the One-Party State in Zambia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

²⁰ D.N. Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

history necessitates the rejection of any preconceived ideological framework of supposedly 'progressive' and 'reactionary' forces against which the ideas and actions of any particular political party or movement can be judged. As this study will show, the adoption of both explicit ideological explanations and strategic approaches by the movements under study was informed by a range of factors (particularly the ongoing regional liberation struggles and the wider context of the Cold War) which did not directly reflect the internal composition of the movements concerned. Most importantly, historical analysis requires that the specific meaning of any given political movement cannot be judged in advance or on face value, but rather must be assessed in relation to its historical impact. Moreover, although it is vital to understand social and political movements in specific relation to their locale, it is equally necessary to relate these to wider questions of political and economic power that, at least partly, stimulate and shape the relationship between local and central politics.

At the same time, it is not the case political and social movements can only be understood in terms of their observable (usually electoral) behaviour, a fault which fatally weakens political science's attempt to understand African political change. In this volume, an attempt is made to understand the motivations, tactics and approaches adopted by the particular movements under study, the extent to which they reflected the aspirations and discontents of those whom they claimed to represent and the ways in which they contributed (or failed to contribute) to the achievement of a general kind of political progress (which some post-structural critics may judge as themselves ideologically loaded and reflecting a modernist position). Inherent in the analysis offered is indeed a belief in the potential development of a polity and society in which Zambians are in a stronger position to effectively express their individual and collective aspirations in ways which impinge on elite decision-making and that, in turn, impacts in a beneficial way on their lives and livelihoods. It should, however, be stressed that this does not represent *a priori* support for particular political movements or, for example, multi-party democracy, and certainly not particular models of economic and social organisation.

In reassessing Zambian politics, it is first necessary to re-examine and deconstruct the myths created during the run-up to independence. The uneven nature of Zambia's nationalist movement and its legacy for post-colonial politics, referred to above, deserves more attention than it has received. For example, whilst northern Zambia and the Copperbelt were consumed in direct action against the colonial state in the early 1960s (see Chapter 1), other parts of Northern Rhodesia were largely untouched by the struggle on the ground. In Southern and parts of Central Province, ethnic and economic differences generated a distinct, more conservative nationalist tradition that was subsequently rendered

illegitimate by the UNIP-dominated nationalist historicity.²¹ The demonstrable persistence of these divisions in post-independence Zambian politics, economy and culture (up to today) behoves observers to take them seriously.

It was by no means inevitable that UNIP would dominate the nationalist political sphere and become the party of government in post-colonial Zambia, nor that Kenneth Kaunda would be its leader. UNIP, far from being the logical outcome of the nationalist struggle against British colonial rule, was itself an uneasy coalition of disparate discontents and aspirations, and Kaunda's leadership was not pre-ordained but rather the outcome of quite specific social forces (see Chapter 1). Kaunda's position as prime minister and then president of Zambia certainly made it difficult for his challengers to unseat him from the party leadership in the 1960s, but for many of UNIP's staunchest supporters, Simon Kapwepwe was the rightful leader of the party, and strenuous efforts were made throughout the decade to replace Kaunda with his childhood friend (see Chapter 2). Support for UNIP amongst Copperbelt mineworkers was predicated on the belief that independence would be accompanied by a substantial redistribution of the wealth generated by the country's strategic copper mines. When this did not transpire, and when it became clear that revenue accruing to the central government would not necessarily be used to support their vision of 'development', many supported both Kapwepwe's challenge for the leadership of UNIP and subsequently the breakaway UPP.

Likewise, the largely unproblematic dominance of UNIP rule during the First Republic remains part of a historiographical 'common sense' that is only now beginning to be challenged. The undoubted effectiveness of UNIP's first government in delivering the first stage of development, in the form of schools, hospitals and other social infrastructure is widely assumed to have met the expectations of the Zambian people for post-colonial change. Where it is accepted that such efforts fell short of popular expectations, these tend to be dismissed as unrealistic, given the limited capacity of post-colonial states. More germane to historical analysis is that such expectations, rooted in the promises made by nationalist politicians seeking to mobilise anti-colonial activity, shaped the hostile response of sections of Zambian society to the post-colonial state and fuelled the social and ethno-regional conflict that presaged the declaration of the one-party state in 1972.

The evidence of the UNIP archives, opened to researchers in 2004, is that many Zambians were not only dissatisfied with the extent of this delivery, but also

²¹ G. Macola, 'Harry Nkumbula, UNIP and the Roots of Authoritarianism in Nationalist Zambia', in J.-B. Gewald, M. Hinfelaar and G. Macola (eds), *One Zambia, Many Histories: Towards a Post-colonial History of Zambia* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 17–44.

sought to act on it politically in ways that profoundly disturbed the apparently hegemonic ruling party. There was, evidently, no direct relationship between the state's developmental achievements and electoral support for UNIP which, in 1968, declined substantially, despite UNIP's utilisation of state resources to reinforce its advantage in inter-party violence – a neglected aspect of Zambian political culture that continues to affect electoral outcomes.²² Macola's recent study of such discontent in Luapula Province has reinforced Bates's pioneering work which identified the extent of early regional disaffection with the capacity of the centralised state to deliver on such expectations.²³ In this study, work on the UPP demonstrates similar discourses, linked to the perceived marginalisation of, amongst others, the 5,000 Bemba activists arrested during the Cha Cha Cha uprising of 1961 in the subsequent post-independence distribution of political appointments and developmental largesse (see Chapter 2). More generally however, it can be argued that, contrary to the positive portrayal of the First Republic in much of the earlier literature, it is now evident that the divisions and problems experienced by Zambia during its Second Republic had their origins in the significant social, ethnic and regional conflicts experienced in the supposed honeymoon period of the mid-to late 1960s.

Borders, ethnicity and politics in post-colonial Zambia

The focus on the dilemmas of nation-state-building led African post-colonial political leaders and intellectuals to delegitimise the political articulation of ethnic difference, hoping to consign it to history in favour of a wider allegiance to the newly constituted national state. In reality, contestation of these boundaries, and the political representation of ethno-linguistic communities within them, was an important issue in the run-up to independence and remains a significant (and, in some countries, a dominant) political issue in contemporary Africa.

In many colonial territories and particularly in remote rural border areas, African subjects had continued to move relatively freely across barely visible borders. Longstanding ethno-linguistic communities, arbitrarily divided by those borders, nevertheless retained significant economic, social and cultural saliency (see Chapter 4). Despite this, one of the most striking features

²² An exception to this rule is R. Molteno's and I. Scott's exemplary study, 'The 1968 General Election and the Political System', in Tordoff, *Politics in Zambia*, 155–96.

²³ G. Macola, "It Means as if we are Excluded from the Good Freedom": Thwarted Expectations of Independence in the Luapula Province of Zambia, 1964–1966', *Journal of African History*, 47, 1 (2006), 43–56; Macola, 'Harry Nkumbula'; R.H. Bates, *Rural Responses to Industrialisation: A Study of Village Zambia* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1976).

of the post-colonial African state was its rigid adherence to the artificial borders created by European imperialists. Precisely because of the fragility of these boundaries, and notwithstanding their often arbitrary nature, nationalist politicians and governments were obsessive in their defence. The fear of ethnically-based division or secession, in a context of external interference rooted in Cold War politics, conjured fears of tribally-based warfare, particularly after the Congo crisis of 1960–61 and the Biafran war of independence in the late 1960s.

In Zambia, tendencies towards regional autonomy or the (variously imagined) redrawing of national borders were the subject of much attention in the run-up to independence. Subsequently, however, advocates of such ideas in post-colonial political discourse were dismissed as ‘tribalist’ and/or as the puppets of white colonial or economic power. Whilst the dismissal of such ideas as illegitimate, in both political and academic discourse, has led to neglect in their documentation and analysis, it is not hard to find them playing an important role in the popular imagination.²⁴ This is hardly surprising; Northern Rhodesia had itself only been united in 1911 from the separate territories of North-Eastern and North-Western Rhodesia. The practical presence of the British South African Company and (from 1924) the colonial authorities was limited, particularly in areas where people moved easily across borders and felt little sense of identification with the weak colonial state, which ruled indirectly via local chiefs.

In the late 1950s it was by no means certain that the colonial borders would necessarily form the basis of the post-colonial state then being envisaged by a variety of actors, nationalist politicians and federal authorities. As well as the familiar story of Barotseland’s resistance to its incorporation into an independent Zambian state, the early 1960s also witnessed the machinations of federal politicians, including Roy Welensky, the South African state, some leaders of the African National Congress and the Katangese secessionist government of Moïse Tshombe; the feasibility of their variously imagined alternative post-colonial states was usually tied up with, and dependent on, the incorporation and utilisation of mineral wealth to underwrite a new, conservative and/or Western-aligned state in central Africa. Shortly before Zambian independence, Tshombe proposed the merger of Katanga into Zambia, again seeing the creation of a unified state based around a ‘greater Copperbelt’ as a feasible project. Normally

²⁴ This neglect is particularly strong in southern African studies: in West Africa, cross-border or secessionist movements have been documented more fully. See, for example, P. Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju (eds), *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities* (London: Pinter, 1996).

understood as the illegitimate product of foreign imaginations, such ideas in fact dovetailed closely with those of many Bemba political activists, for whom the powerful myth of a reconstituted Lunda–Luba empire in which Bemba speakers would restore their historical prestige was, notwithstanding its impracticality, an idea of considerable potency.

As elsewhere in Africa, Zambian politicians sought to utilise the inherited structures of the (post-) colonial state to enforce a national identity which otherwise had little purchase in the historical consciousness and experiences of its peoples.²⁵ The self-conscious promulgation of the slogan ‘One Zambia, One Nation’ was itself tacit recognition of the fertility of alternative local forms of identity amongst many peoples of the new nation. The UNIP-dominated state sought to make itself meaningful in their lives through a variety of supposedly progressive and modernising institutions and development policies. As in the colonial era, however, such initiatives were often experienced as unjustified and authoritarian interference in established practices – for example, in demanding village regrouping as the basis of rural service delivery.

Following the initial phase of state expansion, the stagnation of public expenditure in the early 1970s and the failure of development initiatives to sustain themselves in most of rural Zambia significantly limited the practical presence of the new state in the lived experiences of many of its citizens. In border areas in particular, common ethnic identification with the subjects of neighbouring states led to periodic tensions with Zaire and Malawi; the Zambian state was unable to prevent the continuation of cross-border trading and population exchange, rooted as this was in economic utility in a context of severely limited income-generating opportunities. In North-western Province, post-independence discontent with central state intervention was translated by marginalised chiefs into identification with a Lunda community transcending the borders of Zambia, Angola and Congo (see Chapter 4). More research is still needed about the basis of enduring demands for secession in Western Province, most recently articulated in Zambia’s recent Constitutional Review Commission (CRC), rooted in the abrogation of the Barotseland Agreement in 1969.²⁶ Indeed, the establishment of ‘Zambia’ as a national state in a territory marked by migration and fluid identities brought in its wake sharp debates

²⁵ J.I. Elaigwu with A.A. Mazrui, ‘Nation-building and Changing Political Structures’, in A.A. Mazrui (ed.), *UNESCO History of Africa, Vol. VIII: Africa Since 1935* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1993), 441.

²⁶ Gertzel (ed.) et al., *The Dynamics of the One-Party State in Zambia*, 210; see www.crc.org.zm for the full report of the CRC.