ZAMBIA:

THE KAUNDA YEARS

Owen O'Sullivan OFM Cap.

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PREFACE

I lived in Zambia from 1978 to 1997, mostly in the Western Province. On one occasion I was travelling in a rural area across a large, open plain in a four-wheel drive vehicle. Feeling hungry, I stopped for something to eat. Some distance away was a man herding cattle; he came over to say hello. I was surprised that he spoke English so well, and, as we engaged in conversation over our now shared lunch, I asked where he had learned it. He told me he had been in the British Navy during the Second World War, and had served on ships of the Murmansk convoys, bringing supplies to the Soviet Union following the Nazi invasion. There was something surreal about this experience: the initial picture of the man herding cattle on the plain was part of an idealized image of Africa; but the reality was something else. As we sat under the baking sun he told me of how, apart from the activity of German submarines, the sailors' greatest fear was that the weight of ice encrusted on the ships' rigging would make them top-heavy and liable to capsize in a storm. That bizarre mixture of old and new, African and European, rural calm and modern warfare, combined to add up to an *Alice in Wonderland* zaniness. That occasion remains for me a powerful image of Zambia and its troubled transition into a new world which is often harsh and unsympathetic.

Zambia is the despair of it many friends. Its people are friendly, courteous, welcoming and easy-going. They also seem, at times, chronically unable to get their act together and either have a modern Western society - which many of them want - or develop a viable alternative drawn on African tradition, or evolve a coherent blend of the two.

This study aims to offer an understanding of Zambia, an overview of its life, an interpretation of its past and a view of its future prospects. It covers the period of Kenneth Kaunda's leadership of the country as Prime Minister of Northern Rhodesia from January 1964 to his being voted out of office as President of Zambia in 1991. This interpretation is necessarily coloured by the ideas, attitudes, assumptions, reflexes and prejudices of the author. It does not claim to be dispassionately objective. It does, however, claim to offer an honest opinion, based on twenty years' in Zambia, and on sympathy and respect for the country and its people. Where something is stated to be a fact, it is honestly believed to be so, the available resources having been carefully checked. Where an opinion is offered, it reflects the considered assessment of the author.

Statistics are a problem. Sometimes important statistics simply do not exist. Sometimes they do, but are not made public. Where they are available they are often unreliable or even contradictory. The statistics offered in this book, although they have been checked and double-checked, should be regarded as nothing more than an approximation; it would be dishonest to claim anything more than that for them. Not all statistics are traceable to specific sources; some are based on personal notes or simple recollection. It is the best I can do.

In my view, the most positive attribute of Zambians is their ability to keep hope alive in apparently hopeless situations. They need it: for instance, in the early nineteen seventies a community hall was built near where I lived at a cost of 1,200 Kwacha. Recently, I received a letter from a Zambian friend; the postage was 1,500 Kwacha. That's devaluation.

This is not a book for the faint-hearted or depressive. It does not provide cheerful reading, much though I would have liked to make it so. The facts are there, and cannot be denied. I have to say simply that, in my time in Zambia, I saw almost constant decline with little or no realistic sign or hope of improvement.

Zambians find it difficult to accept criticism, often seeing it as a personal attack. This book offers criticisms, but more besides, I hope. It is offered in friendship and in gratitude. And one can only wish Zambians well as they face a difficult and uncertain future.

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1993

Chapter 1 LIFE IN ZAMBIA

Population

Zambia is a land-locked country lying between 8 and 18 degrees latitude south and between 22 and 34 degrees longitude east. It is bordered on the north by Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) and Tanzania; on the east by Malawi and Mozambique; on the south by Zimbabwe, Botswana and the Caprivi Strip of Namibia; and on the west by Angola.

In area, the country covers about 753,000 square kilometres, roughly a quarter as large again as the Iberian peninsula, or, in American terms, larger than California and Nevada combined.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, it had a population estimated at about 800,000. (1) By the middle of the century, it had grown to about 1,800,000. In 1962, it was estimated at 2,500,000. By 1975, the figure had reached approximately 4,800,000. With population growth rate in the seventies and eighties estimated at about 3.5% annually, the population reached 7.75 million by 1989. About half of that was under fifteen years of age. (2) Projections for the future are doubtful because of the imponderable, but certainly large, impact of AIDS.

Zambia had a population problem, but it was simplistic and perhaps even inaccurate to regard numbers as the heart of the matter. After all, its population density was about half the average for Africa. The distribution of population was much nearer to the core of the problem. At independence in 1964, perhaps 25% of people lived in urban areas, (3) principally in Lusaka the capital, in the mining towns of the Copperbelt, and the towns along what Zambians call “the line of rail”, that is, the railway line from Livingstone in the south through Lusaka to the Copperbelt. By the mid-seventies, the urban percentage had grown to about 35. By 1989, it was close to 50%, making Zambia one of the most urbanized countries in Africa.

Lusaka's growth has been particularly dramatic, from about 80,000 in 1962 to about ten times that figure twenty-five years later. The growth rate of urban population was variously estimated at anything from 5.5% to 13.6% per year. (4), (5) Whatever might be the real figure in statistical terms, it can be said without fear of contradiction that urban population rapidly outgrew the supply of basic services such as water and sanitation.

The reasons for such rapid urbanization were not hard to find. In the years after independence, Zambia's copper-based economy boomed. Government policy favoured the provision of cheap food to urban workers, especially miners. These men were well paid by Zambian standards, so people left the rural areas to make their money in the towns. Even if agriculture were productive, the prices paid were so low that a farmer's return for effort was small. Furthermore, urban areas attracted the bulk of investment in public services. In

addition, in Zambia, as elsewhere in the Third World, the poor of rural areas saw the city as a place of opportunity, excitement and wealth. This was especially so in the case of young people. One study of school leavers showed that 90% of them went to a city or large town within one year of completing their studies. (6) Even if little awaited them there, the city still seemed an attractive alternative to rural life, which was commonly seen as boring, backward and static. And when, in 1973, Zambia adopted the Leninist one-party political model and began to implement Marxist economic policies, this intensified the centralization of power and population in the capital.

Employment

In Zambia's years of hope from the nineteen sixties to the early seventies, President Kaunda spoke optimistically of Zambia as 'the Switzerland of Africa'. (7) He saw rural development as the answer to its problems and the hope of the future. Those hopes came to nothing, and the village, from being the backbone of Zambian life, became a backwater of frustration and despair.

About half the Zambian population was engaged in subsistence agriculture. This involved work at a fairly intensive level for about eight months, from the planting season in October to the harvest in May. From June to September work was light.

In the urban areas, unemployment was massive. In March 1988, President Kaunda spoke of two million unemployed young people. (8) In addition, about 100,000 young people left school each year unable to find work. (9) Their education created in them the expectation of a white-collar job, and the attitude that manual work was only for those who failed at school. Their expectations led to bitter disappointment, and every major town in Zambia had large numbers of young people, especially young men, aimlessly roaming the streets “window-shopping”. After a few years of this experience, many such people became unemployable, having forgotten how to work, and having lost the self-discipline to define or reach a goal.

In response to the pressure for more jobs, and with abundant income from copper to pay the bills, Zambia embarked after independence on a rapid expansion of the civil service at national, provincial and district levels and even at tribal chiefs' courts. The result was a bewildering proliferation of bureaucratic structures. Every *boma* swarmed with civil servants (a *boma* is a district administrative centre, roughly the equivalent of a county town in Britain.) At best, this policy could only be an expensive stopgap which did not deal with the problem. It concentrated, as did much else in government policy, on distribution of wealth rather than on its creation. In the longer term, the bureaucracy became a massive dead weight on a staggering economy. Zambia was forced later to cut back the number of public employees, with consequently reduced opportunities for young people.

Other than farmers, there were relatively few self-employed Zambians. Zambia's development was impeded by a hand-out mentality fostered by government policies of trying to provide a wide range of public services such as health, education and legal aid -- all free of charge. People came to expect that government had an obligation to provide them with a

living. In addition, government policy was wary of anything smacking of private enterprise, since, by definition, it did not come under its control as State businesses did. Small informal town shops and markets with sugar, salt, soap, matches, cooking oil, mealie meal and other simple necessities were gradually squeezed out of existence by a policy of price-control which did not take account of the realities of the cost of transporting goods to rural areas. I remember a village which, in the course of ten years, lost seven of its eight shops. But in a newly independent country, unsure of itself, State control was seen as all-important. Its value as a source of jobs for the party faithful did not pass unnoticed either.

Looming over the horizon was Zambia's biggest unemployment crisis. Copper mines were the country's biggest and best employers, with about 50,000 (10) workers on the payroll, and many thousands of others indirectly dependent on mining for a living. The mines' productive life was not expected to last beyond the year 2000 without large-scale investment of capital. That represented a massive problem for the government, but one which it showed little sign of acknowledging realistically.

Prices and Incomes

The oil price shocks of 1973-74 were a massive blow to the Zambian economy. They were joined by a fall in the price of copper, and an increasingly difficult political situation in southern Africa.

The result was a massive decline in gross domestic product (GDP), falling in real terms by 54% between 1974 and 1980. (11) The harshest blow was felt in 1974-75, when the real income of Zambian families fell by about 30%. (12) Over a longer period, 1974-84, the figure was about 60%. (14)

According to official estimates (which usually erred on the side of optimism), the cost of living rose by 53% between August 1984 and March 1986, and by between 44% and 54% again in 1987, though other official sources give a figure of 83.2% in 1986. (14)

These broad figures, of themselves, say nothing about the distribution of income, or about the impact of this decline on the poor, or on those in rural areas.

It was estimated in 1973 that 60% of the people had 20% of the nation's income; 30% had 34% of income, and 10% had 46% of income. (15) By the late nineteen seventies and early eighties that imbalance of income distribution had intensified, so that it could be said that the richest 2% of the population received the same share of income as the poorest 50%, while another source stated that the richest 5% receive twice the income of the poorest 60% - and that in a society that described itself as socialist! (16)

Half of Zambia's population was engaged in subsistence agriculture and therefore had no regular wage. A large proportion of the other half was unemployed and there was no unemployment benefit. A significant proportion could find work only occasionally, and then on a casual basis, while just a tiny percentage had full-time work.

The impact was greatest in rural areas. Between 1965 and 1970, rural incomes dropped by 65% in relation to rural ones. (17) The decline of rural incomes continued in later years almost without interruption. By 1980, people living in rural areas had to produce three times as much as in 1965 in order to enjoy the same standard of living. (18)

It has been estimated that 60% of urban households, and 80% in rural areas, lived below a level at which basic human needs were met. (19) For those few who had a permanent job, the average monthly salary of about 400 Kwacha (K400), the equivalent of about $25 at 1989 values, was far from sufficient to enjoy a human standard of living. (At the time of writing, the year 2000, the exchange rate is about K3,000 to the US dollar.)

It was not only in financial terms that standards eroded. It was degrading to people to have to stand for hours in a queue in order to buy basic necessities, or, by way of alternative, to pay someone else to do the queuing, or buy at inflated prices on the black market, or use bribery to acquire them. No less degrading was the practice of stamping buyers' hands with endorsing ink after they had purchased their supplies so as to ensure that they would not return again to buy more.

Housing

In rural Zambia, most people lived in huts of straw or reeds. A growing proportion of the population lived in houses of clay-and wattle, or pole-and dagga, as it was called in Zambia, or in sun-dried "Kimberley" bricks. A very few lived in houses of concrete blocks. However, rural dwellers did not have to pay rent; they could extend a house if they wished and repairs could be carried out easily and at little cost, using local materials and skills. In this respect they were at an advantage in relation to their urban counterparts.

Since independence, little money was spent on housing for the poor. This was in sharp contrast to one period before independence, 1956-1960, when 20,000 low-cost houses were constructed. (20) About half of government spending on housing went, not on house construction, but on subsidized rent for civil servants. About half of that allocation went to senior civil servants. They lived in subsidized rented houses, then built themselves top-class houses using government-subsidized mortgages, and then rented those houses out to others - all at the same time. (21)

About three-quarters of all spending on housing went on medium to upper class construction. About 5% went on shanties built by squatters out of their own pockets; their dwellings constituted some 60% of all new housing.(22) With rapid urbanization the demand for new housing greatly exceeded supply, pushing prices and rents out of reach of all but the wealthy. When a modest three-bedroomed bungalow in a provincial town could fetch a monthly rent in the region of K3,000 in late eighties, or several times the average monthly salary, the dimensions of the problem could be grasped.

Rented accommodation owned by district councils consisted mostly of houses constructed before independence. The virtual absence of maintenance work on them meant that many had reached the end of their serviceable life after about thirty or forty years. Heavy rains which leave foundations water-logged for weeks at a time in some seasons, together with the depredations of white ants, took a heavy toll. Although rent was low by European standards - about K75 ($9 in 1989) a month - many Zambians could not afford it. Councils were reluctant to evict rent defaulters because of the political consequences, so that income from rents was low. As a result, councils had little money for maintenance or new construction. Families who found themselves hard-pressed to pay their monthly rent overcame the problem by illegally sub-letting a room of their tiny house to another family, and then charged them the full rent so as to be able to pay their own bill. The concentration of people in "compounds" and shantytowns on the edges of the cities overstrained water supplies and sewage disposal facilities, and became a public health hazard. A further difficulty was that only between 6 and 10% of houses in urban areas have electricity. (23)

There were many difficulties involved in constructing new houses. One of the first was that new legislation on land ownership passed in the early nineteen seventies made it difficult to establish ownership on a firm legal basis. (24) Title deeds were of doubtful legal value. All land was legally vested in the President. This insecurity caused some to hesitate about committing themselves, despite the fact that, in practice, life went on as before, and the new legislation had little practical impact.

A second difficulty was the scarcity and high cost of building materials. There were long delays in obtaining building supplies and it could take years to complete a simple project. A farcical situation was reached in 1988 when Grey Zulu, the secretary-general of UNIP (the United National Independence Party, for long Zambia's sole political party), demanded in a nation-wide TV address that the prices of building materials be reduced. The following day, Zambia Cement Limited, a State-owned company, announced an increase in cement prices, and, one week later, Zambia Steel and Building Supplies Limited, another State-owned company, raised its prices by 45%, the government having earlier rejected the company's application for an increase of 100%. I can recall a builder engaged on a project in Livingstone making a round trip of some 950 kilometres to Lusaka in order to buy three-inch nails; he returned without them as they were not available in the capital. Another obstacle to any programme of building was the high level of theft of building materials. President Kaunda bemoaned the fact that the first thing a contractor had to do in starting a project was to build a wall around the site to safeguard materials.

The overall effect of these factors was a continued decline in the quality of housing, more over-crowding in urban areas, escalating house prices and serious public-health problems, including occasional outbreaks of cholera in Lusaka and the Copperbelt which necessitated large-scale treatment with antibiotics and daily collections of corpses by local authority trucks for mass burial. The sight of Lusaka City Council trucks in Kalingalinga compound making a daily collection of corpses was one that frightened many people.

Marriage

In this area, perhaps more than in most areas of Zambian life, the signs read "Approach with caution". One reason was the rapid pace of change throughout Zambian society. There was considerable diversity in it, for example, between different tribes, between urban and rural areas, and between rich and poor. Despite these areas of difference, there were also substantial areas of common ground. Traditional marriage still dictates the content in most areas. For example, where a couple entered into Christian marriage in a church, it seemed more likely that they did so with their own concept of what constituted marriage than any evangelical or theological concept. Church ritual shaped the ceremony rather than the commitment.

If you asked a young Zambian why he or she wanted to marry, the answer was almost invariably "To have children". Children were the prime consideration. If a woman did not produce children, that ended the marriage in all but the rarest of cases. In such cases, it would be assumed to be her "fault". When a woman reached the menopause, the man might well take a young second wife and have another family.

Ask a young Zambian married man who was the most important woman in his life, and the answer would probably be "My mother", followed by "My sisters". A man could have many wives; he had only one mother. After marriage, his relationship with *his* extended family remained dominant. His relationship to his wife remained subordinate to that.

If a young man were asked about fidelity in marriage, he would answer that his wife should be faithful to him. Asked if he were equally obliged to fidelity to her, the most likely answer would be a laugh. Ask a silly question and you get a silly answer.

Ask a man about equality between man and woman in marriage, and the answer would be one of puzzlement. How could a woman be the equal of a man? He marries her; she is married by him. He is active, she is passive. If she went with other men, it was an insult to him: she was a tramp, a slut, a whore. If he arrived home to find her in bed with another man, he would vent his anger on her rather than on the man. But if he went with other women, it was a merry frolic and she would be expected to understand. Double standards were a large part of the picture. He would state firmly that his wife should respect him, and that he would teach her to do so (which could include beating her), but the idea of his respecting her remained foreign, occasionally acknowledged at a nominal level by those who saw themselves as modern or educated. The “Big Man” syndrome pervaded Zambian life, actively encouraged, it must be said, by mothers vis-à-vis their sons.

Nonetheless, underlying this was an acceptance, at least at the notional level, that marriage involves sharing, mutuality and reciprocity. It was fully accepted that the free consent of man and woman constituted the basis without which marriage does not exist. Arranged marriages, the norm in the past, have largely disappeared.

The state of marriage in earlier centuries is an unknown quantity. Zambians of the older generation assert emphatically that marriage in the past was monogamous (except for chiefs) and permanent, and that infidelity was the exception. However, research on this subject, to

the very limited extent that it has been carried out, does not support this view, at least as far as the nineteenth century was concerned. It is difficult to make reliable statements about earlier periods owing to the absence of written records. It seems that the picture of happy married life in the past, as represented by oral tradition, was really only the imaginative reconstruction of a Golden Age which had all desirable attributes - except existence. In a society where inter-tribal warfare, slavery and slave raiding were common, it would be surprising indeed if marital stability were the norm.

In the past, marriages involved the parents and extended families to a greater degree than in recent times. Some were simply arranged by parents, while others involved lengthy negotiations which still left the final say to the young man and woman. A pre-requisite for marriage was the ability to support a family; a man had to be able to show that he could support a wife and children. In many cases, he would also have had to possess cattle, and these would form the *lobola*. This word, an import into Zambia, means different things to different people according to custom and tradition. It has been translated as "dowry", "bride-price", or "bride-wealth". It might perhaps be best understood as "child-price", as it represented the payment(s) which a man made to the parents of his prospective bride at different stages, in recognition of their expenditure on her, and which gave him the right to have children by her. Similarly, if a man made a woman pregnant outside of marriage, he was expected to compensate her parents for her loss of status in the eyes of a prospective husband.

In Zambian society, wider group relationships were usually more important than individual ones. Marriage was a partnership, not simply of two individuals, but of two extended families and lineage groups. This provided a powerful network of relationships which might equally be a benefit or a burden. In times of stress, there were many people who could be called on for help. For example, if a couple quarrelled, the senior relatives might be called on to give advice, and, if considered necessary, correction. On the other hand, in some tribes, if the husband died, his brothers had first claim on his property, and his widow might be left with nothing but the clothes she wore.

Traditionally, a man married a woman for children, for her capacity for work, and for sexual satisfaction. A woman's greatest attribute was her fertility, both as a mother and a producer of food. Women were proud of their physical strength, in terms of childbearing and work in the fields. Normally a woman who gave birth returned to work in the fields on the same day, her new-born baby on her back. Not to marry was unthinkable: it was a rejection of family, community, and even of life itself. Since the birth of children was the principal purpose of marriage, it was normal for a woman to be pregnant at the time of marriage. Her future husband wished to be assured that she could have children, and there was only one way to find out. Premarital sex was almost universal. It was freely sought and freely given, seen as part of a process of several stages which culminate in a marriage ceremony.

Marriage was entered into with care and preparation. Young men and women were instructed in the responsibilities of adulthood and marriage by relatives and elders. It was not the practice for parents to speak of sexual matters to their children. In some tribes there were special camps where teenagers spent a period of some months in preparation for adult responsibilities. (25) In the case of boys, this might be part of a rite of passage such as circumcision. Sexual instruction was set in the context of marriage, adult responsibility, and duty to the community.

Unfortunately, the above substantially disappeared with modern education, urbanization and the decline of the extended family. It was replaced by school lessons in biology or civics and advice on using condoms to avoid AIDS. It was one area among many in Zambia, where what was modern was far from adequate as a substitute for a tradition discarded as old-fashioned. Similarly, the traditional marriage ceremony, which involved lengthy instruction from elders on the duties of married life, was rapidly disappearing, and young people married, cohabited or divorced readily.

The available evidence suggests that polygamy was common in traditional marriage. It was widely practised by chiefs as a way of cementing political alliances. In times of war it was a way of replacing lost manpower. It extended the network of family relationships, creating new bonds of unity. Wives were a source of wealth, since they did most of the agricultural work, and it was to a man's advantage to have many. A childless wife might be relieved that her husband took a second wife as it reduced her chances of being dismissed to her own village as a failure. She could still have a place in her husband's village as a farm worker and an assistant to his other wives.

Young men lost out in this system. Older men had more wealth, and could afford to have more wives. These in turn created new wealth, enabling them to have still more. A young man, especially one with little wealth, could only wait for a long time until he could save a few cattle for the *lobola*, or marry a divorcee, since, in her case, the *lobola* would be much less. Not surprisingly, extra-marital affairs flourished under this system. Young women married to older men would not say no to a night with a physically attractive and unattached young man.

Women in a polygamous society lived in a state of permanent insecurity. A woman's greatest fear was that her husband might divorce her, and that was easy for him to do when he could find replacements without difficulty. Quarrels between wives, and jealousy over their relative status, were normal. Sometimes the price to be paid for retaining a husband was to accede without question to his sexual demands, however demeaning they might be. Polygamy locked a woman into a state of permanent inequality.

In the period under consideration, perhaps as many as a quarter of marriages in Zambia were polygamous. The proportion was higher in rural than in urban areas. In rural areas, extra wives were valued as farm workers, whereas in urban areas, they might be an economic burden, and housing would be a special problem. Polygamy may diminish in the future, principally because of economic pressures associated with urbanization.

Urbanization loosened the ties with tribe, community and extended family, leaving many people with a sense of drift and alienation. The rapid pace of change contributed to young people feeling that any life-long commitment was too great a risk to undertake and too much of a limitation on their freedom. But the new freedom to come and go at will brought with it the loss of a sense of belonging, and a new insecurity, the expectation of a break-up becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The divorce rate appeared to have accelerated rapidly in recent decades though there were no reliable statistics to make an accurate assessment possible. Very few people entered a civil

marriage, most preferring a traditional one or - in the case of a tiny proportion - a church marriage. One survey stated that in some areas half of all marriages ended in divorce. (26) Another stated that, by middle age, half of those living in towns would have had four or five partners. (27) The real figure was probably somewhere between the two. One indicator was that about 80% of local court cases dealt with marriage disputes. (28) In inter-tribal marriages, the frequency was greater, perhaps as high as 70% in the first twenty years. (29) This may have been due in part to differences of custom and tradition, as well as the difficulty of finding mutually acceptable mediators in times of conflict.

One factor which almost certainly contributed to the increased divorce rate was seasonal migration for the purpose of finding employment. A province such as Luapula, for instance, saw many young men go to the Copperbelt each year in the hope of finding temporary work. Their wives remained at home in the village. The young men often stayed in the cities even when they failed to find work, living off relatives and gradually breaking away from ties of home and family. After two or three years of waiting in vain for her husband to return, the wife might drift off to another marriage with an older, more secure man as his second or third wife.

It was easy for a man to divorce his wife. In some tribes, he needed only to write her a note stating, "I divorce you", and that was the end of the matter. He could keep the children if they were weaned and the divorced wife would had to go to wherever she could find a home. Women, by contrast, lived in dread of divorce. A divorced woman was seen as a failure: she had failed to please her husband. She would probably lose her children, while knowing well that a future stepmother was unlikely to care for them. She might not be accepted back by her own family, as they might feel that she had brought shame on them. She had little choice but to try and find a man who would take her as a second or third wife, with the inferior status of a rejected failure.

Women were reluctant to look for divorce, and courts were slow to grant them. If a woman really wanted one, but her husband was unwilling to cooperate, she could get her way by setting out to make life miserable for him. She might go away on prolonged visits to her relatives, give them the house-keeping money, leave the children without care, burn food, neglect the household tasks, arrange “accidents” and so on. After a few months of that, the husband might be more than ready to accede to her wishes. But women knew that it was difficult for them to live singly unless they were prepared to earn a living in a business such as beer-brewing, or in running what was euphemistically called a "guest-house". (The owner of one such establishment described it as a “pleasure hospital.” He explained this on television, stating that hospitals are places that make people happy, and he wanted to do that. But so as to avoid confusion with the nearby Provincial Hospital he named his premises a Pleasure Hospital.)

In the nineteen sixties and seventies the situation changed in another respect. Young men found they could not get the money for the *lobola* or for housing. Instead of entering into a stable marriage, they came to live in serial cohabitation with any woman who would support them. Drifting from one casual relationship to another, they became involved in crime, drunkenness and drug addiction. *Dagga* (cannabis) and *mandrax*, a synthetic drug, were the commonest. This lifestyle brought with it a high risk of contracting and communicating sexually transmitted diseases.

Young women, especially those with professional training, were increasingly reluctant to marry. They knew from observation that, if they married, they would be almost completely under their husband's control. He might take their salary and spend it on himself, on drink or clothes, or use it to pay the *lobola* for a second wife, or to pay fines levied by local courts for his affairs with “private wives”. She would then be expected to support the children by a second job such as gardening, and, if he were drunk, which might often be the case, he could beat her at will. Some young women became unwilling to accept such a situation and they avoided it simply by not marrying. However, since they wished to have children, they met this need by a series of casual liaisons with a variety of men. In this way they could keep the children as their own since none of the men would be in a position to establish a claim to paternity. Many Zambians were reluctant to admit that such situations existed, much less that they were common, but one had only to know the staff of institutions such as hospitals, schools or government departments to find many examples of it.

Sex was seen as a gift to be enjoyed; it was uninhibited and met with little moral censure. In Zambia one found little pornography. There was almost no overt practice of homosexuality; the few instances of homosexual activity which became known were usually at the instigation of an expatriate taking advantage of a penniless young Zambia in return for money. Instances of sexual perversion were rare. The overburden of guilt which seemed to bedevil European attitudes to sex was unknown to Zambians. But the basic healthy taboos were in place. Sex was simply enjoyed freely between men and women like food and fresh air.

A Zambian marriage might be shallow, oppressive and manipulative, or it might be deep, loving and respectful, according to the relationship of the couple. Zambians did not readily discuss marriage in public as that was seen as lacking respect for the privacy of the other. Neither would a Zambian man, though he might feel affection for his wife, ever be publicly demonstrative of it; that would be regarded as exhibitionistic. Where Zambians discuss the question, the idea of marriage as companionship between man and woman was well down the list of priorities, while having children was at the top. The romantic, misty-eyed, dreamy, Hollywood type of love meant nothing to Zambians of either sex. It was closer to a contract of mutual convenience, and, if love developed later, that was a welcome bonus.

There was perhaps some truth in the saying that a Zambian man desired his wife, found companionship with his male friends, and loved his mother and sisters.

Family life

For a Zambian, the word *family* meant the extended family. Cousins, uncles and aunts were part of it. One could say that Zambians did not have *a* family, but several, though one's own parents and siblings, wife and children had priority.

At its best the extended family acted as a powerful moral and psychological support. In times of trouble, it was an informal and highly effective social security system. A powerful example of this, though not from Zambia, developed in the mid nineteen eighties when

Nigeria, at two weeks' notice, expelled over a million Ghanaians living and working in the country. They were absorbed by their extended families and supported by them until they could find their feet. No governmental bureaucracy could have coped with such a problem with anything like the same effectiveness or compassion. Zambia had neither old peoples' homes nor orphanages because the extended family provided for those needs. Likewise it provides a safety net for children when death or divorce broke their homes. I recall a retired and widowed school caretaker who, by himself, looked after thirteen grandchildren orphaned by AIDS. Without him, they would have been helpless.

The other side of the coin was that the extended family fostered parasitism by relatives. A person with a good job or business might find relatives coming to him for visits of perhaps two or three months at a time. He would be expected to provide for them as if they were members of his own family, and give them money for transport home, and perhaps provide for their children's education as well. As a result of this, civil servants, to take one example, welcomed appointments to places far from home, as it gave them a break from incessant demands by relatives. Through the extended family people were enabled to offload their responsibilities onto relatives, and the person with initiative and energy to go ahead in the world found him- or her-self dragged back by unending demands for help. It was very difficult to refuse, as this was seen as a rejection of one's own people. Another problem arising from it was friction between husband and wife, as each might suspect the other of favouritism towards his or her side of the family.

In agricultural life, the nuclear family was the basic unit of production; it was consumption which was communal. In urban life, the extended family was still effective though it came under increasing strain for economic reasons. Despite this, and Zambia's increasing urbanization, it would be premature to say that the extended family is doomed to die with the passage of time. (Japan, a highly industrialized and urbanized society, still has a form of extended family life.)

Zambian families were large, having about eight children, of whom perhaps five would survive into adulthood. Official statistics for child deaths ranged from 20% to 40% of children under five years old. (30) A United Nations survey in 1970-72 estimated that 76% of Zambian children under five years were malnourished. (31) The situation worsened substantially in later years and the rate of malnutrition doubled between 1983 and 1987 alone. (32) A district governor stated in 1988 that an average of twenty children a day died of malnutrition in Ndola hospitals. Though that figure was almost certainly an exaggeration, it indicated the direction in which the trend was moving. Life expectancy, which was 48 in 1981 (33), dropped since then to 42.

The first duty of a Zambian adult was to reproduce. Not to have a child was regarded as among the greatest of misfortunes. Children were loved and cared for. A mother would carry a baby on her back until it was weaned at the age of two to three; this probably created deep psychological and emotional bonds between mother and child. On the surface Zambian children seemed happy, stable, well-mannered and obedient, and remarkably free from many of the problems that seem to beset children in the “developed” world. Underneath the surface the picture may have been different.

Abortion and infanticide, though rarely acknowledged, were not uncommon. Civil law allowed abortion freely. An Abortion Act was passed in the early seventies; its three stages were debated in the National Assembly in 55 minutes and passed with only 9 members of parliament in the chamber for the vote. It was stated at the time, but without confirmation, that passage of the Act was required as a precondition for a loan from an international lending institution. In practice, abortion only rarely took place in hospital, partly because they were quite unable to cope with the routine demands of therapeutic medicine, much less provide abortions, but also, and especially, because abortion was widely regarded as morally wrong, and not something to be admitted openly. Abortion was not uncommon among girls who feared dismissal from school if a pregnancy were discovered. They were prepared to resort to a variety of practices, from traditional herbal abortifacients to taking paraffin (kerosene), detergent or large doses or chloroquin (a treatment for malaria), sometimes resulting in death.

Parents liked to have large families and there was no great interest in child spacing. One reason for wanting a large family was to ensure that at least some of them would survive and look after the parents in their old age. In rural areas, the more children one had, the more farm workers one had. Older children produced more than they ate. Traditionally, polygamy was a form of child spacing; while one wife was nursing a baby, the other would have sexual relations with the husband. This ensured a rest for a woman between one pregnancy and the next. In urban areas, an interest in family planning developed in recent years, largely because of economic pressures and the inadequacy of urban housing. But it was slow to develop. At the governmental level, it was initially seen as a Western plot to keep Africa down, a colonialism of the womb. Men reacted against it, as they saw contraceptives such as the Pill opening the way to infidelity on the part of their wives. Perhaps at a deeper level they feared a loss of control over them. Women rejected contraception as basically anti-life, an attempt to deprive them of what was most essentially theirs, their capacity to give new life. There were happy to be mothers, and fertility was something to be proud of. This was one area where they reigned supreme, and no one was going to deprive them of it. Mum, Dad, Junior and Sis were definitely not the average Zambian's idea of the happy family. More was better.

In the long run, development would be the best contraceptive. If parents could see that their children would survive because of good nutrition and modern health care, they would probably come to understand that it was not necessary to have so many. If and when conditions of life in rural areas improved, the necessity of having so many children would not be so pressing. This and other factors called for re-thinking on the part of family planning strategists. In the minds of those Zambians who had a real awareness of the possibility of family planning - and they were a small minority - family planning came to be equated with not having children. This essentially negative approach did not win support among a people whose deepest orientation was towards life. A better approach in terms of human appeal would have been to view the matter in the context of a marriage based on dialogue and cooperation between husband and wife, together with allowing the body to function normally instead of sterilizing it. Such an approach would be both more challenging and more positive. A large problem was in male attitudes towards women's sexuality, where the husband was not willing to accept sexual restraint, claiming his “right” to sex as and when he wanted it. If that problem could be overcome - a very large challenge - such an approach could be communicated from couple to couple without the bureaucracy of Family Planning Associations and the requirement of large financial expenditure and technical input.

Children in Zambia suffered a lot emotionally and psychologically from the disturbances associated with divorce and polygamy. It must be deeply disturbing to a child to be passed from one relative to another in its early years. The child learned early not to trust, as this would only bring disappointment. Anyone who has lived and worked with Zambians knows that there was little trust among adults, and Zambians themselves freely admitted this. It may be traceable to the instability of their childhood. Abuse and exploitation of children were far from uncommon. When a mother was divorced, she most likely would have to leave her children in the newcomer's care. It would be exceptional for a stepmother to treat the children with care and love, and it was not uncommon to find examples of coldness, indifference and harshness. That kind of treatment inescapably took its toll.

Perhaps the worst exploiters of children were teachers. In rural areas, it was common to find children boarding with teachers because their homes were far away from school, and so parents arranged for their children to stay with teachers in return for work in their homes and fields. Such children often lived in conditions which differed little from serfdom. They were sometimes made to work very hard, were inadequately housed and fed, even in the cold season, sometimes living in shelters which consisted of nothing more than a grass roof and they were at the beck and call of the teacher's family for every service they required. In the case of girls, this could include satisfying a male teacher's sexual appetite. It was not surprising that suicide sometimes occurred in such cases.

Normally the father was the head of the family. At mealtimes, he ate first and alone unless he had a male relative or friend to entertain, and it was accepted that he would take the best food for himself. When he had finished, his wife and children would eat. He was the decision-maker and his word was final, though there might have be consultation with his wife in private. Though often aloof, (a Zambian father might not be entirely sure how many children he had or what their names were, simply calling them 'You!') there was little doubt that he had real, if undemonstrated, love for his children. In Zambia, in contrast to many other countries, fathers generally valued daughters more than sons, as they would bring in a *lobola* from their future husbands. In rural areas, the wife rather than the husband was the breadwinner, as she did most of the agricultural work. Men’s traditional activities of farming and fishing enjoyed little status, with the result that some men appeared to drift through life without purpose or a sense of self-worth, and sought refuge from reality in drunkenness. Though insistent on being treated with deference as the head of the family, not a few men were self-centred and immature in a manner more reminiscent of children.

Education

Traditional education in Zambia was similar to that in other traditional societies. Young people learned the skills and trades of village life by doing them with their parents and the village community. There was little specialization, apart from the hunter, the medicine-man, the black-smith and, perhaps, the thatcher. The nearest thing to a school was the initiation camp of some tribes. The traditions of the tribe were learned from storytellers around the fire in the evening, and customs and culture were passed on in daily living. It was a simple education, but education it certainly was. It communicated a culture effectively, and a young person who passed through it was equipped to take his or her place in society. They were

trained for work, and there was work for them to do. As already mentioned, education for adult responsibilities, including marriage and parenthood, was a normal part of growing up. Traditional educational did not include reading, writing or arithmetic, but it prepared the young for life and set them on the road to adulthood in a society where they could feel at home.

Missionaries laid the foundations of Zambia's school system. In the years between 1890 and 1924, when the country, then known as Northern Rhodesia, was under the rule of the British South Africa Company founded under royal charter by Cecil Rhodes in 1889 – an example of the privatization of colonialism - the setting up of a school system was almost entirely the product of missionary endeavour. The Company, though committed in terms of its charter to developing the territory, did next to nothing. It maintained one school for European children, contributed an annual £185 to one school for Africans, and that was that. (34) By 1924, out of 50,000 children attending school, all but 600 were educated by missionaries. (35) The Company maintained one hospital, exclusively for Europeans, and twenty-nine jails, exclusively for Africans. (36)

Under the administration of the British Colonial Office, from 1924 to 1953, the school system expanded steadily. The model on which it was based was the European one, and only limited attempts were made to re-think what education might be about in an African setting. Government spending was still tiny - less than £200,000 in 1946 (37) - and most of this was in small grants to supplement the work of the churches.

From 1953 to1963, Northern Rhodesia formed part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now Zimbabwe and Malawi). Under its rule, the system was extended further, but it still had a discriminatory character. *Per capita* spending on white children was more than eleven times that on black children, though this was an improvement on the situation under Colonial Office rule when the ratio was ninety to one. (38). By 1963, virtually on the eve of independence, only 960 children had completed secondary (high) school out of a population of about 3.5 million. (39)

With independence in 1964, a determined drive was made to expand the system. Between 1964 and 1984, the number of primary school children multiplied by 3½ while numbers in secondary school multiplied by about nine. In the first six years of independence, spending on education multiplied by seven. It was a time when money was plentiful and education a national priority. (40) In 1981, the level of literacy was put at 28%.

At the same time, blunders were committed. No one was more attached to the European model of education than Zambian educational administrators. Education in the culture, history and traditions of one's people was dropped, and replaced by doses of party propaganda under the label of civics. It was an attempt to build a new nation, not on the foundation, but on the destruction of the past. Many, perhaps most, young Zambians came to have little idea or - regrettably - interest in their traditions. They probably knew more about Bob Marley than about their chief. This created a sense of being a citizen of no land, a child of no culture, a hybrid human wandering in a wasteland of the mind.

In the first year after independence, English was introduced as the medium of instruction. The reason was political: Zambia had no single *lingua franca*; it had some seventy-three languages. In order to avoid the accusation of tribalism, and in an attempt to create bonds of

national unity, English was adopted as the official language of the country. This caused large problems in schools, since teachers were required to use a language they knew less than perfectly, while, for the pupils, it meant that every lesson, whether in history or home economics, became in fact a lesson in English. This must have had a limiting effect on progress especially in primary (grade) school.

Trade schools were closed, and classes in various trades in primary school were dropped. The argument was that they were a colonial tactic to reduce Zambians to the status of manual workers for whites. It was a long time before the government acknowledged its mistake, but it never took seriously the challenge of providing technical education despite the obvious and pressing need for it. Education was made a white-collar institution.

The examination system was an example of replacing the traditional values of co-operation and mutual help with the new values of competitiveness and productivity. In 1989, out of every 100 young children in Zambia, about 85 began primary school. Of the 85, about 21 would in time pass the grade 7 examination which was the entry requirement for secondary school. Of the 21, about 5 would pass the grade 9 examination, allowing them to continue their education. And, of the 5, about 2 would pass the grade 12 examination which marked the end of secondary education. (41) The dropouts were left with a sense of failure. The system, in grading them, degraded them, to quote Ivan Illich. (42) The children felt they had failed and they blamed themselves for it. They lived in a half-world, neither in a new, modern society, nor in the old, traditional one. They were unable to do agricultural work, having lost contact with it and been taught to despise it. They were unable to take up work in a town since, beyond some knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic, they were trained for nothing. Far from being able to take a place in adult society, they drifted aimlessly in unemployment, unable to do a day's work, and growing progressively less capable of doing so as the years went by.

These young people were the casualties of a system designed to create a self-perpetuating elite. The 2% of children who completed secondary education and went on to some form of third-level education were the privileged minority for whom the school system really existed. The dropouts, separated by the school system from land, language, family and tradition were branded by society as failures. It was a case of throwing mud in people's faces and then blaming them for having a dirty face. An education system which left 98% of children with an abiding sense of failure was itself a failure. What was most remarkable about this system was that few seemed to question it. Symptoms were analysed, but not causes. No one seemed to ask whether there might be another approach; it was assumed in some magical, irrational act of faith that all that was required was to extend the existing system. And the unfortunate dropouts, instead of being regarded as potential assets, were considered a problem, a possible political hazard.

What alternatives were available? In the first place, it was necessary to recognize that there was a problem. Unless that was done, there could be no progress. But there was little sign of such recognition. There needed to be a radical re-think of the goals and methods of the education system. One part of such a review needed to be an overhaul of the practical realities of primary education. The standard of teaching was low, and indiscipline in the teaching profession widespread. One “guesstimate” was that teachers missed about one-third of their classes, mainly through drunkenness, going to *bomas* for shopping or collecting

salaries, or attending funerals or UNIP Party meetings. (43) Their reputation in the community was low because, in addition to absenteeism, they were widely regarded as dishonest in handling school funds, and, in the case of male teachers, of impregnating schoolgirls, even at the primary level. The educational administration habitually ignored such problems.

Not all of the blame could fairly be laid on the shoulders of teachers. Their conditions of work were poor. Their housing, where it existed, was of a low standard. School buildings, with very few exceptions, had no maintenance work done on them after construction. Schools without doors and windows were commonplace, and equipment broken was not replaced. It was normal for schools in rural areas to suffer from shortages of chalk, pencils, exercise books, desks and blackboards. Teachers posted to rural areas were often left there and forgotten; they were expected to work effectively almost entirely through self-motivation and without support from the administration. For example, a pupil, no matter how bad his behaviour, was almost impossible to dismiss. Since some primary school children were in their teens, even late teens, bad behaviour could be bad indeed, and might include drug taking, assault and rape.

Very few schools were built in the period 1976-91. Classes were doubled or more than doubled in size to the point where teachers who really wished to teach were under such pressure that they were no longer able to cope. And the most they could hope for from the Ministry of Education was an exhortation to work harder.

Government spending on education dropped by 20% in real terms between 1977 and 1987. (44) Generally speaking, government spending on education ran at about 2.5% of GDP. The prospects for any real increase being slim, there needed to be some hard choices about priorities. To improve the primary sector, a lot of money would have been needed. Some of this could have been taken from secondary schools by closing the subsidized boarding units which catered at public expense for the children of the (relatively) wealthy. Another step would have been to introduce fees even if only at a low level. After independence, Zambia had set out to provide a comprehensive and free educational system from primary level through to university. That goal was impossible even when copper was highly priced. Later on, it ceased to be anything more than a dream, and attempts to provide it simply starved the system of funds, with a consequent lowering of standards. From the viewpoint of getting value for money spent, the re-introduction into primary school of trade-training for boys and girls would have been a step in the right direction.

There was need for an alternative to the existing system. One initially promising development was the introduction of fee-paying private secondary schools. Such schools, set up in most large centres, proved to be an expensive failure. Their educational standards were no better, and in some cases worse, than those in government schools. Their existence did, however, demonstrate one important point, namely, that some parents were willing and able to pay for their children's education. That was a point worth bearing in mind in reforming a system that suffered both quantitatively and qualitatively from lack of adequate financing.

As already mentioned, missionaries laid the foundation of Zambia's school system. They built schools, taught in them, trained teachers and administrators, and then, in 1974, completed the process of transferring full control of the primary system to government. That

was a step that has since been widely regretted by government, teachers and pupils alike, but it was irreversible. Standards have fallen badly in schools since the departure of missionaries from their management, but, for better or worse, it has become the responsibility of Zambians to lift them up again.

There remained a substantial Church presence in secondary schools. Their academic standards were high and competition was keen to get into them. Government ministers made sure their children attended a Church-run school, or else a government-run school with missionaries on the staff. Nonetheless, it was difficult to understand the rationale that lay behind such schools. Their efforts seemed not to bear very much relation to their stated goal. Their goal, according to advocates of the system, was to spread the Christian message, but their efforts seemed to be directed mainly towards passing exams. Their proudest boast was that they were more successful than government schools in getting pupils through them. That boast was well founded: they were better than other schools in equipping children to run faster and fight harder in the race for power, position and possessions. But how that related to their stated goal was difficult to understand. In the past, they challenged the *status quo* by struggling hard, and with eventual success, to ensure that girls had equal opportunities in education. Recently, they became content to reflect the *status quo*, and to accept without serious question the values of Western materialism in Zambian education.

Health

Compared to many African countries, Zambia was blessed with an abundance of water, though much of it was contaminated by bilharzia (*schistosomiasis*), a parasitic water-borne disease. Its major rivers, the Zambezi, Luangwa and Kafue could provide much more than was needed, if properly managed. However, Zambia had a large problem in utilizing its resources effectively. Since independence there was rapid growth in the urban population. Lusaka, for example, with a population of some 80,000 before independence grew to about 1½ million before anything was done to increase its water supply. Water shortages in towns became common, and people could be seen in compounds and shanties gathered around public standpipes waiting patiently for a trickle to flow through. Development money went to high profile projects, such as multi-storey office blocks, rather than to water and sewage-disposal systems. Maintenance of existing equipment virtually ceased and, as equipment broke down, it was abandoned with little attempt at repair.

Eventually political pressures forced the government to act. It invited foreign government to provide new systems. Italy, Ireland, Germany and Norway stepped in, rehabilitating and expanding existing systems or providing entirely new ones. This relieved the problem for a time in some towns, but what remained was the challenge to sustain those systems through regular preventative maintenance work, such as changing filters and servicing engines and pumps. Unfortunately, the record was one of almost total failure to do such work.

Similar problems existed in most towns in relation to sewage and rubbish disposal. The failure to cope with these situations constituted a health hazard to urban populations. In addition, the Copperbelt, Zambia's most industrialized and densely populated area, had a significant water pollution problem relating to the discharge of industrial waste from mines

and manufacturing industries. The country was lucky to have escaped major outbreaks of water-borne diseases, but it was pushing its luck to the limits.

Zambia's staple foods were maize, millet, sorghum, cassava and rice. Other foods such as groundnuts, sweet potato, cowpea, and cane sugar occupied a secondary place. Meat cost anything from K50 to K120 ($6 to $15) a kilo in towns in the late eighties, and most families could not have had meat more than once a month, if that. Fish, mostly dried, were almost as expensive. Eggs sold for about K2 each, an expensive item in a country where those lucky enough to have a job earned perhaps an average of about K400 ($50) a month. Fruit and vegetables were available in season but they were expensive and generally not of very good quality. ("Natural" food, that is, food untainted by chemicals, might mean food affected by aphids, mildew, insects, cockroaches and rats.) Fresh milk was unavailable to most people. Canned foods were beyond the reach of all but a small minority. With difficulty they might be able to buy milk powder donated for free distribution by the European Community but sold on the black market. Locally brewed beer, known as *chibuku*, provided some nourishment for adults. There were different varieties: "Four Days", Seven Days" and others, some with fruit added to assist the fermentation process. Bread, at upwards of K12 ($1.50) a loaf, was beyond the pockets of most Zambians and was declared a luxury by President Kaunda in 1977.

In urban and rural areas alike, there were frequent shortages of sugar, salt, soap, matches, cooking oil and mealie-meal, or milled maize. This latter was cooked into a kind of porridge called *sadza, buhobe, nshima* or *ubwali*. It formed the core of every meal. Zambians would spend a large part of their time queuing for hours, sometimes even at night, to buy a small supply of these basic necessities. In rural areas, the same basic shortages existed, though the problem was not as pressing, since people could usually grow most of their own food, and, in some cases, have access to fresh milk, forest fruits and perhaps honey. Game meat was rare. However, a government ruling that 80% of all basic commodities had to be sold through State-owned stores created problems for rural dwellers since they did not have easy access to them. The real effect of that decision was to extend the black market from town to country.

A survey from the early nineteen eighties stated that the average Zambian had 87% of daily calorie needs. (45) If a similar survey had been conducted in the early nineties there is no doubt that it would have shown a substantial worsening of the situation. Another survey, which examined a wider range of human needs, showed that 60% of Zambians lived below the level at which basic human needs were met. (46) The "Fanta children" of Kalingalinga compound in Lusaka are one such example: their mothers have to leave home for work, and a bottle of Fanta was the child's food until she returned.

The average Zambian household was a large one. In addition to mother, father, and perhaps seven or eight children, there might also be relatives, often unemployed, who stayed because they had nowhere to go and no money to live on. If one took an average salary to be about K400 ($50) a month in 1989, and if one posited a wholly imaginary situation where a family was able to devote all its income to the purchase of food, then, with great difficulty, it might have been possible for a household to scrape through the month. Of course such a situation is unreal. Rent and water have to be paid for. Clothing, footwear, transport, charcoal for cooking and payments to school funds have to be met. A pair of man's shoes, or a woman's dress, could absorb the monthly wage. Even when there was careful management of income,

the average Zambian faced increasing hardship, with every prospect of a worsening of the situation. And careful management was not universal; a survey in Kitwe showed that the average man spent 10% of the family income on drink. (47)

Food is the best medicine, but Zambia did not produce enough to meet its needs. Consequently, its population had considerable health problems. Diarrhoea, measles and malnutrition were common killers of children. Adults, too, suffered from malnutrition together with tuberculosis, polio and sexually transmitted diseases. Whooping cough and tetanus were also a problem. Malaria, which, in Zambia, killed about 25,000 people a year, and accounted for about 30% of all in-patient hospital admissions, was an increasing challenge, especially with new strains against which treatment using *chloroquin* or *Fansidar* became progressively less effective. Medical personnel have increasingly had to use intravenous quinine drips to cope with some strains, and that brought with it the possibility of side effects, as quinine could be hard on the liver and the kidneys.

Zambia embarked after independence on a programme of building small clinics, or health centres, providing free medical care. These grew in number from 247 in 1964 to 883 in 1988. (48) It was estimated that 81% of the population lived within 12 km. of a clinic. (49) However, because of economic constraints, spending on health in 1987 was, in real terms, only 60% of what it had been ten years earlier. (50)

With severe and growing economic problems, it would have made sense for Zambia to concentrate its resources on preventative medicine, particularly on expanded programmes of immunization for those under five years of age, and on mother-and-child care. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Immunization programmes operate only sporadically, especially in rural areas, partly because of transport problems. Vehicles allocated to the work quickly become unusable because of neglect of maintenance, over-loading or rough handling. In addition, it was very difficult to store vaccines at the required temperature where electricity was unavailable and the supply of paraffin (kerosene) for refrigerators erratic.

A large proportion - some put it as high as 40% - of Zambia's health budget went to one institution, the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) in Lusaka. In addition to being the training ground for medical students, it was the country's principal referral hospital. Its medical care was generally good, its nursing care not so, its kitchens were infested with cockroaches and its toilets with rats. Its mortuary was unspeakable. Broken windows allowed rain to fall on patients; neglected gardens bred mosquitoes; theft of sheets, blankets and medicines meant that patients had to bring their own supplies with them; shortages of beds meant that patients sometimes had to sleep on the floor; doctors could not eat in the staff canteen because cutlery had been stolen; funds allocated by overseas agencies evaporated, and so on. UTH was probably the most consistently and justly criticized institution in Zambia. Letters to the newspapers regularly expressed complaints of its bad standards, such as rudeness on the part of the nurses, or their demanding payment in advance for services such as bringing a patient a drink of water. On several occasions the government sought to overhaul the administration, but without effect. The patient seemed beyond cure. It was worth considering whether closing UTH and re-allocating the money to rural and urban health centres might not have saved more lives. The country could not afford the luxury of expensive failures while basic needs elsewhere were not met.

The lynchpin of Zambia's health care system was the small rural or urban health centre. But these could function only with adequate support. They needed an adequate supply of basic medicines; but their allocation was usually enough to meet only half of what was needed in a year. For the rest of the time, people were simply sent home without treatment. Occasionally they might be given a prescription and told to fend for themselves. There were few pharmacists outside of major towns, so prescription drugs were sometimes sold illegally by private traders who could name their price. That meant, for example, that people might have enough money to buy, say, a quarter course of antibiotics, taking which, of course, only worsened their situation. Parents acting in good faith might give their child 2 or 3 *chloroquin* tablets for the treatment of malaria instead of the prescribed 12. The result might be cerebral malaria, leading possibly to mental impairment or even death. Inevitably, also, the shortage of medicines led to theft, favouritism and bribery.

People also attended traditional healers. These men - few were women - were mostly herbalists who acquired a knowledge of medicine from previous generations. It was said by some that they learned which herbs to use by observing which were eaten by sick animals. Whatever truth may be in that, it was certain that those healers were unwilling to share their knowledge with modern medical practitioners. In part, this was undoubtedly a recognition that knowledge was power, and they were unwilling to dilute their power by sharing it with others. Since traditional healers demanded large fees - K600 to 700 (one and a half times the monthly salary in the late eighties) were commonplace - they did not want to lose a valuable source of revenue. Another part of the explanation might be that their knowledge was like the king's new clothes, and they did not wish that to become known. One herbalist I knew told me he used to test a new treatment first on a chicken, then on a cat, then on a dog and finally on himself. If all went well, he gave it to his patients. I have to add that he died not long after we spoke!

Illness and its treatment were never regarded simply as a physical problem. They were often blamed on witchcraft. Unusual or repeated illnesses would be explained by saying that an enemy had bewitched the patient, or that evil spirits had entered into him/her. Traditional healing was linked to witch-hunting and the use of drumming, dancing and washing to drive out evil spirits. The herbalist, the witch-finder, and the witch lived in a symbiotic relationship; sometimes, indeed, they were one and the same person. The healer commonly enjoyed a good measure of success in dealing with psychological or emotional problems; they were part of the *milieu* in which he operated. Herbal treatment of physical illness was a good deal less successful, as many herbalists had little idea about adjusting dosages for different needs, and little capacity for eliminating harmful elements in a course of treatment. Without doubt herbalists were responsible for killing a good number of people each year. What made matters worse was that patients sometimes combined traditional and modern medicines, creating no-one-knows what sort of chemical cocktail in their stomachs. It was not uncommon for patients to bring traditional medicines to hospital and to dose themselves or others with them while at the same time receiving modern treatment. Many unfortunate doctors burdened with a sense of guilt about the inexplicable death of a patient might have found the explanation had they been able to get honest answers to the questions they asked the patient's relatives.

The spread of AIDS created a new challenge, the impact of which was impossible to assess in the early years of its presence in Zambia. When discussion of the disease entered the

public domain about 1983, the response of Zambians, and the Zambian government, was to insist that AIDS did not exist in Africa. This was partly because of its association in Europe and North America with homosexuality which was very strongly rejected and rarely practised in Zambia. It was also motivated by fear that Westerners would despise Zambians as being sex-crazy. The Ministry of Health forbade medical personnel to make any public statements on the subject, and even private discussion was discouraged. When some doctors felt duty-bound to warn people of the danger of having many sexual partners, they found themselves publicly discredited by the Office of the President, the State security police. In one incident, a Zambian doctor who had the courage to tell people the truth found himself publicly denounced by the Office of the President as a liar.

Official policy changed virtually overnight because of one single event: one of President Kaunda's sons died of the disease. The President, to his great credit, openly acknowledged the facts of the case while addressing an AIDS conference in Canada. That single act of honesty made it possible to drop the sham and the pretence, and to face reality. It was disturbing. In a hospital near where I lived, the rate of detection of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, in potential blood donors went as follows: -

1989: 11%
1990: 16%
1991: 19%
1992: 22.5%.

At a national level, a presence of anything from 20 to 35% was indicated. Results could sometimes be difficult to establish with certainty because of confusion with symptoms of tuberculosis, leprosy (Hansen's disease) or even malaria. Prevailing sexual mores facilitated the spread of the disease, and there was no evidence of a willingness to change behaviour. A popular saying had it that everyone believed in AIDS during the day and no one believed in it at night. Every Zambian knew of several relatives and local people who had died of the disease, yet to speak of the need for a change of behaviour was regarded as the wildest unrealism. Condoms were seen as the answer though their supply was at best erratic and inadequate. It was not uncommon to see small children playing with discarded condoms, placing them to their lips and blowing them up like balloons. But most men were unwilling to use condoms; they preferred 'skin-on-skin'. The best that could be said for condoms was that they made sex less dangerous by about 35% - something worthwhile in a situation where casual sex might carry a death penalty.

There was huge denial of the problem: people would say they had been bewitched, or had TB or malaria or almost anything rather than admit - seemingly even to themselves - that they had AIDS. There was a large and increasing problem of orphans, and the extended family system began to break down, unable to cope. Casualties occurred heavily among the people most needed in a developing country, those with higher education and professional training. Since the type of AIDS found in Zambia and elsewhere in Africa was spread by heterosexual sex, the future was bleak. Some utterly irrational superstitions don't help, such as the idea that a person who is HIV positive can get rid of that condition by giving it to a virgin. The effect of this was to increase the number of cases of rape of young girls and an increase among them of the presence of AIDS.

An assessment of Zambia's situation in regard to health care pointed to the need for re-adjustment in three areas, namely, the attitude of Zambian medical personnel, the role of Church clinics and the need for public-private partnership.

Zambia produced about fifty doctors a year, and about thirty-five of those emigrated. Most of those remaining went into private practice in urban areas. Few, if any, were willing to work in rural areas. The great majority of the 450 or so doctors in the country were expatriates as were nearly all doctors in rural areas. Some hospitals had no doctor. The problems described above in relation to UTH were not confined to that institution. There were hospitals where surgeons could perform no surgery because the risk of infection was too great on account of inadequate cleaning and sterilization of theatres. Some hospitals had no medicines beyond aspirins and multi-vitamins. Rural health centres, with honourable exceptions, were badly run, and, not uncommonly, dirty. Staff were not infrequently absent from work, and theft of basic equipment such as beds and bedding were common. Complaints by patients of indifference on the part of staff were common and appeared to be well founded. The lack of adequate supervision and in-service training, coupled with persistent shortages of medicines, go some of the way towards explaining these problems. Indiscipline that went unchallenged and unpunished was also a factor. For example, a laboratory technician who repeatedly made operations impossible by failing to cross-matching blood samples because of being drunk was kept in his position by a Provincial Medical Officer who was himself an alcoholic.

Doctors were very badly paid. While some expatriate doctors were funded by their government as part of an aid programme, Zambian doctors were paid a pittance. I knew a Zambian doctor whose salary was such that, if he and his family could have lived on fresh air, they could have afforded to buy a TV set after saving his salary for six years. And the family's accommodation was one room in the hospital. An expatriate doctor in my local hospital, a woman of 25 years' experience, and the sole doctor, permanently on call in a 95-bed hospital, received a salary which was only K60 (about $4) a month more than the gate-guard who worked a forty-hour week and whose technical skills were no more than knowing how to open and close a padlock and use a flashlight.

The churches provided a substantial proportion of Zambia's medical care. Through the agency of the Churches' Medical Association of Zambia (CMAZ) they ran 44 rural health centres, 29 hospitals out of 82, nine training centres, and provided in all about 5,550 beds. About 50% of people treated in rural areas received their treatment at a church clinic; the proportion in urban areas was about 30%. (51) The level of State funding to such clinics was miserly, perhaps as low as 6% of the ministry's budget. In 1989, the government allocated K35 million, about $2 million, to CMAZ, resulting in a 40% cut in the allocation of drugs to patients. The government undertook to pay the salaries of the staff of those clinics; it did so, but paid less than to the staff of government clinics. Some churches offered to transfer their clinics to government control, but it refused to accept them. Not surprisingly, health workers in church clinics felt exploited, and that did not help their morale.

With some exceptions, church clinics were well run. They were clean and efficient. Their equipment was well maintained, they used carefully the resources allocated to them, and, perhaps most importantly, they motivated their staff to do an honest day's work. They were

an example of what could be done in difficult circumstances with limited resources. With a more equitable share of health funds, they could have done more for the country.

Since 1971, Zambia tried to provide a free health service. A spirit of generous idealism which wanted to remove the discrimination between rich and poor inspired that attempt. It reflected the generous, if impractical, idealism of Kenneth Kaunda, the country's president. The country made substantial progress towards the goal of a free health service when copper prices were high. But those days did not last long. Revenue from copper fell but the hard choices which this necessitated were constantly postponed until there was little room left for manoeuvre. The choice boiled down to one between a health service in fact and one in name. A hospital without a doctor is a hospital only in name, and similarly a health centre without medicine. If a person was suffering from malaria, there was no use in telling him/her that medication might be available next month, even if it were free of charge. Many Zambians were willing and able to pay at least some of the cost of medical care; the fact that many went to traditional healers and to private medical practitioners was evidence of that. But for a long time an ideological bias against medical care other than that controlled by the State prevented a realistic facing of the problem.

In September 1988, the government began to introduce small charges for what were termed "non-lifesaving" drugs; those termed "life-saving" continued to be provided free - when available. That was a step in the right direction, even if it was not clear how much money the new system would raise, or how much time and money would be spent on administering it. An underlying fear was that money raised would not be ploughed back into the system, but become part of general government revenue, or simply be pocketed by local administrators. It was nonetheless the beginning of a public-private partnership which, if developed, might provide the necessary funding for basic needs.

The Law

Zambia had a twin-track legal system. State courts dealt principally with more serious criminal cases, while civil matters and minor criminal cases were usually dealt with in tribal courts. The written laws of the Republic were enacted by the National Assembly, and jurisprudence was exercised in courts that were founded on the British model of Zambia's former colonial masters. One unfortunate inheritance from the British system was the practice of penalizing crimes against property more severely than those against the person. In one court a man who stole a loaf of bread, a blanket and a litre of milk was given a two year jail sentence while, in another, a man who split his wife's head open with an axe was given eighteen months. Neither sentence aroused public comment.

Tribal courts operated according to local custom and tradition. They dealt principally with marriage cases, and disputes over land and cattle. The basis for judgment was not so much written law as common sense, a moral concept of right and wrong, and a strong emphasis on reconciliation in contrast to the adversarial contest derived from the British system. At its best, the tribal system of justice was flexible, practical and realistic about the concrete facts

of life. It was a system which, by and large, had the confidence of the people, and there was little, if any, demand for change in it.

The same could not be said for State courts. The legal process was extremely slow, expensive, tangled in technicalities, and marred by inefficiency and corruption. It became increasingly common for the police to drop charges, saying that they had lost the files. The courts accepted such explanations; senior officers would not be called to explain what had happened, no one would be reprimanded and no fresh investigation ordered. In the early nineteen eighties, the fee payable to the police for "losing" a file in a serious case was K1,000 ($125 in 1989). With devaluation and inflation it rose, but was still a bargain if one considered the alternative of a stretch in Zambia's anything but hospitable prisons. Where large sums of money were involved, as in smuggling, poaching, black marketeering, foreign exchange transactions, or drug racketeering, the rewards to a judge for a favourable verdict could be substantial. And it would have taken a brave judge to acquit someone whom the State wanted convicted because he had fallen foul of the political system. Some judges were drunkards and their behaviour in court erratic: in one case, a judge directed a defendant who had been found guilty to count aloud the number of buttons on his shirt. He did so, announcing "Six". The judge sentenced him to six years' imprisonment, explaining that if he had had seven buttons he would have got seven years. At the same time, it must be said in fairness that Zambia had a good number of judges of high professional and ethical standards. The system, though inordinately slow, was largely an honest one.

During the nineteen eighties, crime became Zambia's principal growth industry. In Lusaka and the Copperbelt - the latter sometimes known as the Crimebelt - small armies of security guards would assemble at cross-roads in the suburbs each evening before fanning out to protect the homes of the *apamwamba*, or the *Wabenzi* (owners of Mercedes Benzes), as the wealthy were called. It was said that in Lusaka one third of the population was employed protecting the second third from the third third! Properties came to be surrounded by high walls topped by razor wire; sirens wailed at night as nervous homeowners reacted to the presence of strangers, and police advised people to shoot to kill if someone on their property did not answer a challenge to stop. Neighbourhood vigilante groups adopted a policy of armed self-defence, sometimes with fatal results to one another as inexperienced people mishandled firearms. Asians, Europeans and Americans were common targets of attack. There was no racial motive in this; it was simply that, in general, they had more to steal than Africans did. A side effect of this was the departure from Zambia of many professionals, taking with them badly needed business and industrial experience.

The police lost control of the crime problem in the late seventies, and seemed to have resigned themselves to futile gestures such as manning roadblocks. The police training school at Lilayi near Lusaka offered little more than square-bashing and training in how to fill in forms. Few police stations had any transport, but that was a problem of their own making. Every few years, the police would be re-supplied with a fleet of new vehicles, provided by a donor country, but few, if any, of those vehicles would still be on the road after a year or two. Abuse and neglect would put them out of action. Every police station in the country had a number of wrecked police vehicles in its car park.

A more serious problem was that some senior police officers came to work hand-in-hand with criminals. According to the police public relations officer in December 1988, the

principal problem facing the police force was the criminality of some officers. They would arrange for roadblocks in one area while criminals went to work elsewhere. They sometimes supplied guns to criminals from police armouries. Officers who showed too much enthusiasm for pursuing awkward lines of enquiry would be warned off or transferred if they persisted. Many rank-and-file policemen, utterly frustrated by the futility of their position, quietly gave up, and did nothing but the bare minimum necessary to continue drawing their salary. When they saw some of the highest political figures in the country getting off scot-free, despite deep involvement in crimes such as drug-trafficking, it was difficult to blame them.

This situation created a deep sense of frustration and cynicism among police and public alike. Public demand for tougher action against criminals led the government to introduce the death penalty for armed robbery. The result should have been foreseen: criminals murdered those they robbed because dead witnesses don't give evidence, and the criminal had nothing to lose since death awaited him anyway if he were caught for robbery. No official figures for the numbers of executions were published. They remained a matter of uncertainty but were probably between 100 and 200 a year. One small clue was afforded by the situation in 1988 where 37 murder cases were down for hearing at the start of a new session in a provincial high court.

The public reacted to the crime wave in its own way. Regarding it as futile to call the police – 'We have no transport' - or to allow a case to go to court, people began to take the law into their own hands and revert to what was called "instant justice". For example, if a thief were caught in the act a mob would quickly gather around him and beat him, sometimes to death. Some such killings were truly savage in their barbarity. "Instant justice" was mostly instant injustice if one believed that punishment should fit the crime and the criminal. Due process doesn't take place on the street in the heat of anger. It sometimes happened that an unfortunate wretch, perhaps mentally retarded or unbalanced, who unthinkingly helped himself to someone's property, was beaten, burned, kicked or stoned to death.

The police also practised "instant justice" in their stations. Beatings and torture of suspects were commonplace and accepted by the public as legitimate. There was no ombudsman, human rights commission, Civil Liberties Union or Amnesty International to take up these issues. The churches mostly remain silent. While the law rested on the principle that a person was innocent until proven guilty, public opinion held the converse.

These factors, taken together, created considerable insecurity among Zambians, especially in urban areas. The impact of this on the country's development could not have been anything other than harmful. The effect on human relations became evident: fear, suspicion and anxiety exacted a human toll.

Chapter 2 ZAMBIAN CULTURE

Introduction

Zambians belong to the Bantu group of peoples. The word *Bantu,* which means 'people', is a linguistic rather than an ethnological term. Nevertheless, there are many common bonds, other than those of language, linking the peoples of southern Africa. There is a sense of being one people, a communion of nations in one great land. With the exception of the Kalahari Bushmen, who are not Bantu but Khoisan, and live in very small numbers in Zambia's Western Province, the tribes of Zambia shared a common cultural heritage. Undoubtedly, there were differences from tribe to tribe, but it is still true to say that the areas of common ground were much greater than those of difference. The Bantu, originating perhaps as far north as the Cameroons, spread southwards from about the beginning of the Christian era gradually until, by about 1000 A.D., they had reached all of Southern Africa except the Kalahari Desert and the extreme south. It is from this family of nations that Zambians derive their origins. *Mutu u mutu ka batu* – one becomes a person through relationships – is a Silozi saying which reflects a deeply held belief throughout Southern Africa.

The peoples of Zambia shared many common beliefs, ideas, attitudes, values, assumptions and reflexes. There was a feeling of belonging, of knowing where one was, of being at home. This common cultural heritage runs deep. Although it expressed itself in various forms such as music, song and dance, it was neither limited to those nor identifiable with them. Even if they were to change - and change they did - the substratum remained constant. What made people tick, what made them to be what they were, was something that remained in being even while apparently large-scale change took place on the surface. Economic change might appear to have swept all before it, as when rural people migrated to towns, and cities appeared where only a village existed fifty years earlier, as in the case of Lusaka. Superficially, it was a whole new world; but underneath it all, the heart of Africa beat strong, silent and deep.

Zambian culture needs to be assessed on its own terms, and, in the final analysis, by its own people. What follows is the view of a sympathetic outsider.

Language

English, the language of the former colonial power, is the principal official language of Zambia. One of the last relics of empire when political structures changed, it is also the most durable and the most universal. English is without doubt the first international language of today's world, and it gives Zambia a ready opening into the outside world, with its wealth of culture and technology. It is the language of instruction in schools, and is widely used in

government, business and industry. There is no difficulty in finding English-speakers in cities and towns, and the proportion of people in rural areas who can speak passable English grows annually. Unwittingly perhaps, aid agencies played a part in spreading the use of English in even the remotest rural areas.

In addition, Zambia recognized seven tribal languages as official, namely, Nyanja (also, more properly, known as Chichêwa) and Tumbuka, which were spoken in the centre and east; Bemba in the north; Lozi in the west; Tonga in the south; and Luvale and Kaonde in the northwest. None of those constituted a *lingua franca* throughout Zambia, although Nyanja, which was also spoken in Malawi and in parts of Zimbabwe, came nearest to it. Nyanja and Bemba speakers made up perhaps two-thirds of the population. In total, some seventy-three languages were recognized in the country, with the greatest number in the Western Province, with some twenty-three. All seventy-three belong to the Bantu group, with the exception of Kwengo, or Hukwe, a Khoisan language spoken by the Kalahari Bushmen. The boundaries between language and dialect were difficult to determine, and even the experts were not agreed on their definition. A general consensus appeared to be that the term *dialect* was used where there was a large convergence of grammatical structure and vocabulary; otherwise the term *language* was used. For practical purposes, the boundaries of tribe and language are co-terminous. In general, it could be said that there was a substantial degree of similarity in grammatical structure between Zambian languages. There was a lesser degree of similarity in vocabulary, though a good number of basic, everyday words were fairly similar, rendering some languages mutually comprehensible to a significant extent. Lozi, the *lingua franca* of the Western Province, was the odd one out among Zambian languages, because of its origins in the early nineteenth century among Sotho-speaking peoples of south-eastern Africa driven from their home by Shaka the Zulu chief.

Missionaries were among the principal agents in the preservation of local languages. The Bible, or parts of it, was available in about half of all Zambian languages. Indeed, in many areas, the Bible, or a book of prayers or hymns, was the only printed material in the local language. By contrast, the State's efforts were ambiguous at best. Vernacular newspapers were printed in half a dozen of the major local languages. While they were supposed to appear fortnightly, they were, in fact, produced only sporadically, and their quality was poor. Inconsistencies of spelling could be found in every other paragraph and the impression was one of careless editing. The standard of journalism, too, was poor with a happy disregard for accuracy. There was little success in producing a vernacular literature, and the companies of the former Kenneth Kaunda Foundation (now the Zambia Educational Publishing House), officially charged with the task, had difficulty in finding writers. Malawi, by contrast, did much to develop a living literature in Chichêwa. While something, however limited, was done in the case of the major vernacular languages, the unspoken official policy in the case of those less widely spoken seemed to be to encourage their demise. In the name of national unity, tribal identity was gradually suppressed. It seemed foolish to imagine that a strong new culture would emerge from the ruins of the old, but, for political reasons, that appeared to be what government policy aimed to achieve. (The break-up of the Soviet Union was due, in part at least, to the assertion of long-suppressed national identities.) There were few cultural festivals, the nearest equivalent being displays of dancing for tourists or visiting VIP's. Instead of having a rich variety of shared life and culture, government policy seemed to aim at a colourless lowest common denominator as a basis for national unity. Detribalization was a kind of cultural castration, and that has never been a fertile source of vitality.

Zambians have great linguistic ability. It was common to find Zambians, including those with little formal education, who spoke good English, (though few Zambians wrote it well) and had a working knowledge of as many as half a dozen local languages. They learned by listening; no one bothered with grammars or dictionaries, but they achieved fluency in a short time. Similarly, one could find Portuguese speakers in Angola and Mozambique, French speakers in the Congo and even German speakers in Namibia. Many Europeans, stumbling and fumbling their way through *Muli bwanji? Nili bwino* ('How are you? I'm fine' in Nyanja), envied their Zambian brothers and sisters their linguistic talent.

Witchcraft

Witchcraft was alive and well in Zambia. To anyone who lived in the country for even a few years, it was amusing to notice the assumption of new arrivals from abroad that witchcraft must be fading out under the influence of education, health care, and the advance of scientific knowledge and Western ideas generally. (One could make a case for saying that those factors helped reinforce witchcraft, as they brought with them a pace of change that people found difficulty in coping with. Zambia experienced about as much change in three generations as Europe did in three centuries.) It came as a surprise to such people to discover that witchcraft was found not only in remote rural areas but also in the cities, in the houses and offices of the *apamwamba*, the elite. Civil servants, army officers and politicians would acquire "medicine" for promotion. Such medicine might consist of the organs of a human body, such as the heart, the liver or the genitals. It was believed that these would give power to their possessor. They could be got by paying someone to remove "spare parts" (that was the local term) from a body in a morgue or by killing an innocent victim, often a child, or a traveller in a remote area whose disappearance might not be noticed for a long time.

Other "medicine" was protective in character. A successful businessperson, who feared that success would provoke jealousy among rivals or relatives, might believe it necessary to use medicine for protection. Fear of the jealousy of others was, in fact, a major impediment to self-advancement. A person had to ask him/herself whether promotion in the job or an improvement in business, was worth it, if, as a consequence, s/he had to live with the fear that those who were jealous might bewitch or poison him/her. If one really wanted promotion one had to be ready to pay the price for it, and that might include the cost of buying expensive protective medicine.

Anyone who read Zambian newspapers would find in them, from time to time, accounts of fights at funerals resulting from accusations that one person or another had been responsible, by witchcraft, for the death of the deceased. People were often unwilling to accept that there was such a thing as death from natural causes. It was accepted in the case of babies, although suspicion would arise if there were several such in one family. It was also accepted in the case of elderly people whose health had clearly been in decline for several years. But, in other cases, the question that would be asked was not, '*What* caused this death?' but '*Who* caused it?' Suspicion would fall on those considered to have an interest in the person's death or those who failed to attend the funeral.

Witchcraft was sometimes used by Christian clergy - perhaps to be on the safe side. It was a case of hedging one's bets, having a second string to one's bow. Because of their role in conducting funerals, it was not difficult for clergy, with the cooperation of mortuary orderlies, to acquire the necessary “medicine”. I can recall one such instance in which a church leader, anxious to ensure promotion, paid an orderly to remove “spare parts” from a body. The press report other such cases from time to time. ‘How can they justify such conduct?’ one might ask. Zambians do not have difficulty in simultaneously accepting opposites; contradictions are not a problem. A person brought up with the logic of the Western world finds it frustrating that someone can, at one and the same time, accept and deny a proposition without batting an eyelid. That is not a problem for a Zambian. Zambians understand Western logic, and can use it effectively to make a point or win an argument with a person of Western culture, but that does not mean they accept it as part of their own thinking. They don't; life was much larger than logic. In this respect, their attitudes are not very different from those of other peoples of traditional tribal culture. In the scriptures of more than one religious tradition, for example, one may find contradictory statements sitting happily side by side. People from such cultures do not feel that they have to reconcile one statement with another. Each statement, they feel, reflects a facet of reality, and might therefore legitimately be made even if its content was not reconcilable with other statements already made. It was also true, of course, that Zambians sometimes state as fact what was no more than a wish: ‘I did not break the window’ might mean ‘I wish I had not broken the window’.

Broadly speaking, it could be said that there are three categories of people involved in activities which might loosely be termed "witchcraft": the healer, the witch or sorcerer, and the witch-finder.

The healer, whom some would say was simply a traditional herbalist, a doctor, was distinct from a witch. It must immediately be added, however, that neat, clear-cut distinctions were rarely found in Zambia, and, in some cases at least, the healer would kill or cure to order. In many Zambians languages, one word covered both poison and medicine.

The witch, or sorcerer - the term was used of both men and women - was believed to have supernatural powers. For instance, it was believed by some that such a person could change into an animal, such as a crocodile or a lion, and kill a victim, before reverting to human status. He could kill people at a distance with a magic “gun” (e.g. a *kaliloze* gun) which could “shoot” a person a thousand kilometres away. Most commonly, the witch actually killed by poisoning. For this reason, the suspicion of being a witch usually fell on women since it was they who cooked food and brewed beer. Unlike the healer, or, in the past, the rainmaker, no one would announce him/herself as a witch. Witches were hated, despised and feared. The accusation of being a witch, where it carried with it an element of plausibility, was a virtual death-sentence. Anyone believed to be a witch was likely to be killed. This led to the unusual, but sensible, situation in Zambian law, where it was not an offence for someone to be a witch, but it was an offence to accuse someone of being one. The effect of the law was to reduce accusations of witchcraft, and subsequent acts of murder, which were more common in the past.

Initiation into witchcraft might require the murder of a member of one's family, usually someone young and particularly close, such as one's child. Having taken such a step, there was no going back, and silence and future compliance on the part of the initiate was assured. The initiate was required to perform certain tasks for the witch, such as procuring human organs for clients. Gradually, he or she would learn the techniques of the trade until capable of operating independently.

People from the Western world speak loosely of witches and witch doctors as if those terms were synonyms, but they are not. At its simplest, a witch causes trouble, while the function of the witch-finder, or "witch-doctor" (a term Zambians don't use among themselves) was to put right or to "doctor" the harm the witch had done. If there exists any such person as a "witch-doctor", it was the diviner, whose job it was to identify the witch and then leave the community to deal with him/her. His function - and it was nearly always a man - was to find the witch, to "smell" out who it was that was causing the trouble, that brought about the drought, the bad harvest, the deaths of cattle or whatever.

The diviner usually began the process of divination by meeting the people of the locality and spending some time with them. He would ask seemingly innocuous questions. Initially he might appear like a detective trying to establish facts that would point to a conclusion. His real aim was different. He recognized that there was no witch to be found. The explanation of the problem was a natural one, but the community did not, and would not, recognize it as such. His function was to relieve the community's fear, anxiety and tension by pointing to someone whom the community would accept as the witch. The purpose of his questioning was to find out whom the community would accept as the evildoer. Typically, suspicion would rest on someone at odds with the community, such as a local crank whom no one liked and none would defend. An ideal target was an elderly widow without relatives. No one would defend her, and the accusation of witchcraft could be given plausibility by the careful planting of evidence. When the community was in a state of real anxiety, someone might recall that the suspect cursed a person in the past and that person died. The incident might have been nothing more than an outburst of temper or rudeness, but it could be enough to clinch the case. The identity of the witch was taken as established; the community could relax, its problem solved. The diviner collected his fee, and the scapegoat could, in former times, await death. More recently, the payment of fines is considered as "purification".

Diviners were highly regarded by Zambians as benefactors of society by ridding it of witches. Outsiders regarded them as cynically unscrupulous, nothing more than moral vultures battening on people's fear and ignorance. Diviners could easily point an accusing finger at their personal enemies and thereby settle old scores; they could do so for a fee at someone else's behest; they could legitimize acts of murder in the name of "cleansing" the community. They could and did grow rich on the proceeds. They were among the wealthiest, most respected and most feared members of society. While all of that was thoroughly sinister and evil, it should not be thought that diviners exuded malevolence. On the contrary, they were usually people of more than ordinary charm, engaging conversationalists, perfect hosts, and in every way pleasant people to meet - in the right circumstances.

A sub-plot to the above was that the witch was nearly always a woman, the diviner nearly always a man. It might be that this served as a powerful reinforcer of the stereotype of the woman as the Lady Macbeth, the scheming manipulator, while the heroic man was the

defender of the community. It could be that this was a controlling instrument helping reinforce male dominance.

All of this had powerful effects on the community. It crippled initiative since that led to jealousy and accusations of witchcraft. It penalized success for the same reason. It offered a perfect escape from responsibility, since all evils, even those due to stupidity or carelessness, such as neglect of children leading to their premature death, could be explained by saying, 'Someone has bewitched me'. It was all the witch's fault.

Witchcraft damaged trust in families. If a child died, there was sometimes the suspicion that the death might have been deliberate, that a family member caused it in order to gain access to the otherwise closed circle where power lay. It was not surprising that Zambians found it hard to trust, to overcome fear, to step out of the ranks of the ordinary and to be different. The risks were too great.

Witchcraft, whether associated with the healer, the witch or the diviner, was the science of those without science. It offered an easy explanation of all ills. In time of trouble, people fell back on it, secure in the belief that what was beyond their personal control could be reined in through the intervention of preternatural power. Its vagueness and secrecy protected it against close scrutiny, so that it afforded the ideal cover for crime. An ordinary murder, committed for the usual human motives of greed, fear, hatred, revenge or lust would not be investigated if it could be dressed up to have the appearance of witchcraft. It became too hot to handle. Finally, it fostered the fatalism of those who felt that life was beyond their control, that one could do no more than surrender and accept whatever fate handed out.

Zambians troubled by the cultural earthquake of modern life, disturbed and confused by many conflicting pressures, would fall back on what was tried and trusted, on something which seemed to offer a quick fix, a way of cutting the Gordian knot, an instant solution to the problems which beset them. And that was what witchcraft appeared to offer. In the cities, among the upwardly mobile, among those who were fighting their way up the greasy promotional pole, one found recourse to this most ancient of frauds; it was a measure of people's desperation, of their need for re-assurance in a changing and uncertain world. It lived on and created fear.

I can recall the petrified fear of a senior public figure, promoted above his peers, who spent months in bed with a non-diagnosable illness because he believed that his jealous colleagues had bewitched and killed a relative in order to get at him. In time, he recovered (though whether he employed a witch-finder I don't know) and went on to become one of the top members in the ruling elite.

The challenge to understand

Could Zambia evolve from a tribal society where order, hierarchy and tradition were dominant to one where the individual was responsible for him/herself, without degenerating into anarchy as in post-independence Congo, or into Western-style individualism as in urban

Nigeria, or regression into the past as in Uganda from Obote to Idi Amin? Should Zambia even want to try?

Political relations are formed in the matrix of day-to-day personal relations; they are fundamentally similar, though the political was written on a larger scale. So what kind of people are the Zambians? How do they relate to one another? What values underpin their lives? Only God or a fool would claim to have the answers. David Livingstone, the great explorer of south-central Africa, asked himself those questions, and wrote in 1858, 'After long observation, I came to the conclusion that they are just such a strange mixture of good and evil as men are everywhere else…. By a selection of cases of either kind, it would not be difficult to make these people appear excessively good or uncommonly bad'. (1)

One point, however self-evident, needs to be made: Zambians are not Westerners. Western culture was substantially founded on Greek philosophy, Roman concepts of law and government, Judeo-Christian ideas of the person and morality, scientific method from Francis Bacon, and the more recent understanding of civil rights and democracy flowing from the American Revolution. To say that Zambia has none of those influences is simply to say that Zambia is different from the West. Likewise, while Zambia acquired a measure of the technology of the twentieth century, it has not absorbed much of the cultural baggage that goes with it. Zambia is different.

The two great driving forces of a Zambian's life are fear and power. The group had power and the individual feared that power. It was the group which mattered, not the individual. The supreme virtue was conformity. In a society which, like Zambia, was geared to survival, individualists were a nuisance, a threat, a disposable luxury. They caused trouble, they rocked the boat. So, while there was a natural concept of human dignity, there was little desire to press that to the point of insisting on individual human rights. And there was little privacy. A Zambian who would choose to be alone, or to act alone, would be suspected of being mentally unhinged or involved in witchcraft. Initiative and invention were not welcomed: they involved standing apart from the group and taking a stand on one's own. They involved too many risks. Like imagination, they demanded a departure from the *status quo*, and that was too challenging. Those who were different were wrong and should justify themselves.

The group had its own ways of ensuring that no one stepped out of line. Some ways were subtle and might involve nothing more than hints, complaints, corrections or a scolding. Others were as blunt as they could be, such as banishment from the group, or, in a few cases, death by poisoning, dressed up to look like witchcraft. That approach to the relationships between the individual and the group was suited to the demands of ensuring stability and continuity in a society where survival was the priority. It was an impediment in a society which trying to develop by fostering the creativity of the individual.

An illustration of this could be found by looking at ideas of authority. In the past, among tribes with a strong royalist tradition, such as the Bemba and the Lozi, the chief was the authority, and his word was law. Defiance was unthinkable save for the suicidal. Authority and power were synonyms. As recently as the nineteen thirties, one could find people among the Bemba who had limbs amputated for offences such as spilling a chief's beer, or not responding with sufficient speed to his call for service. Many tribes were slaves of the dominant groups. Even though slavery was officially abolished in 1906, it still existed in pockets thirty years later, and the deeply ingrained defensiveness and caution that are part of

the slave mentality have not disappeared. A basic rule of Zambian life was to keep on the right side of those in power, by, for example, telling them what they wanted to hear. If you did not agree with them, you kept that to yourself. In a dispute about right and wrong, you calculated who was likely to be the winner, and supported his/her position. You placed yourself with a view to being on the winning side when the crunch came. If involved in an argument, you made sure to win it, even if you lost the truth in order to do so. (Are Zambians the only people in the world who do such things?)

Such a view of the exercise of authority does not sit well with the exercise of democratic values. An example could be found in attitudes towards President Kaunda. In public, everyone supported him enthusiastically. In private, the reality was different. If he, or any Zambian leader, ever made the mistake of believing their own propaganda, and taking the public plaudits for the real thing, they were in serious trouble.

Zambians, however, were not entirely defenceless in the face of authority. They had their own way of dealing with anyone they considered too bossy or pushy: they would say *Yes* to everything they were told - and then do as they wanted. The pushy one gradually got the lesson into his/her cranium that external signs of compliance did not necessarily indicate internal acceptance; if s/he were wise, s/he would begin to listen to people.

Zambians are a passive, fatalistic people with a poor self-image. The expressions they use illustrate this well. It was common to hear people say, 'That's the way things are, so what can we do?'; 'We black people… that's how we are'; 'What do you expect of an African?'; 'You cannot trust an African'; 'African promises' - the latter a synonym for empty words. Fatalism is the reflex of a person who feels s/he cannot control his/her environment, whether physical or social. A person who is a prisoner of circumstance, such as habitual hunger or illness, is unlikely to be dynamic or creative. So if a child died, the death was accepted - it wasn't caused, it just happened. There would be little pursuit of cause and effect, other than to seek an explanation in assuming that someone was bewitching the family. Far from being an investigation of reality, this was flight from it.

Fatalism is not a hereditary characteristic of Zambians, but a product of their relationship to their environment. It is the reaction of a person who feels overwhelmed by life. In Zambian women, it might be a response to the experience of having lost perhaps as many as half of their children. It often seemed hopeless to try, so people gave up. To challenge such a person by saying that this depressing cycle of fatalism and self-defeat was self-perpetuating unless someone mustered the courage and determination to break out of it, would evoke the response, 'That's alright for a *muzungu* (a white person), but not for us'. The few Zambians who got off the treadmill of hunger, poverty and despair might find themselves disparagingly referred to as 'black *muzungu*s'. At the same time, society regarded the poor as stupid, lazy and ignorant. In time, the poor came to accept this image of themselves, and became accomplices in their own depreciation. To break the stranglehold of inertia, passivity and fatalism, given the strength of their grip on Zambians, will probably take generations.

Zambians' pride in their capacity to endure suffering needed to be transformed into a determination to prevent or overcome it. There was an interesting parallel with the situation in the former USSR. One of Gorbachev's problems in trying to bring about *perestroika* was

the *priterpelost* (servile patience) of the Russian people. They accepted, rather than objected to, the dominance of an unrepresentative system of power. Zambia had its *priterpelost,* too.

Hand in hand with this, and with attitudes towards authority and the group, was an attitude towards responsibility. To an outsider, adult Zambians often seem to have the happy irresponsibility of a child. A civil servant might say, 'Our transport is buggered; we forgot to put oil in the engine' and shake with laughter as he described how a vehicle ground to a jarring halt, its engine seized. And the same person would feel justified in sitting in an office doing nothing for a year or two until a new vehicle was provided, usually by foreign aid. The destructiveness not uncommon among Zambians might be the perversion, due to frustration, of people's creativity because of society's stifling of individual expression. With constructive outlets for initiative blocked, one can still have significance and make an impact and a name by being a wrecker. (Who would ever have heard of Lee Harvey Oswald if he hadn't assassinated John F. Kennedy?) Besides, success creates new demands; failure ensures a quiet, undisturbed life.

Anyone who has spent time in Zambia could multiply examples of irresponsibility almost *ad infinitum*. They were so numerous and so widespread that anyone who reflected on the situation must acknowledge that there was a different sense of social responsibility, a different sense of obligation. A lender was expected to recover what s/he had loaned; that was her/his responsibility. It was not the responsibility of the borrower to return what s/he had borrowed. And people would readily accept a decision, almost any decision, provided someone else took responsibility for it. The government itself opted out of many of its responsibilities to the people and handed them over to foreign aid organizations.

The language people used expressed their attitude towards responsibility. A person would never say, 'I won't do such-and-such'; s/he would say, 'I can't do it'. If a person was unable to make something work properly, s/he would say, 'It was refusing'. Ask a person for directions, 'Is it this road or that for Ndola?' and the answer would likely be 'Yes'. Yes was not a harsh word like No. It was benevolent and committed the respondent to nothing. S/he would wait for you to find the answer for yourself, an when you had found it, would claim the credit for telling you.

But none of that represented the full picture. Zambians have a strong sense of responsibility towards their extended family. They would go to great lengths to attend funerals of even distant relatives. Also, if a tribal chief asked his people to do something that was required of them by tradition, they would do it, even at great personal sacrifice. Excuses would be brushed aside and remedies found. I remember people in a rural area who, for years, offered no cooperation in helping to build a rural health centre in their area, offering the most foolish excuses, construct at short notice a magnificent complex of buildings for a visit by their chief. In general, it could be said that Zambians were fully responsible people where social obligations were rooted in tribal tradition. Where a practice was sanctioned by custom or tradition, people would be faithful to it, even where it called for great effort. Where the structure or demands of modern society required something, people felt little responsibility to it. In the case of State employees this was particularly obvious. State employees who were exemplary in their duties towards their extended family or tribe would think nothing of locking up their office at ten in the morning and taking the day off. A nurse who worked hard and devotedly for a relative in hospital might show callous neglect or indifference to a patient

from a different tribe. I remember a hearing at the High Court in Lusaka to which witnesses had come on several occasions, making a round trip of 1250 km., only to be told by a clerk that the case was adjourned, no explanation being given. Once when a person asked why there was yet another adjournment, the answer was that the judge had gone shopping.

Modern administrative structures, such as those found in government, the civil service, business or industry are imported from the Western world. They presupposed Western attitudes, values and assumptions. The obvious people to work such a system were Westerners; it is their way of doing things. But a Zambian is not a Westerner, and to expect Zambians to work a Western system, is rather like asking teachers to do nursing - and then becoming annoyed when they do it badly.

Social responsibility among Zambians was inextricably linked to family, custom and tradition. In the case of many of these obligations, such as those to the tribe, the extended family, and the dead, the motive was fear. People are afraid to refuse help to a relative, or not to attend a funeral. To do so would cause anger, arouse suspicion and perhaps incur revenge.

How the transition can be made from social obligation based substantially on fear to one based on a sense of individual responsibility is a challenge to which Zambians need to respond positively if their country is to lift itself out of its crippling decline. In a small way, perhaps it has already begun. The use of money, and developing ideas about private property, have helped liberate individuals from the dominance of the group, enabling them to begin to stand on their own feet and to account for themselves. Perhaps the greatest help that could be given to Zambians would be employment in properly paid work, with priority given to women.

A different way of thinking

Zambians were similar to other Bantu peoples in their mode of thought. Like many other peoples of different culture, thinking was practical rather than speculative. Zambians did not generally engage in self-analysis or introspection. They often allowed slogans and clichés to do their thinking for them, a fact fully exploited by UNIP, the country's sole political party, which offered slogan-shouting as a substitute for facing reality. While it was normal for people like farmers to plan for the future, for example, by setting aside seed from this year's harvest for next year's sowing, or, in fewer cases, for people who had a small surplus in their income to save in a credit union or bank, in large part, thinking was about today; it did not involve reflection on the past so as to learn the lessons of history or from one's mistakes. Neither did it involve planning for the future. It was the here-and now alone which mattered. In a hospital, for instance, medicines were ordered when the existing supply was exhausted. That was when the problem presented itself. Think of the significance of that for preventative medicine: if a problem was not present here and now it did not exist, so why do anything about it?

Those mighty tomes from planning offices called National Development Plans should be classified in libraries under the heading of Myths and Legends; they represent a way of

thinking that was not part of the Zambian way of life. They enabled people to act out a role, to play a game of make-believe that government functioned; they gave people a vocabulary of jargon to use - but they did not connect with reality. In a hospital I was associated with, the public health staff could have given as good a talk on public health as any expatriate. If given an examination on matters relating to clean water, personal hygiene or the necessity of latrines they would take to it with enthusiasm and would most likely pass the examination well. But they didn't practise it in their villages; they themselves and their children used to come to outpatient clinics as often as anyone else suffering from diarrhoea and dysentery caused by dirty water wells and the absence of latrines. They knew what the books said about those matters but they didn't believe it, rather like smokers who read the health warning on the pack, but smoke anyway. They acted out the role but they did not believe the part. And the same was true of people in other walks of life. 'All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players…'

Zambians' thinking was synthetic rather than analytical, inductive rather than deductive. Reality was seen as a whole, at a glance; it was not dissected into cause and effect. People were concerned with the practicalities of the power that made things happen rather than ideas and principles, with the practical here-and-now rather than with generalizations. The unknown inspired fear, not intellectual curiosity. Invention, discovery and exploration were ventures into the unknown and they were feared. In pre-colonial sub-Saharan Africa - apart from Ethiopia - there was no writing, no number beyond counting fingers, and no wheel. Initiative came from outside, not from within. Contemporary Western thinking is rationalistic, mechanistic and reductionist. It believes that the whole of life can be reduced to the rational, the logical and the scientifically verifiable. None of that sat well with Zambians and they were never likely to buy into it.

In a sense, Zambia was a society of extremes. For instance, the ordinary citizen had to spend time daily standing in queues for the basic necessities of life. That was accepted passively, even when a daylong wait in the hot sun might achieve nothing. Only on the rarest occasions did this boil over into anger as when the Copperbelt rioted in December 1986. What appeared on the surface to be quite extraordinary patience was more likely a suppression of feeling. People could swing from one extreme to another: faced with daily queuing, people responded either with prolonged passivity or a violent explosion of furious rage; there was nothing in between. If a thief was caught, people either shrugged it off as insignificant or else beat him savagely. If a Zambian bought a crate of beer, the intention was not have a drink but to finish the crate.

Zambia was also a neurotic society: there was a separation of thought and reality. People believe what they want to believe. Zambians might be optimistic or pessimistic, usually the former, but they are rarely realistic. They did not have hope, only wishful thinking. A government official who wrecked every car allocated to his office might say, on receiving yet another, 'Now we are alright'. He will convince himself that, this time, there will be no problem even though the idea of giving the car any maintenance, or treatment different from that which wrecked the others, was not on his mind.

Words were often spoken seemingly without meaning. You might ask someone, 'Do you know this man?' and a likely answer would be 'No, he is my friend'. Promises were temporary palliatives; they involved no commitment. Lies were told even when it was

obvious to the person telling them that the hearer knew the statements were untrue, and when there was nothing to be gained by telling them. 'We Africans, we cannot tell the truth' was a common saying. That baffling illogicality pervaded language. A bribe was not a bribe; it was a "gift". Stealing was not stealing; it was "taking" or, in language borrowed from the jargon of development, it was "self-help". But where language was devalued, thought becomes confused, and trust and commitment impossible. Confucius is quoted as saying, 'If language is not correct, then what is said was not meant; if what is said is not meant, then what ought to be done remains undone'. (2)

One of the most depressing features of life in Zambia was that people did not trust one another. They could not trust one another and admitted so openly: 'We Zambians, we cannot trust one another'. I remember, for instance, on one occasion expressing anger at having being deceived by a local person whom I had trusted, and another Zambian said to me, 'You should have known better than to trust a Zambian'. To deceive was regarded as a success, a sign of being clever, even if it was based on nothing more than the ability to lie. It was seen as a necessary survival skill in a tough world.

Zambians were excellent practical psychologists. They knew how to use logic, even though they did not accept it. They could take a Westerner on a guilt trip any time, using for moral leverage the guilty conscience about past colonial wrongs or racist attitudes. They knew how to use the blackmail of under-development, like a mistress who knows how to pout and exploit her weakness as an instrument of power. They could appeal to such concepts as democracy, human rights, social justice and so forth, but such appeals were strictly for Western consumption; they cut no ice with Zambians.

Fundamental to all this was Zambians' mistrust and fear of one another. This was partly fear of witchcraft, which was more pervasive than Westerners thought, and perhaps out of the experience that many Zambians had as children of being passed from one relative to another within the extended family because of frequent divorce and polygamy. A child brought up in such an environment becomes afraid to trust; the risk was too great and the hurt too deep when the trusted one failed in the moment of need. People became afraid to commit themselves to one another and to reality; it was safer to reduce life to a kind of play where people act out a part, but live their real lives on a different plane. Reality was never quite what it seemed to be. There was always the double track: what seems to be (which exists on the surface of things), and what was (which was buried so deeply that one rarely touched it). An instance of this was the way people sometimes laughed at the sufferings of others. At first glance, it looked like callousness or cruelty. More likely, though, it was relief that it was another, and not oneself, who suffered; it might be fear of the unknown and the dangers it could bring; or a mask for the inability to face a reality which was too frightening to confront. At times, even death itself was like an actor on the stage of life; even it did not break through the crust of role-playing to get down to the bedrock of reality. This might go some of the way towards explaining the apparently casual indifference to personal safety one found among people faced with the reality of the AIDS crisis in their family or locality.

As always there was another side to things. Zambians enjoy life; they would smile and laugh more often in a day than Westerners would in a week. The sense of guilt which many Westerners equated with responsibility, or the sense of grievance which they mistook for a desire to improve the world did not trouble Zambians. They enjoyed life without feeling

guilty about doing so. They accepted the world, warts and all, and were more concerned with enjoying it than changing it. As people are everywhere, Zambians were bundles of contradictions, consistent in inconsistency, baffling, lovable, infuriating, frustrating and friendly. Life with them might be good or bad, but it was never dull.

The expatriate in Zambia

Zambia had about 72,000 expatriates at independence in 1964; twenty-five years later that figure had dropped to about 8,500. Though few in number they exercised a disproportionately large influence. The largest group were missionaries, followed by development workers, businessmen, farmers and diplomats.

Many lived in a psychological ghetto of their own making. With the exception of missionaries, few knew a local language and fewer still knew or understood anything of local customs. The result was predictable: mutual incomprehension, frustration and anger. Some expatriates suffered a persecution complex in the face of the double standards applied to them: they were expected to work harder, shoulder more responsibility, pay their workers better and (sometimes) accept overcharging. Objections by expatriates to this situation might be met with the response 'But you have come here to help us'. As a result, many expats had a siege mentality, resulting from the feeling - sometimes justified - of being ripped off.

A tiny proportion of expatriates adjusted to that situation by submerging themselves in Zambian society and trying to become as Zambian as the Zambians. One consequence of this was that they were no longer able to offer a challenge or a stimulus to society, but reflected it back to itself. An obvious example of this was the expatriate who, in the jargon of colonial times, "went native" by living with a local man or woman in an informal arrangement. A less obvious example was the expatriate who "went native" in psychological terms, by acquiring the less pleasant Zambian attributes while acquiring none of the more pleasant ones. It was the mirror image of the comment often made by expatriates that the more contact with Westerners that Zambians had, the worse they became, acquiring the Westerners' vices but none of their virtues.

Some expatriates, such as missionaries and development workers, came with a sense of mission; others to escape problems at home, but they brought the problems with them; still others, such as diplomats or representatives of multinational companies, were simply sent to the country and resigned themselves to enduring rather than enjoying the experience. With their minority position, their sense of guilt about the colonial past, their democratic ideas about fair play, justice and civil rights, they were open to exploitation and were sometimes exploited. (Some indeed wished to be exploited; it fitted a martyr complex. That was the case with some missionaries.) All of that had the effect of pushing them further into the ghetto where resentment, suspicion and gossip completed the process of isolation from the people. A large part of expatriate conversation was a matter of pontificating with much generalization and exaggeration, on the failings of "the African," coupled with a failure to try to understand. An extreme example of expatriate attitudes was the white woman living on a farm near Lusaka who habitually greeted the arrival of an unknown Zambian on her property with a

loaded shotgun and a pack of snarling Dobermans. In fairness to her, it must be said that any Zambian brave enough to run the gauntlet of her security system would then be treated with hospitality.

Expatriates did not understand Zambians. That broad statement, however sweeping it might seem to an outsider, was valid and recognized as such by expatriates, especially those who have been a long time in the country. For example, they did not understand Zambians' ability to accept contradictions. A conversation between an expatriate employer and a Zambian employee might run like this:

Employer: Do you understand how to do this?
Employee: Yes.
Employer: How do you do it?
Employee: I don't know.

And expatriates were irritated by the way every conversation seemed to turn into a request for help:

Expatriate: You've got a good field of maize.
Zambian: It's good, but it is not good.
Expatriate: What do you mean?
Zambian: How can we sell it?
Expatriate: What about the Provincial Co-operative Union?
Zambian: Their transport is buggered.
Expatriate: So what will you do?
Zambian: If you can help us with transport….

Expatriates felt that Zambians demeaned themselves by such tactics. When they saw the admiration that Zambians had for a successful liar or cheat, they found that difficult to come to terms with or to respect. Zambians regarded the ability to lie or cheat successfully as a sign of intelligence. If caught out, s/he would feel that it was worth a try. Similarly, thieves were often admired as they were seen as combining courage and the ability to deceive. But to call a Zambian a fool was to wound him/her deeply.

Social contact between Zambians and expatriates was very limited. It was only rarely that they visited one another in their homes or had a relationship of simple friendship. In part, this was because not many expatriates took the trouble to acquaint themselves with Zambian customs, and they sought to re-create their home environment in Zambia. They saw Zambian life through the filter of their own life and experience. A very common situation was that Westerners, coming from an efficiency-orientated environment which valued functions more than relationships, had little patience with the rather elaborate process of greeting which Zambians used so often during the day. To a Westerner anything more than 'Hello, how are you?' in the morning was a waste of time. To a Zambian, the matter was different: where there was no greeting there was no meeting.

Although they would never admit it, the secret wish of some Zambians was to be white. One sign of this was the adoption of Western names; another the use of (carcinogenic) skin-lighteners; (Westerners, by contrast, use suntan lotion and holidays in Spain to achieve the

opposite result); another was the practice of wealthy Zambian women, and even men, of having their hair straightened; and yet another was the imitation of Western mannerisms. Those were only the symptoms. At a deeper level, Zambians admired the Westerners' power as evidenced by their technology, money, self-confidence and sheer indifference to many fears which would freeze a Zambian into immobility. It shocked Zambians to hear a Westerner make light of witchcraft but, at the same time, they would dearly like to have had the freedom which that attitude expressed.

Entertainment

Traditional Zambian entertainment centred on music, song, dance and beer drinking. In recent times, the mass media have begun to extend the range.

The great merit of Zambian music was that it really was folk music, that is, the music of a people. It was popular in the sense that ordinary people, without specialized training, could entertain themselves with relatively simple instruments, and without the need of elaborate preparation or rehearsal. The primary musical instrument was the drum, sometimes a single one, sometimes two or three working together. Drums came in all shapes and sizes, from squat, round ones, to others like an hour glass, to long, narrow ones, to those with a rod fixed in the inner centre which, when rubbed with a wet cloth, produced a heavy, grunting sound. There were different rhythms for different occasions, and these varied from place to place. An experienced drummer could tell almost immediately to what tribe a drummer belonged and what the occasion was that was being celebrated.

Drums were played on many different occasions, such as weddings, initiation ceremonies, spiritual healing, divination, fertility ceremonies, funerals and State occasions such as a chief's visit. In the last forty years, drums have come to be used widely in Christian churches. The most common use, however, was when people gathered in the evening round a drum of beer simply to enjoy one another's company and to dance. The drum told how people felt, it expressed and created a mood. Before people started to gather for an occasion, the drummer would begin by warming the drum-skin over a fire, waxing it, tapping out a tune and listening carefully until the resonance was right. Then he (it was not often a woman) would begin, followed by others creating the mood for the moment. People would begin to clap, to dance, and to sing. A chorus leader would start the groups in singing a phrase, repeating it several times. The rhythm would create a bond of unity and the group would become one. There are few soloists or *prima donnas*; it was one group that sang, danced and swayed to the beat of the drum.

The effect of the drum was almost magical: a village which, in the heat of midday, might seem sunken in a torpor of inertia would come to life at night. People endured the day but enjoyed the night: at night it was cool, there was music, song, dance and sex, and all were enjoyed to the full.

Zambians felt thoroughly at home with their music. In other areas of life, they were often burdened by a sense of inferiority vis-à-vis all that was Western; they often felt that what was

theirs by tradition was not “modern”, it belonged to the past. Not so with music. It was theirs and they were proud of it. To a Zambian, European orchestral music was a meaningless jumble of sound, a violin concerto an insane screeching. Zambians take very well to the song and dance of young Westerners, especially where drums form a large part of the accompaniment. That was probably one area where cultural borrowing has been from Africa to the West, rather than *vice versa*. What Zambians like in modern rock or soul music was what Africa has given it. Africa was quite literally getting its own back in the world of music. The slaves who went to Brazil from Angola, and from West Africa to the southern states of the United States, brought their music with them, and that helped to form American black and soul music. From there it went to Europe, along with dances such as the rumba and the conga, which are directly traceable to West Africa. The circle was complete when Zambians in discos and beerhalls dance to the tune of Western pop derived from their African forebears.

Zambian music had few, if any, wind instruments. Along with the drum was the xylophone, made from calabashes set in order of size on a wooden frame, the plates above the calabashes being struck with a piece of hard rubber, often taken from a discarded car tyre. In several Zambian languages, a xylophone was called a *marimba,* the same name by which it was known in Brazil. Another popular instrument was known as the African piano, a small, hand-held instrument of eight thin strips of high tensile steel of different lengths, which were plucked by the thumb. There are few stringed instruments, and their use was confined to certain localities. Young Zambians, though, show considerable expertise in making guitars out of discarded cooking-oil containers.

With music was dance, the two rarely separated. Dance, like drumming, was used on many occasions, but most commonly simply for enjoyment in a village or urban compound. Many were explicitly erotic, and only someone blind or stupid could fail to understand what they suggested. They were a celebration of life and fertility, an open and joyous acknowledgement of the pleasure of sex. They were danced with great gusto and humour, to the accompaniment of bawdy comments from the spectators. There was nothing pornographic or salacious about them; rather they expressed the truth of the saying that dancing is the perpendicular expression of a horizontal desire.

Some types of dance had a special character. In one, the dancer had a string of bells around the ankles, and he (it usually was a he) would shuffle around, stamping his feet to the beat of the drum. In another, the dancer would remain almost still, with only arms, shoulders and neck moving.

To see those dances at their best, they needed to take place in their natural setting, within the context in which they had arisen. Displays of song and dance in tourist areas, such as Livingstone, are necessarily artificial and staged, with a consequent loss in the richness of presentation. To present such displays was as if Britain arranged mock royal weddings to attract tourists to London.

A disappointing development in Zambia since independence was the decline in the age-old practice of telling the stories of the tribe around the fire in the evening. Those occasions were real schools of culture, where the traditions and beliefs of the people were passed from one generation to the next.

Zambian humour shared many of the characteristics of other peoples'. It came easily to Zambians to laugh: a dour, serious, straight-laced Zambian hardly existed. Bring a few Zambians together for a few minutes and, in no time, they would laugh their heads off, shaking hands with one another at something especially funny. Their humour broke tension, was sometimes cruel, sometimes irresponsible, had a lively sense of the ridiculous and took special delight in deflating pomposity and pretence. Born mimics, Zambians would latch onto someone's characteristic features - maybe a peculiar way of walking - and imitate it as soon as s/he turned around, while the instant audience doubled over in hoots of laughter. A play on words meant nothing; a play in action meant everything. They delighted in slapstick and were amazed to see Westerners act the buffoon in TV sitcoms.

Perhaps the only occasion I have seen Zambians truly enjoy Western entertainment was when some children watched Mr. Bean and Mr. Fawlty of Fawlty Towers on TV. Those two comedians did more good for relations between black and white than all the diplomats put together. It was only partly that one needed little English to follow their antics. It was much more the sight of white people (who, in Zambia, usually take themselves too seriously) making fools of themselves for the fun of it.

But things were not always what they seemed: when a Zambian was nervous, s/he smiled; when frightened, s/he would laugh.

Considering Zambians' ability as mimics, it was surprising, perhaps, that there was so little theatre. Small groups in Lusaka and the Copperbelt were mainly inspired by expatriates, or else had a heavily political character which discouraged all but Party zealots. Films were an increasingly rare commodity, cinemas often showing the same films over and over again, because of the lack of foreign exchange to hire new productions. Sex, violence - especially the Kung Fu type - and science fiction were the most popular themes, but fewer and fewer Zambians were able to afford to go to a cinema. Threats to security of person and property also dissuaded people from a visit. On TV, sex and violence were censored on President Kaunda's orders. It was possible to see as many episodes as one would wish of Dallas, Dynasty and Falconcrest - all without even a kiss. The couple would be shown drifting towards a bed, looking as randy as a pair of donkeys. The next shot would show them moving away from the bed, dishevelled and exhausted. One was left to speculate on the cause of their dramatic change of appearance.

Zambia had only one TV channel, government-owned and run, though it was one too many in the view of those Zambians who questioned why taxes were levied on all to provide a service which benefited only the few who could afford a set. Programmes were mostly canned American or British productions. Local programmes were not very well produced, despite the setting-up in the mid-eighties of a mass media complex with new equipment and training facilities. Many of the locally produced programmes were political propaganda pieces of mind-numbing boredom. An annual favourite of the producers was the President's birthday party, where his family, with the Party central committee and cabinet members gathered around the cake singing ‘Happy birthday to you’. Such a production might be shown nightly for a week, supplemented by lengthy coverage of the President's State visits abroad, complete with speeches. On evenings like those, one would welcome the adverts.

Radio Zambia broadcast in the six main local languages as well as in English. It was genuinely popular, though many Zambians came to be unable to afford to buy batteries, and few had access to mains electricity. The political content was ponderous, but under-estimated the capacity of Zambians to differentiate between truth and propaganda. News coverage of events in Zambia was heavily censored and invariably reflected what UNIP wanted people to hear. People made their own choice by listening to foreign stations to hear news about their own country, rather than have to wait a few days for the official, "correct" version from Lusaka. Zambians shared the view with Poles (from Poland's communist days) that nothing was true until it had been officially denied. Many people listened to Radio RSA, The Voice of South Africa, which provided extensive coverage of events in Zambia. It was thoroughly propagandistic and reported bad news from any part of Africa with a *schadenfreude* which it sought to conceal behind a façade of objectivity. The method was to present reports with just enough factual basis to give credit to the subliminal political text. Its news reports enjoyed a high, though undeserved, degree of credibility.

For most Zambian adults, the most readily available source of entertainment was to gather around a 210 litre (44 gallon) drum of beer and sit down for an evening's drinking. Beer was brewed from sorghum for a period of four to seven days, with sugar or fruit added to accelerate fermentation. For many women this was a valued source of income, with a profit of about 100%. It was thick and creamy with a pleasant, if somewhat heavy and sweet taste. It was not filtered but drunk straight from the drum in heavy enamel mugs. Men and women would come together to drink, though they usually sat in separate groups. In beerhalls, however, it was unusual to find women other than prostitutes. In rural areas, beer was drunk *al fresco*, and no stigma was attached to a woman who went for a drink with her friends. The normal practice was for people to finish whatever drink was available. On special occasions, there might be anything from ten to twenty drums, as, for instance, for an initiation ceremony. The party might go on for two or three days, with no one sober at the end. A party that ended with sober guests was a failure. People said plainly that they went to a party, not to have a drink but to get drunk. The consequences of this were serious for family life, as when children were deprived of food because much of the sorghum crop went to brew beer for the adults, and serious also for the national economy with absenteeism and drunkenness on the job. On the positive side, there was a lot to be said for anything which drew people together in a relaxed atmosphere to enjoy each other's company.

Kachasu, a spirit distilled from maize grain in the form of virtually raw alcohol, was altogether different from beer. (3) This cirrhosis cocktail was a killer, and was the direct cause of many deaths each year. Although illegal (unlike beer), it was distilled with little attempt at concealment, often on the implicit understanding that, if the police found out about it, they could be bought off with a few free bottles. Zambia had a large problem with alcoholism, and popular attitudes would have to change substantially before there could be an improvement. Drunkenness carried no stigma and was accepted in court as an adequate explanation for criminal behaviour. The drunkard was a figure of fun, not of censure. The intimate links between drunkenness and entertainment made it unlikely that major change would take place, and alcoholism looked set to remain a substantial problem.

The future of Zambian culture

If culture is basically about the way people think, the values they have, the way they relate to each other, then, in Zambia's case, it must be said that its culture was substantially traditional. Even though migratory labour, a cash economy, schools, trade and the media of communication have brought changes with them, the fundamental substructure, the foundations of thought and behaviour, have not altered substantially. The tip of the iceberg might have changed, but, underneath, it remains constant.

Aware of the need to develop a sense of nationhood where there was none before, the Zambian government developed a national philosophy called Zambian Humanism. It was a blend of African and Christian values, and was propagated through the Orwellian- sounding Department of National Guidance. Schools and the civil service were supposed to adopt it and live by it. However, it must be said that if there was anything to be learned from twenty-five years of trying to impose a State ideology, it was that such attempts do not work; indeed, they backfire. Ideology rested lightly on the shoulders of Zambians. They were like the man who said to Dr. Johnson, 'I tried to be a philosopher but humour kept breaking in', Zambians had too lively a sense of the ridiculous to take seriously a State ideology propagated by Party officials who patently did not believe a word of it. Perhaps the only one who really did believe it was its progenitor, President Kenneth Kaunda. Whatever chance it had of being taken seriously went out the window in the early eighties when some left-wing members of the ruling Party, UNIP, tried to use it as a springboard for imposing Marxism. The slogan "Socialism through Humanism" was used as a smokescreen to introduce Marxism into the primary school curriculum. The explanation offered to the public was that Scientific Socialism was not really Marxist but an attempt to give Zambian Humanism a more scientific base. It did not work, largely because the churches opposed it strongly and it became apparent to the government that the political price for imposing it would be too high. (The churches were capable of working together when they wanted to.) Perhaps also President Kaunda saw through the verbiage and realized that behind it was an attempt by its left wing to hijack the Party. One lasting political side-effect was to let people see that united public opinion could force government to change a policy; that was a useful lesson for later.

Change was coming to Zambia. The old ways are going, and into the vacuum Western materialism and consumer values are intruding themselves. The Coca-Colonization of culture was under way. Globalization, that is to say, Americanization, was gathering pace. Television was a powerful force because, even though it reached only a small proportion of the population, they were influential. They set the pace for others. Western ways were seen as "modern" - whatever that vacuous, all-purpose word might mean. Zambia, with its passivity and inertia, its overpowering sense of helplessness, did not seem able to muster the vitality to get a grip on such influences and shape them to its ways and needs. It does not have a clear sense of its cultural identity. By contrast, societies like Korea and Japan, though heavily influenced by American ways since the Second World War, have a strong, homogeneous culture, and a sense of national identity, which has enabled them to select and reject from what was presented to them by the Western cultural juggernaut. A similar example closer to Zambia would be Madagascar.

Zambia the country did not have a sense of identity. It was more like a loose confederation of tribes, and tribal loyalty was often greater than that to the country. With its rapid urbanization, there was taking place in Zambia what might be called "retribalization". A tribe such as the Bemba, which was sliding into decay in its heartland in the Northern and Luapula provinces in the nineteen thirties, came back to life with a bounce when its menfolk migrated in large numbers to the newly developing copper mines. Today, the Copperbelt is predominantly Bemba in language and culture, and the original Lamba and Lala tribes have fallen into an inferior position. In a somewhat similar way, the southern town of Livingstone, which was regarded as a Lozi stronghold came to be predominantly Tonga and Nyanja speaking.

But retribalization went further than the mere supplanting of one group by another, because what were, in effect, new tribes were being created in the melting pot of the towns. It was not possible to put a name on them: they resembled what *Time* magazine in the seventies called the tribes of Britain - the brolly-and-bowler hat tribe, the skinheads, the landed gentry, the militant left, and so on. In the compounds around the cities new groups were emerging: nine-tenths African and one-tenth Western - the street kids, the unemployed, those in the drug scene, the criminal fraternity. They spoke an Esperanto of Nyanja sprinkled with English and words from Bemba and other Zambian languages. Their parents and grandparents were farmers; they knew nothing of farming and had no desire to know. Mostly unemployed, they spent their days wandering the streets and listening to records outside beerhalls. Where their future lay no one knew but it would certainly be different from the past.

A new force for change was Zambia was technology. It brought a hidden as well as a declared agenda with it, because it was based on assumptions and attitudes towards the person, work and society. A machine that does the job better, faster and more cost-effectively than a team of manual workers has something to say. It might be that, if the job in question were extremely boring and dull, people would be liberated from drudgery when the machine took over. Equally well, the message borne by the machine might be that people don't do a job well, and, such being the case, they were disposable. The message of technology might be anything between liberation from dreary monotony and being dumped into redundancy. It would have made good economic sense for Zambia, which was rich in labour but poor in capital, to opt for labour- rather than capital-intensive industry. But that ran against the desire to be seen by others as “modern”. Anything that was not new was regarded as “old-fashioned”, an attempt to lead Zambians back to a primitive past. For instance, in the name of modernity, the Ministry of General Education and Culture computerized school examination results. Since that was done, there have been long annual delays in publishing the results. The system was expensive, depending on regular infusions of foreign money and know-how to get it going again. But no one dared suggest a return to the original, simple, manual system. That would have been “backward”. People had not thought out the implications - cultural or otherwise - of the technology they had adopted in the name of progress. But people paid a price for not doing so. Know-how needed to be supplemented by know-why.

Zambia in the Kaunda years struggled through a cultural muddle. People were confused as to their identity, where they belonged and where they were going. A striking example of this was the bewildering confusion over names. If a Zambian showed you his/her documents, such as school examination results, national registration card, and passport, more likely than not there would be differences in the names on all three. A person might be known by one

name at work and a different one at home and, in addition, have the secret name of an ancestor that was not revealed to anyone. Young people adopted new names, especially pseudo-Western ones, as the fancy took them: Maybin (after a former colonial governor) Mukuka; Progress Lubinda; Robson Tembo; Loveness Phiri; Air Force Moyo; Six Months Banda (was that premature birth or a jail sentence?) and the Lusaka bus company known as Enjoy Iceland Bus Services. This jumble was illustrative of people's uncertainty as to their cultural matrix.

What will develop out of this muddle? In the short term, probably an even greater muddle. In the long term, one must hope that there will grow something different from the present and yet recognizably African. It will not develop with some half-understood, half-digested Western model for its culture or its organizational structures. There must be substantial continuity with the past if Zambia is not to lose its soul and become a nameless drifting piece of deadwood. Africa has been through crises before and has found a way through. Its basic orientation to life and to God is a powerful driving force that gives hope for the future. *Mutu u mutu ka batu*.

Chapter 3 RELIGION IN ZAMBIA

Traditional religion

Belief in one God was universal in Africa from time immemorial. Africans found belief in God so natural and obvious that it seemed unthinkable either to challenge it, or to try and substantiate it by "proofs". It was accepted as one accepted the fact that night followed day; to deny it was like denying reality itself. That was the general picture.

However, belief in God was not so total or absolute that one never found manifestations of the variety of religious experience. There were African agnostics and atheists; there were those who felt that religion was good for children, that it was alright as long as one did not take it too seriously. Some saw it as mainly about morals, or rituals, or fulfilling prescribed observances, and so on. There were those who were indifferent and there were fanatics. And, as everywhere, there were many whose practice was not in line with their profession.

Nevertheless, the picture was one of overall belief in God. The Christian missionaries of the nineteenth century who spoke of "pagan" Africa were as mistaken as the Moslem slave traders who called their captives, "Kaffirs", or unbelievers. In the twentieth century, Europe, the homeland of most Christian missionaries in Africa, might have been more secular than Africa.

The kind of God in whom most Africans believed in earlier times admitted of much local variation, but, underneath that, there was an essential consistency. God was seen as a personal, all-knowing and all-powerful Creator. In Bantu areas he was widely known by the personal name of Leza or Lesa; he was masculine. He did not reveal himself, but was remote from people's lives. People did not approach him directly in prayer; their petitions were mediated through the lineage spirits, the departed of the tribe. Prayer and sacrifice were offered through these for the needs of the community; and the spirits interceded with God on its behalf. Their role was not unlike that of the saints and departed souls in the Christian doctrine of the communion of saints. There were prescribed rituals for the needs of different situations, whether for petition, praise, thanksgiving, celebration or whatever. Unlike in West Africa, there was rarely a priesthood in any formal sense, except perhaps in the guardians of royal tombs; normally the village headman or a woman lead prayers for and with the village. (1)

It is interesting in passing to recognize the ways in which Europe retained its own varieties of ancestor worship: it has an institutional expression in monarchy; it was also expressed in Nazi Germany, when there was an explicit harking back to the old Norse and Germanic gods, as when the more zealous Nazi Party members specified in their wills that they did not wish to be buried under a Christian cross, but under the sign of the *rune*. And the attitude still flourishes today, especially in conservative rural areas, where a farmer may justify resistance to change, saying, The old ways were good enough for my father, and they're good enough for me'. That is a kind of ancestor worship, too.

For an African, religion was not a part of life, nor was it apart from life; it was one with it. Life was permeated with the presence of the spirit world. It was common to hear a patient in hospital ascribe an illness to possession by spirits, and healing (or exorcism) dances and rituals were fairly common. An early Christian missionary in Zambia made a perceptive comment when he stated that people acknowledge one God, they worship lineage spirits, but what they really believe in was "medicine".

“Medicine” was a general term that includes spells, charms, poisons, healing rituals, as well as pills and injections. When people were confronted by the crises of life, they had recourse to those who could prescribe “medicine”. This could mean calling on a diviner to find out who was responsible for a plague of locusts; it could mean wearing a protective necklace to ward off witches or people who change themselves into animals. It could be poison to get rid of an enemy. In recent years, with the arrival of modern medicine and its array of multi-coloured tablets, and injections of all kinds, this blind faith has been intensified. People believed that, for every problem, there was medicine of some kind. If only one could find that elusive medicine which others seemed to have, then one would have control over the problems of life: a husband could be made faithful, a successful marriage arranged, promotion ensured, and so on. In the turmoil of life, “medicine” (*muliani, muti*) was seen as a refuge of safety.

When the first Christian missionaries arrived in Zambia in the mid-nineteenth century, they came in contact with African traditional religion. From the vantage point of history, one can only be surprised by the contrast between the effort that Christian missionaries made in the study of local languages, and the virtual absence of an attempt to study local religion. Most missionaries either ignored it or rejected it out of hand. This was especially true in the case of Protestant evangelicals who had little hesitation in describing local religion as the work of the devil. Quite simply, some missionaries condemned what they had not tried to understand. It might be that they took the substantial absence of religious specialization for the absence of religion itself. There were few shrines, priests, temples or pilgrimages to holy places. Perhaps they thought that meant there was no religion. An example of such misunderstanding was the missionary who, on seeing a man face the rising sun while praying, concluded that he was a sun-worshipper!

All one had to do was ask any Zambian in order to know that the matter was different: there was an annual cycle of prayer and sacrifice; conversation was studded with references to God and the spirits; religion was so much a part of everyday life that its integration with it might be what led missionaries not to see its distinctness. Whatever the explanation might be, Zambia still awaited someone of the calibre of Matteo Ricci in China, or Roberto de Nobili in India. The dialogue has yet to begin at a significant level. Traditional religion was still there, if not so much in external ritual, as in the attitudes of the people. Until that challenge was faced, Christianity and Zambian religious tradition will continue like the lines of a railway track, close to one another, running parallel, but never making contact. Christianity has not penetrated the culture of Zambia - and the culture is derived from the cult. In Zambia, Christianity was not so much the leaven in the loaf as the icing on the cake. (2)

While Christianity has had little impact on traditional religion, the converse was not always the case. Traditional religion has impacted on Christian practice in certain areas, for example,

concerning baptism. In both Protestant and Catholic churches, the practice followed in regard to baptism sometimes made it into Christian "medicine". Fairly commonly, there was little preparation beforehand or follow-up afterwards. The attitude or motivation of the person asking for baptism was not seriously enquired into; conversion was not a prerequisite. Once the ritual was carried out correctly, it was assumed by wishful thinking that the desired effects would follow. As long as the action was carried out, it would somehow "work". Such thinking was an example of Christian pastoral practice having "gone native".

Religion and Ethics

It used to be assumed by Europeans that traditional religion had nothing to say on ethics. God was remote and did not reveal himself; there were no Ten Commandments handed down on Mount Sinai. It was only in relatively recent times, and largely under the influence of African thinkers, that it was demonstrated that there were substantial links between traditional religion and ethics. (3)

The basic traditional Zambian ethic could be summed up as: Do not offend community or custom. The motivating force which impelled people to adhere to this standard was belief in the lineage spirits. They were the guardians of tradition and culture. To violate them was to draw down the anger of the spirits, not only on oneself but also on the group. If God was remote, the spirits were not: they were ever present, and would not ignore what violated the good of the community of which they were still a part.

This belief created a strong community sense; there was loyalty to the group. There was continuity with the past, so that change came slowly and could be coped with. Zambians were not individualists; they were community-orientated. Responsibility to the extended family, and hospitality, were outstanding qualities. There was respect for authority. People were immensely patient, even if this sometimes degenerated into passivity or fatalism.

This ethical system, like any other, has its weaknesses. While it was strong on group loyalty, it meant that there was often little sense of responsibility to someone who was not part of the group, which, in practice, often meant someone of another tribe. (This does not take from the remarkable courtesy and consideration shown to guests.) In allocating jobs, for instance, an interviewer needs only to ask an interviewee his name to know his tribe. From there it was only a short step to giving the job to someone who was a fellow-tribesman. Similarly, group loyalty does not help to develop a sense of individual responsibility. Honesty, truthfulness and justice demand a strong element of individuality; a person has to be ready to stand up and be counted - to stand alone, perhaps - against the group. Brought up to submerge individuality within the group, it was almost impossible for one person to stand apart and say a firm *No* to group pressure. ("Instant justice" was a group activity; an individual would never do it on his own.)

If morality was what the community said it was, then it was easily assumed that, if the community was unaware of an action, moral criteria did not apply to it. People would say plainly, for example, that stealing became wrong if and when one was caught. If one were not

caught, then it was not wrong; on the contrary, it was clever. That attitude was analogous to that which Europeans have to civil law: if you parked a car illegally, no one considered it to be immoral, and no sanctions would apply unless one was caught; indeed, to get away with it was a triumph to be boasted of. As everywhere, a lot of “morality” was simply keeping up appearances: for instance, if one felt anger, one should not show it. To do so would be betray a lack of self-control. And much of what passed for conscience was simply social conditioning.

The respect for authority and custom associated with the veneration of ancestors helped to give stability to society. In Zambia's case, stability degenerated into stagnation. People have deep-seated resistance to change, as development workers commonly experience. Respect for authority at its best might be based on loyalty to the community, but it was also, and not uncommonly, based on fear of the authority's power, so that even when those in authority acted wrongly and abused their position or exceeded their authority, few, if any, would challenge them. Those in authority were less concerned with a moral basis for action than with their power base. They were strong with the weak and weak with the strong. And that must sound familiar to many non-Zambians.

Christian ethical teaching was presented individualistically, even though the over-arching moral framework of the New Testament, the Reign of God, was communitarian. Whatever missionaries might have taught, the message Zambians caught was that Christian moral teaching was principally about drinking, smoking, and, of course, sex. The duty of parents properly to nourish and care for their children, doing an honest day's work, resisting bribery, protecting the weak against exploitation by the powerful, social responsibility, defending civil rights - these might or might not have been taught but they were not grasped as having an essential connection with being Christian. The ethic of Christianity did not penetrate the milieu, except in one important area, that of liberating the individual from the dominance of the group, by the respect and care it showed for the person. That process was far from complete but Christianity could legitimately claim the credit for having initiated it.

In a sense, all this was irrelevant. Zambia, especially in the later years of Kaunda's rule, was a society bordering on collapse and prospects for the future were not promising. What mattered was survival, and the ethics by which Zambians actually operated were those of survival. What mattered was to get through today, without everything falling apart. That was what dictated the ethical boundaries. The ethics of survival were simple: look after yourself and don't get caught; do what you have to do to survive. It was easy for those who were safe and secure to snort that this was not an ethic at all, but the view from outside the guarded and glass-topped wall was different. Until the economic situation improved, Zambians had not much choice, and would not be able to merge their own communitarianism and Christianity's *de facto* individualism into a new synthesis.

The Christian Churches

Christian missionaries first came to Zambia from Europe in significant numbers in the mid-nineteenth century. Men and women, they were people of vision and courage. They were

great in what they achieved, and greater still in what they attempted. There was the Anglican Bishop Hine, who walked several thousand kilometres in his first years in the country. He also led a protracted and eventually successful struggle to keep the Anglican church in Livingstone open to people of all races. The settler community wanted it all white, and argued for this on the grounds of hygiene: they could not be expected to drink from the same communion cup as people who might have leprosy. The settlers had picked the wrong man to quarrel with on that ground: the bishop had been a medical doctor before becoming a churchman, and assured them that there was no health risk. Defeated on that point, they shifted their ground, but, with the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the High Commissioner in Cape Town, Hine overcame the opposition. (4) Unfortunately, his example didn't catch: until independence in 1964, Catholic church authorities racially segregated the cathedral in Livingstone.

Bishop Dupont, a French Catholic and a larger-than-life figure, became a Bemba chief at the request of the dying incumbent, ratified by his court, though he subsequently took the initiative of transferring power to the British.

François Coillard, a French evangelical, fought and won a tough, no-holds-barred fight against the Lozi king, Liwanika, for the right of slaves and women to attend the same church service as the king. They were both dictators, Liwanika and Coillard. Liwanika tried to starve out Coillard, who replied by telling him to his face that he was a bad king and killed too many people. No one else would have dared to do that. By sheer strength of character, Coillard won his point.

Women missionaries, both wives of Protestant clergy and Catholic religious sisters, provided medical care and educational services. The wives in particular suffered as the mortality rate among their children was appallingly high. Missionaries laid the foundations of Zambia's health and educational services, and are still active in them.

In conjunction with the British administration, missionaries fought successfully against both the trade in slaves and the institution of slavery itself. Unlike their counterparts in some other countries, they did not compromise themselves by having slaves. They also helped to bring an end to the endemic inter-tribal wars that tore the country apart in the nineteenth century.

Like David Livingstone, they spoke of Christianity, commerce and civilization. Commerce was to provide an alternative to the slave trade. By civilization they meant colonial rule, which they generally saw as the only practicable way of overcoming warfare and the excesses of local rulers, of which they saw gruesome and almost daily evidence.

Missionaries were people of their time, and they brought with them the limitations of their century. They took for granted the superiority of European over African culture. They usually dismissed traditional religion without a serious attempt at examining it. But they had the great toughness that seems to have marked expatriate Europeans of the nineteenth century. Perhaps their greatest asset was their determination, an example being the Methodist missionary who worked for thirteen years in one area before making a single convert, and he, just a few weeks after his baptism, left the church, taking with him those preparing to become Christians. The missionaries simply kept going.

The approach of the missionaries was individualistic. They concentrated their efforts on bringing people one by one to the Christian faith more than trying to shift the whole of society and its culture a little closer to Christianity by finding areas of common ground between the two, and building on them. They wanted to wipe the slate clean and start afresh on a one-by-one basis.

They contributed significantly to the economic development of their areas by clearing roads, building bridges, and establishing supply lines. Probably quite unwittingly, they created, by doing so, new social groupings, new patterns of settlement, and new work practices such as a level of specialization that had not previously existed.

Of course, the fundamental reason why they had come to the country was to convert people to Christianity. The ambiguity of that process must have been clear to them. Conversion was territorial: those near a Protestant mission became Protestant, those near a Catholic mission became Catholic. They built schools which were open to all, and in which the Christian faith was taught along with the three R's and a trade. While trying on the one hand to maintain to critics that the schools put no pressure on the pupils to convert, they justified the cost to their supporters at home by pointing to the value of schools as a means of conversion. When there was no other school to attend, it must have seemed to parents that, for the sake of education and its benefits, it was worthwhile going along with the missionary and getting baptism, if that was what s/he wanted. If missionaries were under pressure, as they often were, to produce results by pointing to numbers converted, it did not pay to examine too closely the motives of those asking for baptism. It can also be argued though, that the process operated differently: that parents wanted baptism for their children as a form of protection against witchcraft and sent them to school to facilitate that process.

Life is full of ambiguities for everyone, and there are few who would emerge crystal clear from a close scrutiny of their motives and behaviour. The fact remains that, in the judgment of the Zambian people, missionaries emerged with a good record. They were, and are, highly thought of.

The present generation of missionaries in Zambia come from Europe, America and Africa. (It was worth mentioning that, over a hundred years ago, there were already missionaries from Basutoland, now Lesotho, in Zambia.) The role of the missionaries has changed. Up to the early nineteen seventies, they had control over a very large part of the country's educational system, and a substantial part of its medical services. Since then, governmental control increased. That was by agreement with missionaries who saw it as their role to train local people and then transfer control to them. One consequence of this was that some missionaries seemed to have lost direction. In a period of transition from paternalism to partnership, from talking to listening, from projects to people and from direction to dialogue, they drifted uncertainly. A few made the transition, some struggled with it, and others had not yet begun the attempt.

In recent times, missionaries gave an impression of confusion and demoralization, seemingly unable to relate activities to stated goals. For example, in development work, in which they played a substantial part, there was no doubt that they enjoyed some success in completing projects. But the pattern and quality of relationships left behind afterwards was in

some cases negative, for example, leaving a mentality of dependence, such as the feeling that only outsiders could solve problems. The success of the project in achieving a specific practical goal was sometimes accompanied by a failure to create a sense of community in planning, executing or sustaining the project - though that might have been its stated *raison d'être* - and this went largely unquestioned by missionaries. The questions were not asked, perhaps because the answers were known and were not going to be faced.

In sacramental matters, one received the impression that it was numbers that counted. Some missionaries were proud of their ability to increase annually the number of those baptized; conversion did not always seem to be part of the process and the newly-baptized, even the adults among them, sometimes seemed to have only a vague idea of what it was they had received.

Just as the nineteenth century missionaries assumed the superiority of European culture, those of the twentieth century, for the most part, did likewise. Unwittingly, they contributed to the secularization of Zambian life by their uncritical acceptance of the values of Western consumer society, the cash economy and migratory labour. Mission stations in remote areas were often outposts of relative affluence and consumerism, reflecting the Western world's preoccupation with money and material goods.

The development of local leadership was slow, particularly in the Catholic Church, whose insistence on clerical celibacy was a major impediment. In 1971, the Catholic Church had 63 local clergy; in 1981, the figure was still 63. New priests had been ordained in the intervening period, but the dropout rate was high. Problems with celibacy were the major reason, though usually not acknowledged. To a Zambian, celibacy was not a virtue: it was a rejection of responsibility to one's family and community. A person without a child is seen as a child; s/he has failed in the primary human responsibility - to reproduce. A celibate is seen as a freak, a caricature of an adult, possibly a witch.

The first generation of local Zambian church leaders were people of great courage; they faced misunderstanding or even rejection by their own people. They faced the daunting challenge of doing something radically new. The recent generation of Zambian church leaders were from a different mould: it was difficult not to see their priorities as the enjoyment of the symbols and status of office. Life in the Church was often seen as a career like any other rather than a commitment to service. A sense of vocation appeared to be weak. One looked in vain for initiative, for interest in people or care for them. In contrast to African missionaries from outside Zambia, local clergy seemed unmotivated. In contrast to Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), they had scarcely begun to adapt the worship, theology and structures of the church to the local situation. In contrast to their colleagues in Zimbabwe and South Africa, they were usually silent about human rights' abuses. With the number of foreign missionaries declining, senior church leaders seemed to have pressed the panic button, and decided that what mattered was to find as many clergy as possible, turning a blind eye to questions about standards.

A similar situation existed in relation to some national church organizations. They did not have a reputation for integrity to lose. The product of inertia and idleness on the part of church leaders, the jobs-for-the-boys mentality that existed in those bureaucratic empires was justified by clichés wrapped in humbug and hypocrisy. Quite simply, there was too much

money and too little conscience in those bodies; they did not believe in cleaning up a mess if they could cover it up successfully. Commissions of enquiry made reports that were left to gather dust on the shelves. Deeply corrupt, they made development the new name for stealing. If the donor agencies that provided money to those bodies exercised their responsibility by insisting on accountability as a prerequisite for future aid, they would help to provide the impetus for an overdue house cleaning.

The higher church leaders were men without a vision. They seemed convinced that nothing should ever be done for the first time; that would be imprudent. They were afraid of UNIP and dressed up that fear as a wise desire to promote harmony. In this context, the Catholic Church had a special problem. It was perhaps the most hierarchical of the churches. Paradoxically, while it had its period of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the nineteen sixties, it was under a Polish pope, John Paul II, that it retreated into a mood of frightened reaction. The pope's pro-nuncio, or ambassador, in Lusaka fulfils the role of Roman proconsul, keeping an eye on the distant provinces of the empire. It was he who choose new bishops and who controlled much of the funding that the Vatican provided. The Vatican's desire to maintain close control ensured that only those were chosen who were most likely to tread a predictable path. The fear of losing control - itself the by-product of fear and suspicion - was allowed to stifle initiative. The dullness and lack of leadership of Zambian Catholic bishops was their insurance against the suspicion of unorthodoxy or separatism.

Church and Party: Christ and Caesar

The separation of Church and State as found, for example, in US political tradition was the product of minds formed in a different cultural matrix from that of Africa. There were no such clear distinctions there. To a Zambian, it seemed more appropriate that Church and State should be partners, working in co-operation like husband and wife. What actually happened was something else; the Party seduced the Church, which consented to concubinage, or a marriage of mutual convenience. A Catholic bishop declared in 1988 that he was praying that President Kaunda would receive a massive *Yes* vote from the electorate in the elections of that year. His prayers were heard, God, as ever, being on the side of the big battalions. In 1987, when the churches jointly produced a document on Christian liberation, justice and development, they first sent it to UNIP for approval; the Party objected to certain passages which were then sanitized to open the way for publication. In the mid-nineteen eighties, when the Catholic Secretariat was fined K100, 000 (about US $12,500 at the then exchange rate) for mishandling foreign aid donations, a word in the presidential ear led to the cancellation of the fine. In 1987, a year of presidential and general elections, the Catholic bishops, in a pastoral letter read in their churches, waxed eloquent on the blessings that UNIP had brought the country. In 1973, a Catholic bishop campaigned on UNIP's behalf for the introduction of a one-party State. The United Church of Zambia, formed in 1965 from the union of a number of Protestant churches, saw itself for many years in the role of court chaplain to UNIP. It stripped its leader of the title of president, stating humbly that Zambia had only one President, His Excellency Dr. Kenneth Kaunda. And many, perhaps most, Zambian clergy were members of UNIP. One Catholic bishop, Emmanuel Milingo, who publicly questioned the disappearance of funds collected to relieve victims of flooding in Kamwala in Lusaka in

1978 was removed from office by the Vatican on other grounds in the eighties. UNIP was not sorry to see him go.

There was a process of mutual infiltration, a symbiosis, between Church and Party. The leaders of one and the other were often the same. That reached an incestuous level when the Office of the President, one of the State security organizations, “planted” sympathetic students in the church theological colleges to keep a watching brief on staff and students. The president himself often preached on public occasions; indeed, his sermons were sometimes better than those of the professionals. He wooed the churches' leadership into the ruling elite, and they allowed themselves to be drawn, not too shyly or reluctantly, and were effectively neutered as a result. Church leaders welcomed that arrangement: it enabled them to feel they had a role in the direction of the State. Others, viewing the matter differently, felt that what happened was the politicization of the church. When the Party organized a major function at local level, it decided when and where church services linked to the function would be held, and which Party leaders should speak at it; Church leaders usually complied. In such a situation, the church was not an independent voice on behalf of the poor, weak or marginalized, whatever it might claim. When the Office of the President was well aware of church corruption, and could make it public any time, the church would have to think twice about criticizing State corruption. It was the old alliance of throne and altar, when Christ and Caesar went hand and glove. The church never criticized the president; it never questioned the leading role of the Party. At most, it might murmur a word or two of dissent about this or that point of policy or method of administration. Such statements, well self-censored in advance, were presented as exercises in quiet diplomacy, and one was given the assurance that this was really more effective than open confrontation.

But the affinity between Church and State went deeper than a mere marriage of convenience; it might even be called spiritual, especially where the Catholic Church was concerned. That church taught that it was the one, true church, outside of which there was no salvation; it was one flock, with one shepherd, and was founded on one authority, who was Peter, the rock. UNIP was the one political party in Zambia, and, as TV announcements reminded Zambians: "UNIP was the salvation of the nation". Zambia was one nation, with one leader, and was founded on one authority, the Mulungushi Rock of Authority. (UNIP held its annual conference at Mulungushi; a rock there had this quasi-Sinaitic status bestowed on it by Kaunda.) Both were hierarchical structures where authority flowed from the top down, not complemented by a movement from the bottom up. The tribal chief was the role model for president and bishop alike; and chiefs did not retire.

The system of ecclesiastical consultation and UNIP's “one-party participatory democracy” were alike in that, while they went through the motions of consultation, decision-making was firmly locked in at the top. UNIP's National Council was like the Catholic Church's Synod of Bishops: participants were presented with an agenda as a *fait accompli*, and acceptance of it and of subsequent decisions were made a test of loyalty. Acceptance of the Party line was the equivalent of credal statements of faith, just as the acquisition of a Party membership card was a kind of political baptism, involving compliance more than commitment. What was required of the individual in both Church and Party alike was attendance at meetings, staying in line with approved authority and doctrine - and the Church or Party did the rest. They carried the individual along to the Promised Land. The church forgives any sin, except the sin against the Holy Spirit, namely, a challenge to its authority. The Party did likewise: a member

could be ever so corrupt, but if s/he repented (the Party used religious terminology), forgiveness was available. What would neither be forgiven nor forgotten was any challenge to the president or to the authority of the Party.

Church and Party alike used scapegoats: the Party blamed South Africa for Zambia's problems; the Church blamed the missionaries of the past, or foreign donors, or the Vatican. Both had a body of doctrine - the Bible or Zambian Humanism. Both had ritual and ceremonial, both feared change. They shared an interest in preserving the *status quo* and so they supported each other. The church feared that an alternative to UNIP might be worse; the Party was glad to have the church do for it much of its work for it, at little cost, and it recognized the church as a useful force for social control.

Both Church and Party were concerned about losing control of people. They were afraid to take the risk of trusting them; they valued control above freedom, and compliance above creativity. The Party was paranoid about security and the church about separatism. Dissenters of either sort were harassed and banned into silence in the name of either national security or loyalty to the church. In both, there was the same suppression of diversity, the same indifference to public opinion, and the same result - a silent schism in which people publicly stated the official line while privately going their own way, leaving the leadership isolated, talking to itself like a lunatic in an asylum.

Church and State alike were aware of the ambiguities of such a situation, but it was a price they seemed willing to pay in the interest of their self-perpetuation.

Ecumenism

Zambia was roughly 40% Protestant, 35% Catholic and 25% who were not formal members of any church. (5) Muslims and Hindus were few in number, perhaps not more than a few hundred, mainly businesspeople and traders from the Indian sub-continent. In both urban and rural areas there was a large number of churches. In some not-so-large villages one might find a Catholic church and half a dozen small churches of various Protestant denominations. Broadly speaking, the larger mainline churches, such as the Catholic, the United Church of Zambia and the Anglicans accepted and respected each other despite their differences. The smaller churches, on the contrary, were often narrow, ignorant, and bigoted and were not uncommonly a source of division in a community, though, in some cases, they may have served rather as a focus or outlet for divisions already there. This might be a valid interpretation of the Lenshina movement in the north-east in the sixties, or some of the purification and healing cults.

The mainline churches developed a substantial degree of cooperation among themselves and in the interests of the wider civic community. They established a training institute, the Mindolo ecumenical centre; Multimedia Zambia, which produced programmes for radio and TV and *The National Mirror*, a weekly newspaper; the Churches' Medical Association of Zambia (CMAZ) which co-ordinated between church medical institutions and the Ministry of Health; a joint syllabus for Christian education in primary and secondary schools; and there

was also substantial co-operation in the Bible Society of Zambia, where the Catholic Church since the nineteen sixties took a more prominent role than previously.

From the time of their arrival until the present, the mainline churches were actively involved in medical and educational work for the whole community. The smaller churches and sects were not. While the latter were clear, explicit, and emphatic as to what they opposed, they were often silent on what it was they stood for and believed in. The churches, big and small, received substantial overseas funding. I never heard of a church leader from one of the mainline churches give or withhold assistance, e.g. food aid, from a person because of his/her religious beliefs, or lack of them. In the case of small churches and sects, precisely the opposite was true: benefits were for members only.

In general terms, it could be said that Catholic theology stressed the community, and Protestant theology the individual. So, a Catholic was saved by being a member of the church, a Protestant by his/her individual act of faith in Jesus Christ. That theology had practical expression in the way people lived. Catholics had a sense of community and a universalist outlook because of the nature of their church; they had a certain openness and breadth of vision. On the other hand, they did not have a strong sense of individual responsibility, and many adult Catholics are infantile and passive in faith, a frame of mind perhaps reinforced by calling the priest *Father*. Their local leadership was weak, their members having little concept of evangelical outreach, even within the confines of their own family. The transmission of faith from one generation to the next was left to the school, a by-product of the church's heavy involvement in schooling. Protestants had a strong sense of individual responsibility; they were active church members and vigorous in spreading the Christian message. They were adults in faith. On the other hand, they showed little interest in development work and were difficult to motivate to concern for the local civic community. They regarded traditional religion with little more than contempt.

It was interesting to speculate on reasons for the difference of attitude between Catholics and Protestants towards traditional religion. Catholics were usually more sympathetic, or at least less unsympathetic, than their Protestant counterparts. In the nineteenth century, many Protestant missionaries were British in origin, stiff, straight-laced, urbanized, middle-class Anglo-Saxons. Catholic missionaries commonly came from peasant societies at the lower end of the economic ladder, and from a religious tradition which incorporated devotion to the saints, to the souls of the deceased, and the use of relics, medals and other articles of religious devotion. Perhaps that enabled them to be less abrasive in their comments on the external manifestations of traditional religion.

In a peculiar way, the Protestant and Catholic churches seem to have swapped theologies since the Reformation. The Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone is one that probably no Protestant accepts today, at least in practical terms. On the contrary, a Protestant would probably say, ‘It doesn't matter what you think; it’s what you do that counts’. Justification nowadays is by works. And while Protestant tradition was overwhelmingly biblical in its basis, it was Protestant biblical scholarship that has demythologized the Bible to such an extent that little was left. It was like peeling away the layers of an onion in search of the pure inner core, only to find, on peeling away the last layer, that there was no core. Paradoxically, today it is the Catholic church which defends the integrity of the Bible

although, in the Reformation period, it was regarded as anti-biblical. Of such twists and turns is history made.

At the grass-roots level, there appeared to be little or no ecumenism. Their members mixed freely and worked together in all day-to-day activities, but, on the Lord's day, they went their separate ways, and, even in a very small village, there could be three or four churches with congregations trying to out-sing one another to the glory of the one true God. Looking towards the future, there was nothing on the horizon to indicate a change in the pattern of relationships between the churches.

Christian life in Zambia

Driving across Zambia, one found churches everywhere. They were usually small in size, holding perhaps no more than fifty people; they were built and maintained by the local community and were a source of pride to it. They were a status symbol. Mostly, it was women and children who attended; men spent Sunday drinking beer. For women, Sunday was an opportunity to dress up, meet friends, exchange news and, in general, escape from the drudgery of the week. Services were conducted in the local languages, and were usually long, lively and enthusiastic, especially in the less ritually formal churches of local or other African origin. Singing was varied, very lengthy, and often shared by the whole congregation rather than a specialized choir. The level of teaching was low, sometimes very low. One commonly gained the impression that the preacher had not thought about what he was going to say and simply kept talking in the hope that something would occur to him. Sermons were usually a moral harangue rather than a presentation of doctrine, much less anything inspirational or encouraging. Here, as elsewhere, advance preparation was the exception rather than the rule.

One might well ask what difference it all made, although, in asking it, one must recognize that the question was virtually impossible to answer. But there were some clues. In a hundred years, the churches drew three-quarters of the population of the country into their membership. Probably more than a million Zambians attend church each Sunday. There was no other organization which was capable of motivating people in such numbers to go week after week to a meeting. The Party could not have dreamed of it. Furthermore, while people were dragooned and driven to Party meetings they went to church of their own choice.

The depth of conversion was open to question. Christians divorce and re-marry, or marry polygamously, as readily as non-Christians, and the number of Christians who marry in church - never large - declined substantially since the nineteen sixties. Likewise, it appeared to be the case that Christians were as readily involved as non-Christians in corruption. During the government campaign in the early nineteen eighties to introduce Marxism as the State philosophy, most Christians went along with it passively; there were few who were prepared to come out in open opposition. For the majority of Christians, life seemed to go on as before, and entry into church membership did not appear to make a great difference. Some combined Christianity and witchcraft with apparent ease. While they drew comfort from the rituals of the church, especially from a well-conducted funeral service, they did not appear to look to the Christian faith as a significant power in the crises of life.

A consequence of this was that, as the churches gradually withdrew from educational and medical work, they became as marginalized as in Europe. The new situation thus created could give the church the opportunity of focussing on what was properly its role, that of developing an energizing spirituality and a life-giving liturgy, but that did not appear to happen. One partial answer to its problems would seem to lie in adult religious education, which scarcely existed. Apart from the Bible, adult Zambian Christians have virtually nothing to read. Their understanding of the Bible was often woodenly fundamentalist. If improving standards of general education and culture erode the foundations of a fundamentalist view, they may have little left.

There was one exception to this trend, namely, the Watch Tower, or Jehovah's Witnesses, who provided an abundant literature for their members. It was their great strength. While members of this sect were often bigoted and fanatical, it was also true that its more balanced adherents, while avoiding extreme attitudes, are tough, vigorous individuals who know where they stood and why, and who were constant and courageous in proclaiming their views. In many countries they encountered opposition and overcome it. Whatever one might think of their beliefs, it was clear that their members had a depth of conviction and strength of character which was as admirable as it was rare. Zambia has a higher percentage of adherents of the Watch Tower in its population than any other country.

An agenda for the churches

If the churches appeared to be directionless, there was no need for them to be so. There was much for them to do, especially if they could look beyond parochial interests to the needs of the wider community.

The churches needed to penetrate Zambian culture. They skimmed over its surface. Christianity had not shed its Western cultural clothing, so that a Zambian who became a Christian became partially westernized. There was a need to resist Western cultural dominance, especially in its more vulgar material form and to link at a deeper human level the elemental undercurrents of Zambian and Christian life. In theological jargon, the Christian faith needed to be “inculturated”. Christian missionaries brought with them Western ideas and models of ministry, church, and even God. “God” was a white, male, civilized middle-class gentleman - like the missionaries. Those models began to go into terminal decline in the late sixties and have grown more fragile since then. Whether new and localized models could be developed depended in the first place on a willingness to face facts and call them by name, but the churches largely seemed to prefer the ostrich approach of the head in the sand.

The churches could help in the creation of a sense of community that was often lost in the big, impersonal compounds and shantytowns. One motive for doing so could be reparation for the damage done to community by the proliferation of churches and consequent divisiveness. A way of doing this might be to organize cultural festivals in which different

tribes could share what they have in common. As matters stand, one of the few centres of real inter-tribal contact is the beerhall

There was a need for the churches to be unambiguously on the side of the poor and marginalized, not by issuing pretentious statements, but simply by doing so in the day-to-day hassle of life. This was an especial and unrecognized challenge to the Protestant churches which were conspicuously absent from this field. There was no one to speak on behalf of the underclass which comprised more than 90% of Zambia's population. Social justice was honoured more in the breach than in the observance and this was sometimes true of the churches' own internal practice also, especially in the matter of paying workers such as catechists a just wage.

The churches needed also to make up their minds whether they were into the numbers game or working on the level of reality in the matter of increasing their membership. Religious education and personal prayer at home surely be part of this process; they were largely absent. A process of conversion which was real could be a powerful factor in giving Zambians what so many needed, a sense of identity, of the self-esteem that flows from it, a sense of purpose and meaning in life.

The churches badly needed to clean up corruption, place-seeking, and financial rackets, especially in their national organizations. Zambia was sliding into a trough of corruption from which it would be very difficult to extricate itself. Regrettably, the churches were not slow in the race for the spoils, and despite the embarrassment of public exposure of wrongdoing by their leaders, seemed chronically unable to muster the will effectively to challenge these problems. Had the churches done so, they would have made a powerful contribution to national life.

The churches could exercise a useful role in development work. Hopefully, this would be seen, not as the work of a single specialized agency, or as the interest of a few enthusiastic individuals with personal projects, but as a normal part of the life of a Christian community in conjunction with others who might not necessarily be Christian. A particular contribution would be in the areas of relationships, motivation and conscience.

Alcoholism was a large social problem in Zambia. The churches could make a contribution there that would be of value.

The exploitation of children as a source of labour, and for sexual purposes, was a pressing problem. This was the case with children such as orphans, or those displaced as a result of divorce, or those who lived in school boarding establishments, or girls raped by HIV positive men.

If any of the above were to come about, there would need to be change in the churches. Firstly, there was a need to develop local lay leadership. Lay people were the hope of the church in Zambia. If they could survive their clerical leadership for a generation or two, the churches would probably take root permanently. Secondly, the churches need to define a role for themselves; they lacked vision or direction.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the most pressing need in church leadership was for moral courage. It was deficient. The Churches capitulated in the face of many major challenges, an exception being their opposition to the programme for Scientific Socialism. If nothing else, that resistance, successful as it was, showed that it was possible for the churches to find courage when they stirred themselves. The weakness, vacillation and timidity of church leadership, disguised as prudence, would have to be discarded if the churches were to deserve to continue. The danger to the churches was not that people would lose faith in God but that they would lose hope in the church.

There was some hope for the churches, however, because, with all their numerous faults, they showed some capacity for self-criticism and renewal. The Party in Zambia, by contrast, had none. As long as an institution was willing to stand back and look critically at itself, in its spirit and structures, it was not without hope. That much could be said of the churches, and in that lay their hope.

Chapter 4 THE ECONOMY

The economy as it was.

Prior to 1924, when the British South Africa Company handed over administration of Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, to the British Colonial Office, the country did not have an economy in the modern sense of the term. The overwhelming majority of the population lived by subsistence agriculture, and what trade existed, usually in copper, ivory, guns and slaves, was mostly by barter. Expatriates in the country were a handful of administrators, some missionaries and a few hunters. There was little contact with the outside world, and communications were slow. The prevailing economic philosophy in Europe and North America was that government should not become involved in business, but leave it to private enterprise.

Between 1924 and independence in 1964, there was dramatic growth in the country's economic life. It had been known for a long time that the country had copper, but mining by traditional tribal methods was uneconomic. Large-scale development began about 1923 with investment by the Anglo-American Corporation and Roan Selection Trust, representing American, British and South African interests. Expansion was rapid so that, by 1930, between thirty and fifty thousand people were either directly or indirectly employed by the mines in what was later to become the Copperbelt Province.

Mining became the major factor in social change, drawing people from all parts of the country, and giving the impetus to the development of communications. By 1935, mineral revenue was able to finance its own development without significant external investment. (1) Manufacturing followed mining, and Northern Rhodesia became part of the world economy. The Copperbelt grew rapidly, so that what had been small settlements and mining camps grew into the towns of Kitwe, Ndola, Mufulira, Chililabombwe, Chingola and Luanshya. By the time of independence, the Copperbelt was the largest industrial concentration in sub-Saharan Africa.

The benefits of growth were unevenly spread. For example, the infrastructure was severely underdeveloped except where it served the needs of copper and related industries. Some provinces did not even have a bank branch. In the ten years prior to independence, Northern Rhodesia was linked to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and to Nyasaland (now Malawi) in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The role assigned to Northern Rhodesia in this arrangement was to finance the development of the other two parts. During the ten years of Federation, almost £100 million went out of Northern Rhodesia to the other two areas, in particular to Southern Rhodesia, whose infrastructure was paid for substantially by Northern Rhodesia's copper. (2) The biggest beneficiaries were the two mining corporations and the British South African Company, which, although it did not itself engage in mining, held the leases to the mines. Those companies took £260 million out of Northern Rhodesia in dividends and royalties during the period of Federation. (3) It was not surprising, therefore,

that one of the first acts of the Zambian government after independence was to secure a majority shareholding in the mining industry.

Statistics never tell the full story. Economic statistics say nothing about the distribution of wealth; they can only say whether there was any wealth to be distributed. In 1964, when Northern Rhodesia became Zambia, the country had the highest *per capita* income and highest *per capita* exports in Africa. It had the highest rate of capital investment in the continent, apart from South Africa. Exports were more than double imports; inflation was low, as was the public debt; and reserves were good. (4) There was a small, honest and efficient civil service. The country was largely self-sufficient in food production, but, as already mentioned, the infrastructure was undeveloped, especially in rural areas.

The economy as it became

A word of warning is in order at this point. Official statistics are unsatisfactory: while they often give the general picture, they are not sufficiently accurate to do much more than that, and they are sometimes suspiciously self-congratulatory. The statistics that follow, by way of introduction to the subject, aim at the middle ground between sunny optimism and gloomy depression. (5)

The first large-scale blow to the Zambian economy was a series of nationalizations of privately owned companies starting in the late nineteen sixties. This was seen by the government of the day as a step towards economic independence, following on the attainment of political independence. The second blow was the oil-price shocks of 1973-74 and again in 1979. Between 1975 and 1979, government current expenditure fell in real terms by 25% and capital expenditure by 65%. Private consumption fell by 21%. (6) In the 1974-75 alone, Zambia's real income fell by 30%. (7) From 1974 to 1980, gross domestic product *per capita* fell by 52%. (8) Between 1983 and 1984, gross national product fell by almost 23%. (9) The value of the currency dropped sharply, while inflation in 1988 was estimated by government at between 44 and 54%. (10) In 1981, with the worst news still to come, the International Labour Office wrote that 'apart from countries torn by mass exodus or civil war like Mozambique and Angola, Uganda and Kampuchea, it was difficult to find a country where the real output has fallen by the magnitude that it has in Zambia'. (11)

Zambia's economy went into free-fall, the breakdown of one part having a domino effect on others. There was a quality of madness about the process, *Alice in Wonderland* seeming, by contrast, like a rock of sanity. For example, insufficient foreign exchange was allocated to the tyre industry, so the transport system began to break down, which in turn contributed to factory closures and disruption in agriculture, especially at harvest. The mining industry - the country's main foreign exchange earner, had to cut back on copper production because it had insufficient foreign exchange to buy new equipment to replace its ageing plant. A farmer could sell maize to a State co-operative union, and then buy it back again, milled, at a lower price, with government paying all the transport, milling and other costs involved. This was because government was trying to boost agricultural production by increasing producer

prices, while keeping consumers happy by subsidizing food prices in the shops. One could go on and on, but the picture was the same: the pace of decline was accelerating.

If people are the first economic resource of any country, then it must be said that Zambia did not use this resource well. Out of a population of about 7.5 million, there were, according to President Kaunda, two million unemployed young people. (12) Many others were under-employed, and productivity per worker was low. The Japanese car manufacturer, Isuzu, in a comparative study of assembly plant workers in Japan and in its Livingstone plant, found that output per worker was 17 times higher in Japan than in Zambia. About half of the population was engaged in agriculture, where people worked for about eight months a year and ticked over for the remaining four. About 22% of workers were in services and 12% in industry. (13) Less than one person in twenty of the population was engaged in full-time paid work.

People found it difficult to adjust from the leisurely pace of rural life to the specialization, organization and time-consciousness of industrial society. Supervision by management was often haphazard, leading to the mentality that time was no problem, anything could wait until tomorrow or next week or 'Any time from now'. Technical education was neglected and everyone wanted a white-collar job. Manual work was held in contempt. Many Zambian employers paid their employees poorly and fell behind with pay and social security contributions. Politicians moved from air-conditioned offices to Mercedes limousines exhorting people to work harder. There was serious indiscipline in the civil service: absenteeism was widespread, punctuality did not exist, and programmes and timetables were fairy-tales. In short, Zambia did not have the work ethic on which a modern economy could be built.

Zambia, at the end of the nineteen eighties, had an expatriate population of 8,500, down from 72,000 in 1964. (14) They held key positions in mining and manufacturing. As human beings, they range from dedicated idealists to those running from personal problems at home, to greedy parasites. (I recall a US diplomat saying unashamedly at an embassy reception that he was in Zambia to make money for himself; and he did, too, along with an Italian counterpart, using the diplomatic bag to smuggle poached ivory and rhino horn out of the country.) But their skills were needed. They left Zambia steadily throughout the seventies and eighties, partly because of the breakdown in law and order and the increase in violent crime directed at them. It did not help to restore confidence in the business community when a Greek businessman's body was found on the roadside, *sans* payroll, but with twenty-three bullets, and the investigating police officer told a news conference with a straight face that the death was caused by suicide! Neither did it help when some businessmen and traders of Indian origin, who held Zambian citizenship, had their property and businesses confiscated prior to their expulsion from the country in 1987. The fact that some of them later had their property restored did not undo the damage.

Industry in Zambia in 1987-88 operated at about 35% capacity. (15) There was not enough foreign exchange to buy the necessary raw materials and many factories operated on a stop-go basis as and when supplies became available. Government investment was heavily weighted towards consumption rather than production. Distributors were held in high esteem, producers not. There was no strategy for industrial development, no new industrial parks or plans for regional development. There were few government incentives to industry. At national level, government was well meaning but ineffective; at local level, one encountered

a barrage of bureaucratic obstruction. For some perverse reason, civil servants and local UNIP officials seemed to conserve their energies for the purpose of making life difficult for those trying to do something for the development of their area. Normally passive and inert, they would spring to life when there was an opportunity of being a spanner in the works. If they simply wished to be bought off, that would at least be understandable. But their interest seemed mainly to be the exercise of power; they wanted to be seen as people to be reckoned with, a "Big Man". Their destructiveness might be explicable in psychological terms as the expression of a frustrated will to power, frustrated because the bureaucratic system penalized initiative and rewarded inertia. In Zambia, to be successful drew down on one's head antagonism and opposition.

The direction of government expenditure was a major problem. In 1963, the year before independence, it was £20 million, or Kwacha (K) 40 million. (16) In 1988, it was K8.3 billion. Of this, K6.35 billion was for current expenditure and K1.95 billion for capital expenditure. K5.5 billion came from revenue and K2.75 billion - almost a third - from borrowing. (17) For 1989, the Minister for Finance estimated a budget deficit of about 5% of GDP, on the assumption that government revenue after borrowing would increase by 44% over 1988. Beyond a reference to a campaign (which did not materialize) to catch tax-dodgers, he did not explain where the extra revenue was to come from. (18) And he was not asked to explain it. During the seventies, spending on food subsidies multiplied by 14, and, by 1987, it exceeded capital expenditure. (19)

For political reasons, the government decided after independence to keep food prices low by means of subsidies. Food producers were poorly paid and consequently had no incentive to increase production. As a result, food imports and the cost of subsidies grew, as did the rate of urbanization. The government tried in 1986 to restore the balance by increasing payments to producers and reducing subsidies. The result was an outbreak of rioting that constituted the most serious threat to internal stability since 1964. According to government figures, fifteen people were killed and many more injured. The government backed down and bought itself time, at the price of increasing its indebtedness and postponing the day of reckoning. The problem was one of the government's own making: at the immediate level, it had not explained to the public the reasons for its actions; more than twenty years of unchallenged power made explanations seem unnecessary. In the longer term, subsidies have always been easier to introduce than to abolish.

For twenty-five years, the government had created a crisis of expectations: people had been led to believe that independence was a formula for easy prosperity for all. Faced by the choice between self-discipline in policy and the imposed discipline of reality, between responding with courage to a challenge or being pushed by events, the government's response was to stall and introduce palliatives to postpone the crunch for as long as possible. The crunch came and was beyond the government's capacity to cope with; it was caught between the twin pressures of economics and politics.

The taxation system was a striking illustration of this crux. The average Zambian paid a minuscule amount of tax. Startling though that sounds, it was true. Prior to independence a poll tax was levied on every adult. Branded as an instrument of colonial oppression, it was abolished at independence. The State set up a free educational and medical service. People came to see government in an almost magical way: it was a bottomless pit of free goodies.

When people living in local authority houses stopped paying rent, or their water bill, the State stepped in and made up the loss with bigger subsidies. Evictions for non-payment of rent were politically anathema. Essentially, the State was distributing, not producing. It was living on the accumulated reserves of the past. Government revenue came from income tax, customs' duties, mining levies, foreign aid and borrowing. A sales tax, increased in 1988 from 15 to 20%, was the only tax that most Zambians paid. The proportion of full-time workers required to pay tax was very small, and many of them were government employees. In rural areas, where half the population lived, and where people purchased little from stores, the return from sales tax must have been small indeed. As indicated already, about one-third of government spending was with borrowed money. Clearly, it was only a matter of time - though it was a long time - before creditors would begin to ask serious questions about the wisdom of lending money to a government run along such lines. In terms of attitudes and relationships, fiscal policy was a large factor in the creation and promotion of the free hand-out mentality that was widespread in Zambian life. The reasons for it were political and the price also political.

The Zambian currency, the Kwacha (K) (it rhymes with *gotcha*!), made up of 100 ngwee (n) (the double *ee* is pronounced like the *ey* in *grey*), provided a useful barometer of the state of the economy. At its birth, it was valued at ten shillings sterling or 50 new pence - about US $1.25. As sterling fell in value during the sixties and early seventies, the Kwacha rose with good prices for copper, partly because of the demand for munitions during the Viet-Nam war. It reached a high of 62 pence. It then broke with sterling and was linked to Special Drawing Rights of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In 1979, it was officially pegged at 85 US cents. It was kept at an artificially high level, perhaps as a way of reducing the price of luxury goods imported by the decision-makers. However, the other side of the coin was that exports were being priced out of the market.

The Kwacha was not a convertible currency and its real value could only be a matter of conjecture until it was put on the market. In response to pressure from the IMF, the Bank of Zambia in 1985 put up dollars for sale at auctions where manufacturers and exporters could make their bids in Kwacha, the dollars having been provided by the IMF and donor countries. Before the auctions began, the official level of the Kwacha was 65 US cents. Once auctions began, it fell quickly, reaching a low of about 4 cents, at which point the government intervened and stopped the auctions. On 1 May 1987, the government denounced the IMF and announced a decision to go its own way. It established an official rate of 12 cents to the Kwacha. The government denunciation of the IMF was mostly public relations, partly in view of President Kaunda's then role as Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, but behind closed doors, it maintained links to the IMF, as, indeed, it had to. Not long after, President Kaunda denied he had ever broken links with the IMF.

The auctioning system was, in effect, the nationalization of the black market in foreign exchange. It favoured the rich, and stores bulged with expensive consumer goods while it lasted. It also favoured those with political connections who were able to get their names on the *nomenklatura* that had the privilege of buying foreign exchange at the pre-auction exchange rate. It favoured the corrupt who could buy influence in the Bank of Zambia or the Foreign Exchange Management Committee (FEMAC), several of whose officials were suspended or dismissed. Likewise, a manufacturer, with the cooperation of overseas suppliers, could produce fraudulent invoices to show that he had used his allocation of

foreign exchange for a given purpose, e.g. to buy raw materials, when, in fact, it had gone into his personal overseas account.

With the abandonment of the auctioning of foreign exchange, Zambia returned to a fixed level for the Kwacha. It was devalued by 25% in November 1988, coming down to 5 US cents. Devaluation by a further 65% followed in July 1989. The black market put it at 1 cent, depending on the availability of foreign exchange from time to time. Among the suppliers of foreign exchange to the black market were some staff of embassies and development agencies and clergy; it could be a lucrative side-line. The Zambian government was doubtless aware of this, but could not protest too loudly for fear of offending the organizations concerned. It was said, for example, that the Chinese embassy employed large numbers of Zambians on prestige development projects, such as the Tanzania-Zambia railway, and paid them with Kwacha bought outside the country at rock-bottom prices and brought into the country in the diplomatic bag. Clearly, it didn't matter whether the cat was black or white as long as it caught the mice.

Zambia had lost control of its economy and was at the mercy of predators of every kind.

The curse of copper

Copper mining is several centuries old in Zambia. Women of the Lunda tribe, working in opencast mines, were the miners, while men did the smelting, shaping copper into bracelets, earrings and cross-shaped ingots. Miners received one-fifth, smelters one-fifth and the chief three-fifths - probably a fairer system of distribution than that which obtained on the Copperbelt in modern times. (20)

Zambia ranked in the nineteen eighties as number five in the table of world copper producers, with annual production of about six to seven hundred thousand tonnes, about 15% of the world's supply. With the exception of the great depression of the nineteen thirties, when they dropped sharply, prices were largely steady, showing a gradual improvement with consequent beneficial effects for Zambia. But over the period 1974-89, the situation changed. The supply of copper on the world market increased as new producers, such as Papua New Guinea, and new mines in Australia and Chile entered the scene. Demand dropped with the use of transistors, fibre optics, short wave, microwave and satellite instruments of communication, where copper had previously been used. Plastics began to replace copper in plumbing. The price of copper collapsed in October 1983 so that the net effect over the period 1975-85 was a drop of between 60 and 65% in Zambia's real earnings from copper. Although settlement prices improved in 1987-89 from £1100 to £1900 a tonne on the London Metal Exchange, heavy damage had been inflicted on the economy.

Along with other producer countries, Zambia tried through the UN Conferences on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and CIPEC, the copper producers' organization, to stabilize prices. But the two biggest producers were the USSR and the USA, and they were able to call the shots in a way that left the smaller producers scrambling to make the best of the situation. The collapse of the Tin Council as a producers' cartel and of the International Cocoa

Organization's price agreement, did not give encouragement either. It was questionable whether, within the context of a free market economy, producers of primary produce could get a fair price for their output if supply exceeded demand.

Zambia was a classic case of a Third World country with a one-product economy. In 1960, 59% of the country's exports came from copper. (21) By 1974, that level of dependence had greatly increased. In that year, copper accounted for over 90% of export earnings, about 50% of government revenue, and about one-third of GDP. (22) The proportions have remained substantially the same since. In 1987, for instance, Zambia's total non-mineral exports amounted to only US $80 million. In the boom years of the sixties and seventies, Zambia did not use its copper revenue to diversify its economy or develop agriculture. Regrettably, it took the option of going on a spending spree, lavishing money on politically popular social programmes. It was like winning the national lottery and spending it on wine, women and song.

A further problem was that Zambia's supply of copper was steadily being exhausted, unless there was to be a large increase in investment in equipment - something clearly beyond its capacity. Copper production fell in volume by about 25% during the mid-eighties for a variety of reasons, and the mines lost over K700 million in the period April-December 1986, according to a government source. (23) One ray of hope was that Zambia produced about 30,000 tonnes of lead and zinc, 5,000 tonnes of cobalt and an unspecified amount of emeralds in the eighties. Nonetheless, the effect of the above was that Zambia applied to the UN to be re-classified as an LDC, a Least Developed Country. It was a long way from Kaunda's bright hope of Zambia becoming the Switzerland of Africa.

Socialism

Under President Kaunda, Zambia became a socialist State and its economy was run on socialist lines. This was partly because the colonial system was capitalist and there was a reaction against everything to do with it. In part, also, socialism was seen as being naturally African, the logical development of the communitarian way of life of African tradition. It seemed likely, too, that Julius Nyerere, the philosopher-president of Tanzania, exercised a large influence on Kaunda of Zambia. Socialism was seen as leading to the economic independence needed to complement political independence.

Between 1968 and 1978, Zambia took a controlling interest, or nationalized outright (with compensation), more than a hundred companies across the entire spectrum of the country's economic life. The Zambia National Commercial Bank was set up under State ownership. Findeco, the Finance and Development Corporation, was set up to control financial institutions. Mindeco, the Mining Development Corporation, took control of mining, while Indeco, the Industrial Development Corporation, took control of industry. These were grouped into a holding company, Zimco, the Zambia Industrial and Mining Corporation, of which President Kaunda was chairman and whose director-general was a member of the UNIP Central Committee. This company controlled the greater part of the economy, including transport, insurance, housing, wholesaling and retailing, rural development

organizations, electricity, oil, food processing, textiles, fertilizers, building materials, forestry, dairying, telecommunications and so on.

The ideological underpinnings of this system were not perhaps as solid as they might have seemed at the time. What Zambia had got in the name of socialism was in fact State capitalism. The State has become the number one capitalist. The Zimco group of companies had a monopoly of the market that would have had the most rabid nineteenth-century capitalist slobbering at the mouth with envy. And the wage differential between the highest and the lowest paid of Zimco employees was 53 to 1.

There was no public accountability in the system. To say that the companies were publicly owned and therefore accountable to the National Assembly was true in a technical legal sense, but, in the realities of everyday life, it was a fiction. The consumer had no choice but Hobson's - take it or leave it; good or bad, there was nothing else available. (A new brand of soap - always a scarce commodity - was launched by a State company to coincide with the 1988 elections; it was called *Choice*. Someone said that it was the only choice they had and would not last for long!) There was no economic democracy: people did not have choices, alternatives or influence over decision-making. In reality, Zimco was accountable neither to market pressures nor to public opinion. The one-company economy was the economic complement to the one-party State.

The system of State ownership was very far removed from the African communitarianism that it claimed for its motivational source. In traditional life, people had choices and could express them. Equally important, they could revise them if they thought it appropriate to do so. There were established and working channels of social communication. But control over people's economic life by a chief was limited, and private or family ownership was the norm.

The theory was that State ownership would mean economic independence: Zambia would be run by and for Zambians. With that in mind, Zambia adopted an economic model borrowed from the Soviet Union, and based at a philosophical level on Marxism. (The Soviet ambassador to Zambia in the seventies was highly influential in government circles.) How an economic philosophy developed with nineteenth-century industrial Germany in mind was supposed to help twentieth-century agrarian Zambia become more fully itself was a mystery surpassing all understanding, unless one looked at the politics of the matter: nationalization was politically rather than economically motivated.

More so than most Third World countries, and with less reason than most, the Zambian State was nervous and jittery about what it did not control. It saw it as a threat to its power. The free market economy, therefore, had to be brought under its control - and it was. The political decision-makers who brought this about were also doubtless not blind to the immense, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that nationalization offered for patronage, and for binding the Party faithful in an economic embrace. (24) Jobs for the boys probably had as much to do with nationalization as Marx or African tradition or any ideological factor. Since there were few Zambians with management skills, and few managers with the hands-on, get-involved approach to management, it meant that appointments to senior positions went to people who knew little or nothing about running a business. Such appointments were political, a reward for favours received or anticipated.

The same comment could equally have been made about the process called Zambianization. That term did not mean adapting economic and administrative structures to Zambians' mode of thought, something which would have had a lot to commend it. Instead it often meant making appointments of Zambians – often with little regard for ability, training or experience - to jobs previously held by expatriates.

One effect of these processes was that there was a poor level of management in many companies. Managers had little interest in their work or their workers, they exercised minimal supervision, were frequently absent, presented annual audits of doubtful accuracy, and had a happy-go-lucky approach to profit making. It simply didn't matter as the State would make up any deficit and they did not have to worry about competition or complaints from consumers - the latter had nowhere else to go. I can recall going to a State-owned sawmill on a weekly basis for more than a year, just to get a quotation for wood. Mostly, the manager was absent, (on poaching trips, as it subsequently transpired) and all official documentation was locked in his office. His secretary told they were waiting for the new price list to arrive from Lusaka. A new manager, when I told him my tale of woe, gave me the wood free of charge in order to make up for the delay!

Private enterprise was constantly denounced by the president as exploitative. ‘The exploitation of man by man’ was a favourite political catch phrase. However, Zambians quickly grew tired of hearing this while knowing that political leaders were involved in smuggling, the black market and bribery. One former secretary-general of UNIP was vigorous in his denunciation of the evils of capitalism while owning a chain of profitable beerhalls in the Copperbelt. Other leaders used their leverage in poaching, drug-pushing and the smuggling of basic necessities in short supply in the country.

During the seventies and eighties Zambia "enjoyed" stability and shortages. The real symbols of socialism were smuggling, the black market and the ever-lengthening queues. In July 1989, Frelimo, the sole political party in Mozambique, dropped its commitment to Marxism in favour of a mixed economy, while Zimbabwe took significant practical steps to encourage private investment. Zambia did not follow their example.

The private sector

There remained a small private sector in Zambia, forming perhaps 15% of the national economy. It might be that it was allowed to function so that, for public relations purposes, Zambia could say that it had a mixed economy. That would be more acceptable to potential investors than the rhetoric of socialism.

Official attitudes were hostile to it: profit was a dirty word. Also, there was little understanding of how a private sector works. At times, one heard leaders speak of the law of supply and demand as if it were a capitalist plot rather than a fact of life. Initiative was seen as stepping out of line; it was regarded as something dangerous which needed to be contained lest it get out of hand. Zambians, who, against all odds, succeeded in business found that, without bribery, they could not get local officials off their backs. Having coped with them,

they might then have relatives descend on them for months at a time looking for aid of every kind. To be a success was to leave oneself open to the jealousy of rivals, and to accusations of witchcraft, or to becoming its victim. Without doubt, it was safer to grind along in obscurity at an undemanding desk job.

There was a small middle class in Zambia but they had almost nothing legitimate to invest in. There was no stock exchange, and setting up a business involved endless hassle with bureaucrats and local Party officials. In the case of foreign investors, repatriation of profits was difficult. The role of multi-nationals was very limited. One such company, Lonrho, described by former British Prime Minister, Edward Heath, as showing ‘the less acceptable face of capitalism’ was involved in cotton production at Mumbwa, west of Lusaka. Local people regarded it as a good employer, and wanted more, not less, of it.

Another example was the Zambia Sugar Company, owned by the British firm of Tate and Lyle. It was well run, and managed to keep going through all the difficulties of the seventies and eighties. Jobs in it were eagerly sought after. Most Zambians, with their habitually low self-esteem, assumed that Zambia Sugar succeeded because it was run by expatriates, though that was not, in fact, the case. In the nineties, apart from the general manager, all the staff was Zambian.

Communications

Zambia is a land-locked country dependent on its neighbours for transport links to the outside world. Three of its immediate neighbours, Angola, Mozambique and Namibia were torn by warfare in the nineteen eighties. Malawi and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) were run by corrupt dictators, Malawi's being efficient and Zaire's not. Zimbabwe seemed gradually to be heading in the direction from which many other African states were trying to extricate themselves. Botswana was stable and prosperous, but powerless. South Africa, though not an immediate neighbour, was the key player in the region, but with President P. W. Botha constant only in vacillation, the likely future for the region from the perspectives of the nineteen eighties was unpromising. (Botha repeatedly pledged reform with the slogan 'Adapt or die' but did not carry out reform.) Zambia's transport system was therefore highly vulnerable. Its weakness was made dramatically clear in 1979 when the Rhodesian air force, under the regime of Bishop Abel Muzorewa and General Peter Walls, destroyed many of the country's bridges, crippling the network at a stroke.

In 1902, the Belgians opened a railway line from the West Coast of Africa into their colony, King Albert’s Belgian Congo. They extended the system in later years, but it was of little use to Zambia as an outlet for trade as it was neglected after independence in 1960, along with the country's roads. In 1904, the railway from Cape Town reached Zambia's southern border town of Livingstone. From there it continued north to Lusaka and the Copperbelt. It was to have been part of Cecil Rhodes' dream of a Cape-to-Cairo railway, a dream that was never fulfilled. This line continued in operation, and, with the addition of the 1850-km Chinese-built *Tazara* (Tanzania-Zambia Railway) line from Kapiri Mposhi in the centre of Zambia to Dar-es-Salaam on the Tanzanian coast, it formed a highly important link

with the rest of the world. In 1931, the Portuguese, the colonial power in Angola, opened the Benguela railway line linking the Angolan port of Lobito with the Copperbelt. It has been closed since 1975 by the civil wars that have raged almost uninterrupted in Angola since then. Even if a peace agreement came and lasted, the line may be beyond rehabilitation after decades of damage and neglect.

Zambia Railways operated the Livingstone-Lusaka-Copperbelt line and that part of *Tazara* which was within Zambia. Its rates were very cheap by international standards, but it was slow and losses due to theft and bad handling of cargo were high. During the eighties, only about 30% of Zambia Railways' locomotives were normally in working order, and replacements were sometimes destroyed through lack of maintenance. Drunkenness by drivers and other staff led fairly commonly to accidents such as derailment, sometimes resulting in loss of life.

Tazara, since its construction by China in the seventies, was plagued by problems. One was a structural one: the line was built to a different gauge from that prevailing in Zambia so there could not be any linkage with the earlier Cape to Copperbelt system. The Zambian government tried to persuade the Chinese to change this before the line was built, but to no avail. Some problems were similar to those of Zambia Railways. Others were due to bad liaison between the Tanzanian and Zambian parts of the line, a problem compounded by frequent organizational re-shuffles. In addition, the port of Dar-es-Salaam was never properly developed, resulting in congestion and long delays because it could not cope with the needs of its very large catchment area. In addition to being the port for Tanzania, it was also the port for Zambia, Rwanda and Burundi. Bottlenecks in the port led to a situation where goods travelling between Zambia and Europe could take a year to reach their destination.

The principal reason for *Tazara*'s construction, as far as Zambia was concerned, was to reduce dependence on the southern route to South Africa. Understandably, Zambia did not wish to have all its eggs in one basket. In this respect, *Tazara*'s success was limited. Somewhere between 70 and 75% of Zambia's trade passed through South Africa because of the limitations of *Tazara* and the port of Dar-es-Salaam. (25) In addition, large quantities of South African goods passed through Zambia on their way to Zaire (now DR Congo).

For a time, the port of Beira in Mozambique was regarded as a possible alternative to Durban in South Africa, since goods could move from there to Zambia, without having to pass through South Africa. But the Beira line was severely damaged in the civil war in Mozambique that lasted from 1975 to 1992. Between January and September 1988, for example, only 65 tonnes of Zambian copper was exported through it. Zambia Railways further stated that, since Zambia imported nothing through Mozambique, the wagons were returning empty, making the line unprofitable. (26)

In the late nineteen sixties an oil pipeline was built from Dar-es-Salaam to Ndola in the Copperbelt where crude oil was refined for the national market. Some 1600 km in length, it required regular maintenance - but did not receive it. A report in 1988 on a series of major breakdowns ascribed its problems to an almost total lack of preventative maintenance since its construction.

River transport offered little scope. The Zambezi River Transport Company which operated barges on the Zambezi River between Livingstone and Sesheke in the Western Province went out of existence after independence. In any event, the Zambezi, although a large river, was not navigable except by shallow-draft barges, owing to the fact that it was broken up into channels by its many islands, and falls to a low level during the dry season.

New roads were built in Zambia after independence, many of them tarred. Some formerly remote rural areas were given easier access to towns with their markets. The weakness of the system was that, while the roads were largely built by foreign aid, maintenance was left in the hands of governmental and local authorities, and they did virtually nothing. When a road deteriorated until it became unusable, then a donor country would be asked to reconstruct it. Petrol and diesel were cheap in Zambia by international standard because of low taxes, diesel retailing at the equivalent of about 40 US cents a litre in 1989, and petrol perhaps one-third more.

A persistent problem in maintaining a road transport fleet was the lack of spare parts, due to lack of foreign exchange to buy them. When the IMF-sponsored auction of dollars was in operation, spares were fairly easy to obtain even though prices were high. Both before and after it, they became virtually impossible to obtain, and a bus or truck could be off the road for several months at a time waiting for even simple replacement parts.

The government of Zambia had special problems with its transport fleet. One report, perhaps overly pessimistic, stated that, at any given time, some 85% of government vehicles were classed as "non-runners". Another report stated that some 42% of rural buses were off the road, (27) though that was more likely an understatement. Abuse, overloading, and lack of preventative maintenance such as changing engine-oil and filters were principal causes of this situation. A later development was the pre-arranged theft of government vehicles in the Copperbelt and North-Western Provinces. They quickly disappeared across the border into Zaire (now DR Congo), money changed hands, and another vehicle theft would be reported to headquarters.

Yet another problem was what might be called Landrover fixation. Government departments regularly bought new Landrovers, even for use in built-up areas with tarred roads where a cheaper vehicle would have served satisfactorily. One study of vehicle costs showed that the purchase price and running costs of one Landrover were about the same as four Renault 4 vans, or 12 Honda motor-bicycles, yet government ministries went on buying Landrovers as if there were no alternative.

In an effort to control sharply escalating costs of official transport, the government set up what was called the Mechanical Services Branch (or Department) in the Ministry of Works and Supply. It was given responsibility for the maintenance of government vehicles and was provided with garages, spare parts and equipment. Its depots could easily be recognized in most Zambian towns by the stacks of vehicles, three or four high, side by side, inside the fence. Some of those could have been put back on the road by cannibalizing parts from one to repair another. But no ministry wanted its vehicle to be taken apart to repair another ministry's, so both would stay where they were, slowly decaying in the sun, dust and rain. A look behind the MSB fence would reveal no sign of human activity.

In marked contrast to this was the maintenance of private vehicles. People used extraordinary flexibility, imagination, patience, ingenuity and sheer hard work in keeping the most geriatric jalopy on the road for years on end. Some of these had to be seen to be believed: there were vehicles on the road which were literally held together by wire and pieces of scrap, while "air-conditioning" was provided by the absence of glass. One could only feel respect for people who refused to give up, no matter what the struggle, and kept working at their vehicle until the heap of junk moved.

Many Zambians would gladly have used a bicycle if they could have got one, but, at a cost of five months' average salary, few could afford it. Bicycles from the State-owned Eagle factory in Chipata were not normally intact on purchase and it was necessary to buy spare parts for them, if available, in order to be able to use them at all. In 1987, the factory was placed under new management from the Tata Corporation of India.

Zambia Airways ran a substantial network of internal flights and flights to Bombay, Belgrade, Frankfurt, London and Rome. It went out of existence in 1991 for reasons similar to those already seen in other areas. For example, towards the end it had four planes and twelve staff who held the rank of general manager, while a survey of the last flight before it collapsed showed that only thirteen people out of a full complement of passengers on a DC10 had paid for their ticket. The rest were politicians and government employees who had been issued with tickets to be paid for by the appropriate ministry. Such tickets were usually not paid for. Political interference was common in decision-making at all levels. A member of UNIP's Central Committee sent a Boeing 707 back to Mauritius to collect his wife after she missed the flight while on a shopping expedition. I was on a flight to London via Frankfurt which was diverted to Oslo (flying over Frankfurt airport on the way) to enable President Kaunda to attend the funeral of King Olaf of Norway. Passengers were told about this after the plane had already taken off. It must have been the only case in history where a plane was hijacked by a head of state!

Electricity in Zambia was abundant and cheap, coming from the Kariba dam on the Zambezi, owned jointly by Zambia and Zimbabwe, and the Kafue dam. Zambia exported electricity to Zaire (now DR Congo) and Zimbabwe. But only 6 to 10% of houses in urban areas had access to it. The State-owned Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation (ZESCO) was an exceptional company: despite many difficulties and constant political interference, it carried out regular preventative maintenance and managed to keep its customers supplied.

Another exception to this depressing picture was that telephone, telex and fax systems were extended and improved during the eighties, and levels of maintenance were good.

Potentially the weakest spot in Zambia's communications system was its heavy dependence on South African rail and port facilities. When Zambia closed its border with Rhodesia in the seventies, its economy took a nosedive and the border had to be re-opened. Similarly, Zambia could not realistically talk about "comprehensive and mandatory sanctions" against South Africa; it would have been an act of suicide. Sanctions could work both ways and South Africa could have applied overwhelming pressure to Zambia if it had closed off access to its ports and railways. The government of Chief Leabua Jonathan in Lesotho was toppled after three weeks of South African sanctions against it; that was a clear warning which Zambia heeded.

Trade Unions

In a society as newly industrialized as Zambia, it was to be expected that trade unions would still be at a relatively early stage of development. The first union in the modern sense of the term was the Northern Rhodesian African Mineworkers' Union founded in the Copperbelt in 1948. (White miners had their own union; about three in every four of them were members of a Masonic lodge.) The Copperbelt, Lusaka and the civil service contributed the very great bulk of members of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions.

As in other African countries, unions played a significant part in the independence movement, and it was in them that many leaders gained their first political experience. Unions had a real political role to play in addition to their more conventional one, and their support meant that nationalists had a strong reserve of organizational support behind them. Once independence came, the political leadership was anxious to establish its autonomy so it distanced itself from the trade union movement. Unions were excluded from political activity, and, in Zambia, their traditional role was circumscribed by presidential decree. It was not too severe to say that politicians used the unions to get into power and then, having got there, clamped down on them as a rival power base.

As might be expected, the unions were most active and organized in the Copperbelt. It had the greatest concentration of industrial workers, and it generated most of the country's wealth. Miners, knowing and using their political clout, carved out a good position for themselves relative to the rest of the country, but did not do so excessively. Faced with intense economic hardship in the nineteen eighties, they pressed for wage increases which the government resisted as it could not afford them. In a situation like Zambia's, where most industry was nationalized, wage claims almost automatically came to be interpreted as a form of political protest whether they were or not. This led to an atmosphere of confrontation between government and miners, to which the government responded by emergency decrees, banning of certain strikes, suspension of the passports of union leaders and threats of detention. Cowed by this pressure, union leaders backed off, only to walk into a storm of protest from the rank-and-file who, understandably, felt let down by their leadership. The government knew how to use the stick; its carrot was to appoint the leaders of the miners' union to the Central Committee of UNIP.

The unions, like government, the civil service, business and industry seemed to give little thought to adapting their structures, attitudes, plans and policies to the demands and setting of Zambian life. They adopted the British model for their activities, allowing themselves to become the reactionaries of the twentieth century. They had a mentality of hostility to the creation of wealth, being interested only in its distribution. They fought the same issues as the British unions, such as demarcation, and created over-manning in industry and a proliferation of small unions leading to inter-union squabbles which weakened the movement as a whole.

There was a large role for unions in Zambia if they had opened their eyes to look at it. Unions showed little interest in the unemployed, the retired or the lower-paid, such as agricultural workers, waitresses, domestic servants and cleaners. When they spoke of "the workers' rights" they meant the rights of their members. The unions, in fact, represented only

a small and relatively well-off proportion of the community, leaving the great bulk of Zambians untouched. This elitism limited the impact of unions on Zambian life.

There was serious exploitation of workers in Zambia and no union raised a protest on their behalf. Some Zambian employers were shameless in exploiting their employees, knowing that there would be no difficulty in finding replacements if they complained too loudly. Agricultural workers, in particular, were paid only a pittance, and even then, could not be sure of getting it. Social security contributions to the Zambia National Provident Fund, although required by law, were left unpaid more often than not, and this went unchecked. Domestic servants lived a life that differed only marginally from serfdom. They were at the beck and call of their employer for almost any service at any time, and were without legal protection. Their pay in the late eighties might be as little as K15 a month, or US$2.00, with leftover food and an occasional article of cast-off clothing thrown in for good measure. About all that, and much more, the unions were silent and appeared to see it as none of their business to do anything about it.

Tourism and Wildlife

Tourism had the potential to provide Zambia with a substantial and renewable income. Kenya and Zimbabwe were two countries that made a success of the business. In Zambia's case, its wildlife and Victoria Falls, or Musi-oa-Tunya, were the principal attractions. For people living in crowded towns and cities in Europe, Japan or North America, there was a sense of liberation in being able to travel for a day and see only a few small villages. The number of tourists visiting Zambia was said to have doubled between 1976 and 1984 to reach 130,000. (28) With cheaper air fares and package tours, the number could have been increased.

National Parks comprise about 8% of the area of the country, and the largest, the Kafue, was about half the size of Switzerland. Zambia has a great variety of wildlife: some 100 mammals, 150 fish species, 700 bird species, and 4,600 varieties of plants, of which 200 are unique to the country.

However, this great heritage was under threat. Over-fishing and the use of fine nets reduced fish stocks in the lakes of the Luapula Province, especially Bangweulu and Mweru. Fish catches dropped as a result, as did incomes and employment. The natural habitat of wildlife was eroded by deforestation and slash-and-burn agriculture. Most of all, poaching took a severe toll. In the Luangwa Valley, once one of the world's greatest wildlife parks, the elephant population was reduced by poaching from an estimated 100,000 to 30,000 between the mid-seventies and mid-eighties. Black rhino numbers fell in the same period from 8,000 in the Southern Luangwa national park to perhaps 200 in the whole country. Throughout the nineteen seventies, an average of 20 elephants and 2 rhino were killed every day in the South Luangwa Park. In the late eighties, the entire stock of rhino in the small Livingstone Game Park was killed - by a gamekeeper. Indeed, the role of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in the protection of game was analogous to that of the fox in protecting the chickens. And the political leadership was heavily involved in poaching. A former UNIP Secretary of

State for Defence and Security and a close associate of President Kaunda's, Grey Zulu, used to send unmarked and unlit military planes at night to land at Njamba in Angola, across the border from Sinjembela in the south-west of the country, to collect supplies of rhino horn and ivory from UNITA, the Angolan guerrilla movement, for transmission to markets outside Zambia. (Diamonds might also have been part of the cargo.) Ivory was sold mainly for ornamental purposes while rhino was used in the Far East as an aphrodisiac, though it was useless for that purpose, and for knife handles in the Yemen. The Benedictine monastery at Peramiho in Tanzania was believed in wildlife protection circles to have been the main transmission point for shipping those products to Europe.

It was clear that slaughter on the scale described above could not have taken place without support from senior officialdom. I personally knew a Minister for Tourism, with responsibility for the National Parks and Wildlife Service, who was involved in it. It was impossible to believe that there wasn't complicity when the slaughter took place in the game park where the president had his official safari lodge and security for his protection was supposed to be strict. Where poachers were caught, it was not often that a case would go to court; the money involved was so large that police and magistrates could easily be bought off. When rhino horn reputedly fetched US$1,000 (about K15,000 in 1990) a kilo in Zambia, it was easy to understand the temptation this presented to a person whose annual salary was perhaps one-third of that sum.

With stocks of game declining as they were all over Zambia, prices escalated, increasing still further the pressure to get more while there was still something to be got. It must be said that the ordinary Zambian was far from supportive of conservation, and the anger expressed at poaching was due less to concern for declining stocks than to not sharing the spoils. If poaching continued at its nineteen eighties' level there would be little left to quarrel about in the succeeding years. The selfishness of a few, and the passivity of the many, would have deprived the country not only of a precious natural inheritance but also of a source of income that had the potential to replace the declining copper industry.

Without wildlife, Zambia would have only one major tourist attraction, the Victoria Falls. These were “discovered” by David Livingstone in 1855, though marked on a map and named as Musi-oa-Tunya (their Silozi name) in an English publication in 1852, (29) and claimed to have been the hunting-ground of an Afrikaner family called Erasmus for some twenty years before that. (30) Needless to mention, the African people had also “discovered” them, and given them several names, of which “Musi-oa-Tunya”, the Smoke-that-Thunders, is the most widely used today.

The falls are 1¾ km wide and over 100 metres high (about twice the height of Niagara). During the flood season from March to May, the flow of water over them was in the region of 4,500,000 litres a second. In 1958, a year of record floods, the flow was about 11,700,000 litres a second, so great that it flowed over the top of the Kariba dam, then under construction, even with all its sluice gates fully open. The best time for seeing the Falls was perhaps June or July. Although the flow was reduced at that time of year, the view was best; in earlier months, spray from the Falls obscured it, unless one took a flight from across the border in Zimbabwe. Just below the Falls was the single-span railway bridge linking Zambia to Zimbabwe and the south. That bridge, designed and prefabricated in Scotland, was assembled in 1904 with a span of 150 metres and rising some 123 metres above the river. Close to the Falls was the Livingstone wildlife park, a museum showing the natural history of

the area, and, in the nearby town of Livingstone, a national museum showing many interesting displays and with a large library of African and Zambian literature.

The future of the tourist industry in Zambia began to look increasingly shaky as the years went by. The principal attraction was wildlife and that was being exterminated. While the Musi-oa-Tunya Falls were indeed beautiful, not many people would be prepared to travel several thousand kilometres to see them alone. Zambia needed more and better hotels and also cheaper alternative accommodation. It needed also a change of public attitude towards tourists, from seeing them as wealthy people ripe for being ripped off, to knowledgeable people who expected to get value for money. Tourists expected clean food, sleeping quarters and toilets, and good service. They also expected a welcoming atmosphere; it did not help to create this when people travelling between Lusaka and Livingstone, the tourist capital, might be ordered out of their coaches, not always courteously, by armed soldiers at three or four road-blocks and have their baggage and personal effects searched on the side of the road. If they carried a camera and were foolish enough to use it, they might well be harassed by "Party militants" anxious to demonstrate their zeal in sniffing out spies.

The problem of debt

Zambia developed a large debt problem in the Kaunda years. Symptomatic of its power was the difficulty of getting accurate figures about it. However, the following presents a reasonably accurate picture for the period in question. Zambia's external debt in 1983 was $2.6 billion; in 1984, it was $4.36 billion and, by 1988, it had reached $5.4 billion. (31) That meant a debt of about $725 per person (K10, 875) at 1989 values. Considering that average annual income, even for the 5% or less of the population who were full-time wage earners, was about K4, 800, it could readily be seen that the problem was very large indeed.

Another way of looking at it was to consider the annual burden of debt servicing as a percentage of export earnings. In 1983, it was 12.6%; in 1984, 25%; in 1985, 40%; in 1986, 58%. (32) And so it went, increasing from year to year. Much new borrowing went simply towards repaying old debts. The then Prime Minister, Kebby Musokotwane, stated publicly on many occasions in the late eighties that the country could not repay its debts. Because of the extent of arrears, and a unilateral suspension of debt payments above a level of 10% of exports, and the decision in May 1987 to break off talks with the IMF, Zambia created a serious credibility problem for itself among world financial institutions. When a group of Zambian delegates to a debt conference in London gave assurances that the country would meet its obligations, but then left without paying their hotel bill, eyebrows were raised.

The causes of the debt problem were internal and external. Some of them Zambia could control, others not. Perhaps the largest internal cause was high government spending. In 1986, government deficit financing was about 18% of GDP. In 1988, one third of money spent by government was borrowed. Food subsidies, free education, free health care and free legal aid were burdens that many even highly-developed economies were unable to sustain.

In addition, there was little accountability in public spending. Some government ministries did not present an audited statement of accounts to the National Assembly for years. In a few years, no ministry at all presented an account, and requests for them from the auditor and comptroller met with no response. President Kaunda, in a moment of candour, admitted that, after the oil price shocks of the seventies, Zambia simply went on spending money as if nothing had happened. The level of military spending was a case in point. The budget presented annually to the National Assembly made no mention of spending on defence, the police or the Office of the President. The public was told that it was not in their interest for information about security matters to be disclosed. However, most estimates put spending on "security" in the region of one third of the total budget. That could be seen as protection money, insurance against coups. A new recruit to the army, even if barely literate, was paid more than a trained teacher. With about 30,000 men and women in the Zambia National Defence Forces that put a heavy burden of doubtful value on the public purse. (In Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, military spending usually equals that on health and education combined; and a survey by the French foreign ministry in the seventies showed that, for every $1 received in aid, sub-Saharan Africa spent $2.50 on the military.)

Other aspects of the pattern of public spending also caused problems. It was heavily weighted towards consumption rather than production, and especially against long-term capital investment. Zambia had a civil service of some 90,000, expanded as a matter of public policy to soak up unemployment. Zambians took with great enthusiasm to the *minutiae* of bureaucratic life: they had a passion for rubber stamps and carbon paper, and for sending memos to all and sundry. Filing cabinets overflowed with the minutes of countless committee meetings, the bureaucratic passion for sending memos being nicely balanced by white ants' passion for eating paper!

By the late eighties only 350,000 Zambians were engaged in full-time paid work; that was less than 5% of the total population and the percentage was falling. That should have set alarm bells ringing.

Civil servants retired on full pension after twenty-five years' service; normal retirement age was fifty-five. A civil servant was in practical terms impossible to dismiss. For example, in the early eighties, when provincial and district airports closed, their staff was kept on the payroll of the civil aviation department as if flights were arriving as usual. A provincial hospital with no ambulances continued to employ thirteen ambulance drivers.

Heavy spending on education, health care and food subsidies, together with low levels of taxation, combined to develop in people a hand-out mentality. Zambians came to feel that the international community had an obligation to provide for them and that someone would bail them out of their difficulties. It was paradoxical that political independence led, in practice, to a mentality of dependence and helplessness. There was an increasing tendency on the part of individuals and governments alike simply to give up in the face of problems and, almost automatically, to look for a foreign donor, either governmental or non-governmental, to solve problems for them. Some development agencies submitted to the blackmail of dependence and - unwittingly, perhaps - made matters worse by lifting responsibility from the shoulders of a government which seemed only too willing to let others takes over its duties. The agencies themselves had their own agenda, of course: they had to be seen to spend money; how else could they justify their existence?

Another factor in the debt problem was the high level of official corruption. As recently as the mid-seventies it was uncommon and was punished when proven. Fifteen years later it had become endemic, with the widespread feeling that one might as well grab something while there was still something left to grab. Public money was spent on private purposes, funds disappeared without a trace, goods vanished from government warehouses and so on with wearisome monotony. In the Bank of Zambia, the country's central bank, official documentation was physically ripped from ledgers and disappeared. For the most part, official reaction was to give a shrug of the shoulders and do nothing but look for another donor to make up the loss. If the amount involved was small and the culprit weak, he would be severely punished with much righteous indignation; if the amount was very large, and the culprit had political clout, especially on UNIP's Central Committee, the issue would be fudged and dithered over until public attention shifted to something else and the matter would be allowed to drop. There was truth in the saying that foreign aid was money taken from poor people in rich countries to help rich people in poor countries. A considerable proportion of it ended as a subsidy for official corruption.

The external causes of Zambia's indebtedness were powerful and Zambia had little or no control over them. When international lending institutions were awash with petro-dollars in the seventies, they virtually begged the developing world to borrow money from them and offered low interest rates as an inducement. Then interest rates rose, partly as a result of budget and trade deficits in the US. Another factor beyond Zambia's control was the fluctuating value of the US dollar in which its debts were calculated. It could not know from day to day what the dollar's value would be and, consequently, its own level of debt. And, in addition, the price of Zambia's copper fell heavily in the same period.

The lending institutions bear a substantial part of the responsibility for creating the Third World's debt problem. For them now to insist on getting the last penny, even if that means reducing borrowers to bankruptcy and starvation, is morally inadmissible and economically self-defeating. They were partly responsible for creating the problem; they have to accept part of the responsibility for the solution.

During this period, the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union, while proclaiming fraternity with a fellow socialist State, gave Zambia little assistance. The same was true of oil-exporting nations, many of them countries that posed as champions of Third World solidarity. Foreign aid was a responsibility reserved to the West.

The First and the Third World need each other. The developed world needs the developing for raw materials and an outlet for exports; the developing world needs the credits and technology of the developed. Human solidarity is not just a moral imperative; it is a pragmatic necessity. The debt problem needs to be handled with intelligence and sensitivity, but simply to cancel Zambia's debt is desirable neither in principle nor in practice. To do so would foster the semantic illusion that a loan was just another word for a grant; it would create the expectation that similar debt remission could be anticipated again at a later date; it would foster irresponsibility, corruption and a mentality of dependence; and it would undermine the trust that is at the heart of borrowing and lending. And a likely consequence, of course, would be that no private financial institution would again lend money to Zambia.

Furthermore, debts do not disappear at the stroke of a pen; someone pays them, if not a lending institution, then taxpayer in the First World.

What could Zambia have done?

It appeared to many observers and indeed to Zambian citizens also at the end of the nineteen eighties that the country's economy had reached the point of no return. But there were others who saw hope. They pointed to the example of Ghana, which had succeeded in turning itself round from a position which, if anything, had been worse than Zambia's.

Others sought a solution in a Marshall Plan type of foreign intervention, a massive inpouring of aid of every kind in an integrated way so that a rising tide would lift all boats, an improvement in transport and communications, for example, helping other sectors such as agriculture. The negative circle of decline could be made a positive circle of success. Although some favoured this idea, there were serious problems about it. The human infrastructure of trained personnel and credible institutions was not there. And there were not many Zambians who asked themselves who would provide the money for such a plan and why they should provide it. The Santa Claus view of government and development that was widespread meant that it did not occur to people to ask such questions.

The idea of privatization of State industries was first floated in 1985. The State-owned Zambia Breweries formed a partnership with the Dutch firm of Heineken. Commentators applauded the shrewdness of the move: after all, not even the most doctrinaire of ideologues would object to drinking good beer. It would be a welcome change from the over- or under-fermented product of the State company, sometimes containing sand, leaves or unidentified organic matter, and sold in old, chipped, dirty and unlabelled bottles. It sounded like very good PR as the advance guard for a series of privatizations. Sadly, it was only a dream and the Minister for Finance, in December 1988, shot down privatization or any public-private partnership with a volley of ideological verbiage.

The government could have reduced the size of the civil service; it nibbled at this problem but did not bite on it. (33) With more than a quarter of the country's permanent workforce employed as civil servants, the net effect was that they got in each other's way and frustrated initiative. A smaller civil service would have been cheaper and probably more efficient. A further reform could have been to shift the focus of decentralization from Party to government officials so as to de-politicize local decision-making. Furthermore, public spending could have been shifted from consumption (e.g. food subsidies) to production, especially of food.

Zambia could have sought to create conditions for investment from home or abroad. That would have involved getting the bureaucracy off people's backs, setting up a stock exchange, establishing a realistic currency exchange rate, changes of legislation regarding banking, insurance and ownership (including that of land), and a willingness to work in co-operation with international financial institutions. It could have accepted the principle of accountability for loans and grants, but the president insisted in an address to the diplomatic corps that these

should be given unconditionally on the grounds that anything else was an infringement of national sovereignty. Zambia could have faced the problem of corruption; instead it fudged it. Fiscal policy also needed to be overhauled so as to bring more people into the tax net; too many were getting a free ride and that made it impossible for government to pay its way.

Zambia needed, too, to diversify its economy. Minerals - copper, cobalt, lead, zinc, emeralds and amethysts - formed almost 99% of the country's exports. The great untapped resource was agriculture. Zambia had the potential to be a large food-producer but the surface had - literally - only been scratched.

Zambia did attempt to work for regional cooperation between states of the southern African region. In practical terms, such cooperation could only have been very limited because of wars in Angola, Mozambique and Namibia, the virtual collapse of government in Zaire (now DR Congo) and the unstable and unpredictable situation in South Africa. But a start was made with the Preferential Trade Agreement between members of the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference. (34) However, their trade with each other was small; no SADCC member exported more than 12% of its goods to the other members. And without South Africa, the economic giant of the region, SADCC could not be much more than a Potemkin village, all façade and little substance. In 1983, South Africa accounted for 80% of the GDP of the combined SADCC/South African region, and SADCC trade with South Africa was seven times greater than intra-SADCC trade. SADCC without South Africa would be like the European Union without Germany.

The history of regional agreements in Africa was not encouraging. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), founded in 1975 with 15 members, achieved little, in part because of the failure of members to pay their dues. Similarly, the East African Community (EAC), comprising Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, broke up when Kenya grew tired of paying the bills for the other two members. Uganda tore itself apart under Obote, then Idi Amin, then Obote again. Tanzania took a socialist approach to economic development and Kenya a capitalist one, and relations between them deteriorated to the point where they closed their borders. With the collapse of the EAC, East African Airways and their telecommunications union also broke up.

What Zambia needed most of all was a change of attitudes: a recognition that wealth must be created before it can be distributed; that profit-making was good, not an evil to be preached against; that people respond more to incentives that are real and financial than to moral exhortation; that individual initiative was to be welcomed, and that ideological purity, however satisfying it might be to the well-fed, did not fill empty stomachs.

A different approach to technology was also needed. The idea of appropriate technology, the brainchild of E. F. Schumacher of *Small is Beautiful*, was not accepted in Zambia. It was seen as a kind of technological imperialism to keep Africa backward. Zambia believed that Big was Beautiful, the microchip better than the man, and capital-intensive technology better than labour-intensive. An illustration of this was the situation in a multi-storey office block in Lusaka when the lifts went out of order. No one knew how to repair them and, in any event, no spare parts were available. So they were operated by a man who knelt on the roof of the lift and hand-cranked the winch, calling out the numbers of the floor as he came to them. Or the computer-controlled pontoons on the Zambezi River in the Western Province which

replaced the earlier models that people had learned how to use, and whose digital control panels were left exposed to the weather so that they short-circuited in rain, so that technicians had to be sent from Finland to repair them. To use a stairs in some buildings one might have to walk through water flowing from roof tanks - and that at a time when people in suburbs could be forced to walk long distances for drinking water. To have suggested that simpler technology might be better was political heresy. Zambia could not shake off its fascination with gadgetry - it was the technological equivalent of "medicine" - and accept simpler methods which people could use and maintain without outside help.

The Zambian government, in late 1989, took some far-reaching measures to deal with the country's economic crisis. It devalued the currency, reduced food subsidies very substantially as a first step towards eliminating them and abolished the system of food coupons. Inevitably, one result was that inflation took off, though the expected social upheaval did not follow.

Developments in the USSR, Eastern Europe and China could have given Zambia food for thought. Firstly, there was the lesson that political and economic reform go together: in China, economic reform without political participation led to the massacres in Tienanmen Square on 4 June 1989. In the Soviet Union, political reform under Gorbachev without economic change led to a crisis of expectations that undermined his position. A second lesson was that effective government is based on the consent of the governed. Zambia had, in effect, minority rule by an unrepresentative party that saw itself as having a quasi-divine right to permanent rule in the name of "the people". A third lesson was that consent was based on participation, which, in turn, presupposes free, open, informed debate of issues on their merits. Zambia's leadership was afraid to trust its own people and they, regrettably, accepted their status passively.

An illustration of Zambia's failure to learn from experience was the way in which the government, in July-August 1989, introduced new currency notes. The object was to reduce the money supply and also to cut off the black market in foreign exchange. The government closed the country's borders and announced that people had ten days in which to exchange old notes for new. Other than that, little information was provided by the mass media. Everyone was allowed to have K10,000 (about $670) tax free. Anyone who had more than K10,000 had to pay tax at 50% on the excess. People in rural areas had their savings wiped out as some did not hear the news in time; in some areas new notes were not available, and for some people the cost of going to a distant provincial capital with banking facilities would have made the journey uneconomic. Rural traders and cattle dealers lost heavily. They had no bank accounts, either because there was no bank near them, or because banks in large centres refused to handle cheques from rural areas on account of the level of fraud, so those people had no choice but to store their cash, of which the government then took 50% of everything over K10,000.

Police and soldiers on duty at banks sometimes demanded bribes for places in the queue, and, in a few cases, helped themselves to people's new notes. People were robbed, and some murdered, on their way to or from the banks. Some who were faced with the possibility of losing half of their money to the government tried to get round the problem by sharing out their cash in lots of less than K10, 000 to relatives and friends. These, in some cases, exploited the situation by demanding a commission for doing the job. One consequence of this was a number of suicides.

To add a further twist to the tale, it seemed that the principal target of the exercise, namely, people involved in the black market, escaped the net since rumours of the change had been circulating for weeks beforehand. Furthermore, new banknotes had been available in the Copperbelt before they reached Lusaka, lending credibility to rumours of a forging plant in Zaire (now DR Congo) which had got hold of genuine printing plates. It was said also that new K100 notes were stolen on arrival at Lusaka International airport from abroad. That rumour was never confirmed but what was clear was that no K100 notes were made available at the time of the changeover and the government announced soon after that the new K50 notes were being withdrawn as they had been forged.

It was astonishing to see a government treat its citizens with such cavalier contempt. On two occasions in the previous decade the currency had been changed in a broadly similar manner. For a people who were largely new to a money economy these actions were a severe blow to their trust in both government and money. There was little public outcry but the people did not forget; probably more than any other single factor it was this that led to the downfall of the Kaunda regime.

The basic challenge to the country was a political one. Radical surgery was necessary, a Band Aid approach only buying time while making it more difficult to overcome problems when the crunch came. The alternative to a change of leadership was a continuing slide into decline. Could Zambia's leadership, after twenty-five years of uninterrupted power, initiate a fundamental change of direction? Could it muster the vision and courage to acknowledge its mistakes, break with much of its past and set out to win support for a new direction? That would have meant accepting much of what it had previously rejected and showing a pragmatism and flexibility to which it was unaccustomed.

Chapter 5 AGRICULTURE

Zambia has about ten hectares of land per person; it has some of Africa's largest rivers, and between 850 and 900 mm of rain a year; it has an average of seven hours sunshine a day; and between half and two-thirds of its population was engaged in agriculture. Yet between 1970 and 1981, *per capita* food production dropped by 13% and was worsening, so that, in 1989, Zambia was listed along with Mozambique, Ethiopia, Somalia and Chad (all countries with civil wars) as being among the five nations in Africa where more than half the population was considered to be permanently hungry.

The conditions of rural life

The average Zambian farmer was a woman, young to middle-aged, perhaps pregnant, with a hoe in her hand and a baby on her back. As in the rest of Africa, women did about three-quarters of agricultural work. But, in not a few cases, their menfolk spent the earnings from it. Close to 90% of Zambia's farmers lived at subsistence level. (1) They produced enough for their families and, in a good year, had a small surplus that enabled them to buy a few basic necessities. The rural population of Zambia experienced a substantial decline in living standards in the quarter-century that followed independence. In 1981 a farmer had to produce three times as much as in 1965 in order to purchase the same amount of goods. (2)

Marketing and distribution were in a shambles with constant shortages of the basic needs of agriculture: seeds, hoes and spare parts for ox-drawn ploughs. The same applied to the basic human requirements: clothing was often unavailable, or available only at a price beyond the reach of rural consumers. In areas away from main roads, perhaps as few as 20% of adults normally used footwear and virtually no children had any. Roads were bad, almost impassable in the rainy season, and buses were an increasingly rare sight. The pay and working conditions of farm workers were abysmal, sometimes as little as K20 a month, or US$1.25 - that is, when they were paid at all. There were no newspapers in rural areas and, if people had radios, they could not get batteries for them. This had a stultifying effect as there was little mental stimulus or exchange of new ideas. The only visitors were those from a similar environment who talked about familiar subjects. Life was raw and basic, requiring little mental energy and no innovation to cope with. With so little mental stimulus, people gradually lost creativity, dynamism and initiative. It was no surprise, therefore, that 90% of Zambians under the age of forty expressed themselves dissatisfied with rural life. (3) So would anyone who lived in a situation where sugar, salt, soap, matches, cooking oil, clothing and footwear were luxuries unobtainable for long periods.

Why was this so? It had not always been the case and could not be described as the “natural” state of things. A large part of the explanation must be found in government policies. Although the government, since independence, did not cease to repeat that agriculture was a national priority, its practice told a different story. It kept the price of food

to urban dwellers low because they were the most active politically. The return to farmers was so small that it was uneconomic for them to produce more. In the 25 years from 1964 to 1989, about 80% of government investment was in urban areas, leaving the bulk of the population which lived in rural areas to get by on the remainder. (4)

Manual work in general, and agricultural work in particular, was despised. Work on the land was considered suitable only for fools, failures and women. Anyone who had passed the Grade 7 exam at the end of primary (grade) school was considered to have graduated from farm work and would do it unwillingly, if at all. The young with initiative exercised it by getting out of rural areas, leaving the plodders behind. That created a self-perpetuating cycle of hopelessness.

What could have been done about it? A prerequisite would have been to recognize that agriculture would not improve until the conditions of agricultural people improved, and, in particular, until they could see that there was a real reward for extra production. It was pointless to engage, as many Zambian leaders did, in sermonizing on the theme of *Back to the Land*. To say to the youth of the Copperbelt, whose parents and grandparents were born and reared there, and who know nothing of agriculture, that they should pull up their roots and return to Luapula to grow cassava was so stupid as to be insulting.

Firstly, and above all, farmers need to be paid a just price for their produce. That was the biggest help they could have received. There also needed to be an integrated programme of rural development. That would have called for investment and careful planning. An attempt to provide that was made by the government of (West) Germany in Zambia's North Western Province. A determined effort to improve roads, schools and rural health centres would have provided a much-needed boost to morale. A further improvement, which would have cost the government nothing, would have been to give life back to the village stores, many of which had had to close because of a combination of transport problems and rigid price controls which made them uneconomic to run. If, in addition, ordinary stores had been allowed to sell seeds, hoes, spare parts for ploughs, and other basic agricultural requirements, instead of insisting that State companies have a monopoly, distribution problems would have been eased. As a by-product, government spending on State companies involved in agriculture would have been reduced. Those measures would have contributed to reducing the flow of young people to the towns where there was neither employment nor housing for them.

To introduce those changes would have involved a shift of investment from town to country, and that would have involved political risks. The government learned from the riots in the Copperbelt in 1986 that those risks were real and, if it had ever had any inclination to change its direction, it abandoned it.

Food production

The basic unit of production was the nuclear family. Husband and wife sometimes had separate gardens and incomes. In a small proportion of cases, the extended family helped in production; it certainly "helped" in consumption.

Men did most of the work in pasturing cattle. In agriculture, women did most: they dug the ground, cleared scrub and weeds, planted seeds, weeded again, chased away birds and animals, harvested, prepared and cooked the food. Men felled trees for new gardens though stumps were often left. They usually did the ploughing, perhaps because cattle were their responsibility. Children helped with weeding and chasing away birds and animals. Beyond this, there was little specialization. In Zambia, some 600,000 subsistence farmers produced about 60% of the maize (corn) crop, the remaining 40% being produced by commercial farmers, mostly South Africans, who numbered about 600. (5)

Most Zambians cultivated with a hand-held hoe, an ox-drawn plough being owned by only a small minority. Cultivation by hoe was necessarily limited, not much more than two hectares (about five acres) a year. Those with a plough could manage perhaps five hectares. There were few tractors in private hands and a survey showed that only 38% of them were in working order. (6) In many areas, some variety of slash-and-burn agricultural (such as *chitemene*) was practised. Where land was plentiful, it was easy to expand into unclaimed ground. In rural areas, it was common to see healthy trees, including teak and mahogany, burned down so that their ash would fertilize the soil. Agricultural methods varied from one area to another: some practised crop rotation, inter-cropping and allowing land to lie fallow for a year or two before resuming cultivation. Others worked the land until it was exhausted, before moving on to start a fresh "garden" elsewhere. Studies showed that land in Zambia would recover its productivity after six or seven years, where it had not been pushed to the limit by over-cropping, especially with the same crop. But where that happened, the period required for recovery could be as long as thirty-five years, particularly with heavy root crops such as cassava (manioc). (7)

The soil in most parts of Zambia was deficient in nitrogen, but, with careful management, it could be productive. With the use of manure, and with good rains or irrigation, it gave an adequate return for effort. Cash crops needed to be introduced with care: in some cases, their thoughtless introduction contributed to the impoverishment of the soil, and the social and even cultural spin-off effects needed a more careful examination than they sometimes received. Farming benefited in the eighties by the introduction of new varieties of maize and sorghum. These were drought-resistant and had a shorter stem, diverting nutrients to the production of more cobs or seeds per plant. One drawback was that some were hybrids, making it necessary to buy a new supply each year, with all the problems of transport and distribution that this involved. Nonetheless, the overall effect of their use was to increase productivity.

In former times, the supposedly conservative and change-resistant Zambian farmer adopted new crops with the introduction from South America, in a by-product of the slave trade, of new plants such as cassava and maize. And, since the sixties, rice became widely planted in suitable areas. The question wasn't one of adaptability but of incentive.

In Zambia, the weather is cool and dry from April to August, hot and dry in September and October, and hot and wet from November to March. Mean daytime temperatures throughout the year was in the region of 25° Celsius, with about seven hours of sunshine a day. Rainfall averages between 850 and 900 mm, though there can be substantial variations from one area to another. The south-west of Zambia is at about 1000 metres above sea level, rising to 1300 metres in the north-east.

An important factor for agriculture, especially the maize crop, was the distribution of the rains. A downpour followed by two or three weeks of dry weather would probably do more harm than good; the downpour would wash the soil from the roots which would then burn dry in the sun. Maize needs frequent light showers; given those, it grows well. Unfortunately, in Zambia, the rains are often irregular. People insure themselves against that by having two, or even three, plantings - early, middle and late - in the hope that one or two of them will be productive. In the nineteen eighties, there were prolonged periods of drought which caused serious crop losses. Generally speaking, across the country one harvest in three failed.

There was very little irrigation in Zambia though there was huge potential for it. One estimate, probably an optimistic one, was that the country used about 4% of its water supply. In a few places, the government introduced small-scale pilot schemes but there was little take-up by small farmers because they lacked the investment capital necessary. Some areas, such as the Gwembe valley in the Southern Province, had problems of soil erosion due to deforestation, late burning of grass, over-cropping and poor soil management. It was estimated that Zambia lost about 3,000,000 tonnes of topsoil a year. Only rarely did farmers use small dams as a means of water conservation, though it was technically possible to do so, as could be seen from Zimbabwe which has a similar ecology and which had many of them.

A partial reason for this was that cattlemen were sometimes not the owners, but simply the herders, of the cattle. Understandably, they would not be interested in a “self-help” scheme that would bring them little benefit. Sometimes they worked for wealthy cattle-owners living in Lusaka who paid them a calf a year for herding the cattle. It must also be admitted that local farmers with small herds also showed little interest in providing water ponds for their herds, even if the alternative was to spend a large part of the day walking the animals to and from a river or lake, reducing the time left for grazing. The communal irrigation systems found in the central plateau of Madagascar were not known in Zambia.

Various foreign aid organizations became involved in providing wells for people and water ponds for cattle. Their degree of success varied widely. Some organizations were content to go slowly, working at the pace of the people, and working with them on a self-help basis, with community involvement at all stages of the project, including maintenance work after completion of the task. The number of projects they completed was relatively small, but they lasted, and their future seemed assured. Other organizations, anxious for quick results, and high on technology, bulldozed ahead as if people didn't exist: ‘We know what's good for you; just keep out of our way’ seemed to be their message. They got quick results - which didn't last. Wells and ponds were often badly sited – I knew of one dug in a cemetery! - because local people had not been consulted, and people felt no commitment to the care of a project in which they had not been involved. The lesson was taught, not for the first time, that working for people as a patron is very different from working with them as a partner.

The pattern of land ownership and utilization in Zambia was a difficult matter. Traditionally, land belonged to the people collectively and was allocated to individuals by a chief on behalf of the people, on the understanding that a person would either use it or lose it. Western concepts of ownership needed to be used with caution as they suggest something different from an African understanding of the term. In Zambia, "ownership" of land was not a freehold; it was more like a right to use and usufruct. If a family died out, or moved from an area, their land reverted to the chief, who could then re-allocate it. But in the normal course of events, land passed from one generation of a family to the next without any problem, while pasturage was held in common. A person could not lightly be dispossessed; indeed, it was in no one's interest that s/he could be. If a chief wished to acquire a piece of land already allocated, he could not simply confiscate it; he had to provide land to replace it and allow the holder to harvest his crops from it. The holder could refuse to give it and the matter would go to court. A high proportion of court cases dealt with land issues; most of these were small, petty cases, such as those involving one person's cattle wandering into another's crop. People enjoyed these cases as a source of free entertainment. But by-and-large, people were happy with the system. If a newcomer wished to begin farming, s/he would go either to the chief, or to a local *nduna* (senior headman) representing the chief, and s/he would be given it. It was not paid for, nor could it be sold, but the farmer was secure as long as s/he used it.

When the British South Africa Company came to Zambia in the nineteenth century, it entered into a series of dubious arrangements with local chiefs regarding land. Its agents exploited the illiteracy of the chiefs and the difference in understanding of legal terms. In the event of a dispute a Company court would decide the issue on the basis of English law. That did not leave much room for doubt as to the outcome. The Company sold land to European settlers at a price equivalent to about 5 US cents per hectare. Subsequently, under British rule, land along the "line of rail" from Livingstone to Lusaka and the Copperbelt was reserved for people of European origin. This land was no better, as land, than other areas, but it had the large advantage of easier access to communications. Settlers who came there, and their descendants, formed the bulk of Zambia's commercial farmers.

Under the terms of the 1970 Land Act and the 1975 Land (Conversion of Titles) Act, all land was invested in the president and was to be administered by the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources. In practice, however, the situation was a confusing mish-mash of Western and African systems of ownership. Title deeds were not issued and occupancy offered perhaps the only real assurance of security. Fortunately the supply of land exceeded the demand - indeed, Zambia cultivated less than 20% of its land - so that there was no great pressure to sort matters out. Custom was still the most widely used rule of thumb in sorting out disputes.

Cattle

The number of cattle in Zambia was variously estimated at between 1¼ and 2 million head. (8) Cattle were a status symbol, a kind of living bank, a useful way of storing a surplus. But only about 5 or 6% of cattle were marketed annually, as against 40% in the USA. (9) Healthy

cattle were not slaughtered except with the greatest reluctance; most cattle sold in markets were old. There was a high mortality rate among calves, because of diseases such as foot-and-mouth, anthrax, “black leg”, “timber tongue”, tuberculosis, pleuro-pneumonia, the so-called corridor disease and sleeping sickness. Tsetse fly, the carrier of sleeping sickness, was prevalent over about one-third of Zambia, though some effort was made to eradicate it. Paradoxically, one hoped that such efforts would not be too successful, as a likely consequence might be over-grazing with all its ecological hazards.

About 10,000,000 hectares were available for pasture though only about one-quarter of it was used. (10) To an outsider, one of the most surprising features of cattle management in Zambia was that neither hay nor silage was made. In the dry season, from April to October, cattle lived on whatever dry grass was available. Sometimes there would not be much, owing to the practice of burning off grass so that its ash would fertilize the soil for the next season. The result was that, by September and October, a good number of cattle would be reduced to the condition of living skeletons.

Fresh milk was scarce, even in the Western Province, the “Cattlebelt” of Zambia. The government-run Dairy Produce Board, despite a large staff and its own herds of cattle, did not produce more than a small fraction of the nation's needs. Instead it took to reconstituting milk powder released from the European Community's surplus stocks. The EC, under pressure from its citizens to send surplus food-stocks to the hungry of the world, and burdened by the high cost of storing its butter mountains and milk lakes, despatched large consignments of milk powder to Zambia for free distribution. Some of it was sold at inflated prices on the black market. Where it was distributed free of charge, it had the effect of undermining the local dairy industry. And it helped to reinforce the mentality of dependence. President Kaunda, speaking at a conference in Brussels in April 1988, described food aid as 'killer aid'. (11)

The management of cattle was deficient. Herdsmen were very badly paid and had perhaps the lowest status of any worker. Herding cattle was seen as work for those who were mentally defective and incapable of anything else. The price of cattle in the late eighties varied from about K5 (about 35 US cents) a kilo in some rural areas, to perhaps 12 times that amount in Lusaka. There were heavy losses in transporting cattle to markets, owing to bad roads and vehicles, the failure to provide water for them on long journeys, and physical abuse. Only a very small effort was made to introduce new breeds or practices such as artificial insemination. Other than commercial farmers, few made use of new approaches.

One possibility that received little attention was that of managing wildlife on a commercial basis. Antelope put on more meat per season than cattle; they have greater resistance to disease and drought, and they cause less damage to delicate grass root systems. In addition, their meat commands a high price in export markets. This was done successfully in Namibia.

Cash crops

It was often suggested that cash crops were the answer to rural development and, in some countries, great efforts were made in this regard, though with decidedly mixed results. Some hard lessons were taught - if not always learned - about the limitations of looking at a problem simply in commercial terms without taking account of social, environmental and cultural factors.

Experience showed that the thoughtless and unplanned introduction of a cash crop could lead to debilitation of the soil, resulting in a drop in food production and consequent social disturbance. In some situations, too, it simply meant more work for women and children, while the menfolk spent the income, often on themselves. In addition, if a peasant family was capable, because of their methods or technology, of cultivating effectively only about three hectares, and perhaps one hectare of that was set aside for a cash crop, it meant that the family had to live on the food from two hectares instead of three. Also, if the same cash crop were introduced widely, it could lead to a glut on the market and an inadequate return to the producer, especially if a country's system of transport and marketing were as ineffective as Zambia's.

In Zambia, farmers produced largely for their own needs. Maize was the preferred crop and was milled commercially or ground with a mortar-and-pestle, and then cooked into a thick, heavy, and tasteless but nutritious food called *nshima*. Sorghum and millet were also widely produced and used for brewing beer, either locally or commercially. It had nutritional value, but for adults only. Children, who put a good deal of time and effort into sorghum and millet production, derived little benefit from it, as the “porridge” made from it was unpopular because of its coarseness. Cassava (manioc) was also produced and was valued as a famine food, a kind of living food bank, which was resistant to drought and could be relied on if other crops failed. (In some areas, such as among the Luvale, it was the staple food.) There was a lot of work in preparing it as food, and it was work that had to be done with care as the skin contained cyanide. In the late eighties, there were severe losses in the cassava crop owing to insect infestation.

Rice became a popular cash crop in some areas since the nineteen sixties and cashew nuts from the early eighties. The latter were an object lesson in the risks of cash crops. Farmers in the Western Province were encouraged to grow cashew nuts, a long-term project that promised no results for several years. They co-operated and planted in the hope of a steady income. But internal disputes in the marketing company led to some backers withdrawing their support and the company went bankrupt, leaving the farmers with a cash crop that had no market.

Zambia produced groundnuts, tobacco, coffee, sunflower seed and cotton among its principal cash crops. With the exception of a small group of commercial farmers such as Lonrho, the amounts involved were small, sometimes very small, so that the cost of collection would make a crop economically non-viable.

Market gardening was one area where there was a ray of hope. In areas near the big urban centres such as the Copperbelt and Lusaka, a good living was made by some people out of

relatively small areas of land. In those areas, transport problems were much less, water for irrigation was available using cheap electricity, and fertilizer and insecticide were available with less difficulty than elsewhere.

Marketing

There wasn't a great deal to market in Zambia. In most years, surpluses were small, except among commercial farmers, or in areas where there was a tradition of concentrating on a particular crop, or when rains were exceptionally good. Subsistence farmers living in the same environment generally had surpluses or shortfalls in the same crop. However, a surplus of fruit or vegetables might be sold or bartered at a local market or sold to an institution such as a hospital or boarding school.

The chronic transport problems that seemed to beset every aspect of Zambian life had a particular impact at peak times of the farming year. In the early part of the season, around September, people look for hybrid maize and sorghum seeds. At harvest, from April onwards, the demand for transport was greatly increased, especially in those areas that concentrated on maize production. There was a depressing annual ritual of confusion, muddle and waste at these times. In 1988, for instance, farmers were still waiting in December for hybrid maize seed that should have been planted in October; it was held up in the port of Dar-es-Salaam. During the harvest, there would be frequent shortages of sacks, transport, and storage facilities, so that, even if the harvest was good, it might stay where it was until it rotted.

Perhaps the most disheartening and frustrating part of the process was the fact that, each year, Zambia lost about 30% of its harvest through mismanagement of one kind or another. The commonest form of waste was that, in the State-owned depots, large quantities of maize were each year left uncovered while rain poured down causing the crop to ferment or rot. For that to happen once was inexcusable; but for it was to happen annually, as it did in Zambia, was insane. Perhaps the bitterest twist was that, in a good many cases, there was no shortage of tarpaulins to cover the maize. But the logistical challenge to the management in getting the tarpaulins out of storage and over the maize in time was too much for them. Common explanations were that no one thought of preparing the tarpaulins until the rains began, or the person with the key to the tarpaulin store was away, or the tarpaulins had been loaned out to someone who had not returned them. Government leaders regularly fumed and fulminated about this but nothing effective was done. The *Times of Zambia* reported on 14 September 1988 that 150,000 bags of maize, each of 90 kg. (200 lbs.), were destroyed by rain in the Northern Province although 800 tarpaulins were available to cover them. In 1988, Zambia had a record marketed harvest of 1.35 million tonnes of maize, due to good rains. By October, 270,000 tonnes had already been lost due to exposure to rain. No one lost a job because of this annual mess-up. A solution was sought by asking help from external agencies, so the Canadian government provided some large storage sheds that, if properly used, could be a real help. But, in their first year of operation, in at least one district, they remained locked against all comers because of a dispute between the district council and the provincial co-operative union as to who owned the sheds. And the maize remained outside in the rain, rotting as before.

The situation was symptomatic of what was wrong with Zambia. The country sometimes seemed incapable of solving even the simplest problem by itself and, increasingly, the way out of a difficulty was to ask someone from outside to come and deal with it. There was something deeply demeaning and humiliating about a nation of adults behaving like children. How often one would hear Zambians say, 'We can't', 'We're not able', or 'You must help us'. But to take the burden of responsibility from people's shoulders and solve a problem for them does not, in reality, solve anything; it simply encourages a mentality of dependence and helplessness that reinforces the problem.

The National Agricultural Marketing Board (Namboard) ran the maize depots in question. All of Parkinson's laws, and a few he never dreamed of, applied there. Namboard was abolished more than once but still survived. It was heavily over-staffed but did little work. When producers delivered a crop to it, they might have to wait a year for payment, during which time inflation would not only wipe out a profit but also, quite possibly, leave them at a loss. Namboard was deeply corrupt and was the object of many investigations but it still ground on, managing effectively only one task, that of frustrating the organizations set up to replace it.

Provincial Co-operative Unions were set up to replace Namboard. They were not co-operative unions in the ordinary sense of the term; they were not the product of local initiative but were the provincial branches of the Ministry of Co-operatives. They were Namboard multiplied by a factor of nine, one for each province. If Namboard missed an opportunity for frustrating marketing, the PCU's found it. A wise old Roman, one Petronius Arbiter, writing in 210 BC, stated, 'I was to learn late in life that we tend to meet any new situation by re-organizing; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization'. And that was before the Provincial Co-operative Unions.

Zambia Horticultural Products (Zamhort) was another State body set up in the marketing business. Its stores in cities and towns were often empty of produce, and staff would sit around in a catatonic daze, seemingly shocked out of their minds if a customer walked in. Producers who sold to Zamhort found that they had to give bribes in order to be paid, so they simply sold elsewhere - hence the empty shelves.

One might conclude from this depressing summary of bureaucratic bungling that Zambians were simply incapable of running a business. However, there was evidence to the contrary. Smuggling was a thriving business in Zambia, neck-and-neck in a close race with ordinary criminality. State-subsidized mealie meal used to go across the borders into Zaire (now DR Congo) and Namibia where it fetched a good price. The organizers of this business showed initiative, drive and energy; they overcame the transport problems that stopped everyone else; they worked hard and took great risks, including that of being shot at by border guards. In short, they showed all of the qualities that the State-owned system conspicuously lacked. That would seem to imply that there was nothing inherently wrong with the Zambian people's business ability but a lot wrong with the system in which they were trapped. Reform the system and the story could have been different. Zambia could have learned useful lessons from Malawi, its eastern neighbour, which operated Admarc, a highly effective State marketing organization.

The role of government in agriculture

From the moment of independence in 1964, President Kaunda spoke of the importance of rural development in Zambia. His speeches and writings constantly addressed the subject. After the second oil shock of 1979, the need to develop agriculture acquired new urgency. The easy old days of spending furiously and paying the bills with copper were gone, so a new strategy needed to be developed.

In 1978-80, Zambia launched the Lima programme. (The verb *kulima* means *to cultivate* in several Zambian languages.) Money equivalent in value at the time to US $400 million was set aside for a lengthy, sustained programme of agricultural development. Commemorative coins were struck and stamps printed; new slogans were invented, such as "Food First". A great many speeches were made; in one of them, with remarkable candour, the Minister for Agriculture said at Monze agricultural college that agriculture in Zambia was then at the level it had been twenty years before independence.

The Lima programme died the death of a thousand good intentions. It attempted too much, with too little depth, and with inadequate supervision or follow through. Money was swallowed up by the bureaucracies and, ten years after it was launched, it was still extremely difficult, and sometimes impossible, in rural areas to get seeds, whether for maize, sorghum or vegetables, or even a hoe or a few simple nuts and bolts for repairing an ox-drawn plough. Meanwhile agricultural production *per capita* had dropped, according to the 1984 World Bank Development Report, by something in the region of 15% in the previous decade.

The Zambia government believed that if there was a problem the answer was to set up a bureaucracy. And if the problem was big, then the answer was to set up several - with overlapping areas of responsibility. So there was a Ministry of Agriculture and Water Development, a Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, a Ministry of Decentralization, a Ministry of Co-operatives, the Provincial Co-operative Unions and Provincial Co-operative Societies, the Zambia Co-operative Federation, the Rural Resources Board, the Rural Development Corporation, the Lima Bank, the Agricultural Finance Company, Namboard, Zamhort, Zamseed for distributing seeds, and so on and on. The result was great expense with little return for it, the strangulation of initiative, and a lack of coherent planning and coordination. (Perhaps the example set for Zambia by the “experts” was not impressive: in the seventies, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the FAO, spent two-thirds of its annual budget in its Rome headquarters.)

The government set up a nation-wide network of agricultural advisers. It was their task to encourage farmers to use new methods and to market their crops better. But agricultural work in Zambia was done mostly by women, while the advisers were men. It was not culturally acceptable for them to go into the fields where women worked. If they called women to a lecture the ladies would sit with every appearance of docile respect and eager attentiveness, because that was what they were expected to do. However, the moment the adviser's back was turned they would break down laughing, and clap their hands with delight as they re-told each other some of the funnier things he had said. There was good reason for it. The advisers, usually young men, knew little and cared less about the subject than those they were supposed to advise. In most cases, they probably went to agricultural college only because

there was no alternative, and, in any event, what they were taught there their grandmothers could have taught them at home. One needed only look at the fields and gardens of an agricultural college to see the point. A further problem was that of tribalism: an adviser from one tribe might not be acceptable to people from another; 'Who does this outsider think he is, telling us what to do?'

An alternative to the above would have been to appoint to an advisory role, perhaps on a seasonal basis, experienced middle-aged women who could relate to those who were doing the work, who could communicate with them and also learn from them. Was it too radical to suggest that an adviser could learn something from people on the spot? Such women would be able to take the farmer's experience as a starting-point. It is generally better in development work to start with what is there and build on it than try to introduce something new. In addition, regional differences can sometimes be turned to advantage. Some tribes specialize in growing particular crops. For example, the Lunda and Kaonde grow pineapples on a large-scale, and the Lozi, mangoes; their experience could be used to help others. Zambians learned in the past by word of mouth and observation at village level and thereby acquired the skill of growing new crops. A simple way of enhancing the effectiveness of advisers would have been to allow them to sell the basic necessities such as seeds; regulations prohibited it. Also, advisers need to be supervised. As in other areas of life, supervision ended with the tarmac, and advisers were often left on their own in remote areas with neither practical help nor encouragement, and sometimes without salaries, for months at a time.

The government also tried to set up model farms and cattle ranches. The idea was to introduce new methods, to let subsistence farmers see modern ideas at work in practice, and to encourage by example. That hope went unfulfilled. The model farms were a model of how not to farm. They were based on the assumption that it was possible to move in one step from hoe-in-the-hand farming to high-tech agri-business. They were heavily mechanized and no one knew how to look after the machinery. The high level of capital input made them unrealistic as a role model for Zambian farmers. One such farm, just a little distance from where I lived, produced nothing and was gradually abandoned by its demoralized workers, leaving the equipment to rust in the fields.

Yet another well-meaning attempt to improve agriculture was the Rural Reconstruction Camps (RRC). These were part of the national service required of secondary school leavers. They first had six months' military training, followed by eight months in an RR camp, learning about agriculture. The idea was borrowed from the agricultural communes of the People's Liberation Army of China. The theory was that the well-educated would learn about farming and change its image of being the work of the uneducated and the ignorant. The camps would be self-sufficient and produce a surplus for processing industries. They would help to slow the drift of the rural young to the towns, promote a cash economy in rural areas, diversify agriculture by introducing new crops including cash crops, equalize rural-urban incomes, and improve the general level of agriculture in their areas by the introduction of new techniques. The unreality of this was expressed in the Latin (!) inscription on the cap-badge of RR members: *Sudor et Sanguinis pro Patria*. (*Blood and Sweat for the Fatherland* - with a misspelling: it should have been *Sanguis*.)

The reality was something else. The programme was compulsory and was seen by the young school leavers as something to be endured. City youngsters, in particular, disliked it.

Since it was part of national service, it was under military discipline that could range from easy-going permissiveness to outright brutality. For the most part, officers had no interest in it; they were military men uninterested in agriculture. A joke went around about the air force squadron leader who commanded a flight of broilers - the military men were not amused. Another problem was that many of the girls went home pregnant and infected with sexually transmitted diseases. I remember visiting one such camp and chatting with members about their life and work. They told me there were fifty-three young women in the camp. I expressed surprise, as I had not noticed many. One explained to me that there were now only six. 'What happened to the others?' I asked. 'We impregnated them', he replied.

Standards of sanitation dropped to a low level, with some of the young people dying of typhus. Since some of these were the sons and daughters of influential people, their deaths accelerated a review of the scheme. After some eight years, the matter was dropped, though, for public relations purposes, it was said merely to have been suspended. In their time, the RR camps had failed to feed themselves; on the contrary they were a drain on the rest of the economy. Their military discipline discouraged contact with the local people; members were not taught how to maintain machinery; and with officers more often absent than present, there was little direction or management. It was less the failure of an idea than of its implementation.

A similar critique could be made of government efforts to improve standards of agriculture by introducing it into the school programme, starting at the primary level. Each school was required to have a garden, or, in official terminology, a production unit, and children were required to cultivate it under the direction of the teachers. But teachers disliked the work, resented it, and avoided it when possible; as a result, many school gardens became a wasteland.

In the teacher training colleges, trainee teachers were required to have a garden in which, theoretically, they would learn new methods which they would pass on to their pupils. But trainee teachers usually regarded it as beneath their status to do such work and they dodged it whenever possible. Their attitude communicated itself to their pupils. In secondary schools, in particular, pupils resented working in the production units, and their parents often supported them in this attitude. When at home during school holidays, secondary school pupils could often be seen sitting in the shade of a tree, chatting to each other, while their parents, grandparents and younger brothers and sisters worked in the fields to provide the money to enable them to attend secondary school. Parents usually did not see anything anomalous about this.

The low status of agriculture seemed to be a self-perpetuating vicious circle that defeated all efforts at raising it up to a higher level.

A somewhat brighter spot on the scene was the work of the agricultural research station at Mount Makuru outside Lusaka. It succeeded in developing new strains of maize and sorghum which were drought-resistant - an important consideration where rainfall might be erratic. Farmers were quick to make use of these new seeds. Where distribution problems were overcome, farmers responded positively. With the exception of Mount Makuru, most research stations were for practical purposes defunct. There was little communication between

researchers and farmers. And the research workers themselves, for the most part, did not apply the results of their research even in their personal gardens.

The Zambian government, in an effort to help farmers who wished to rise above subsistence level, set up the Agricultural Finance Company and the Lima bank. Interest rates were set at 25%, above half the prevailing level of inflation. Even at that subsidized level, it was still a risky venture for farmers who were so heavily dependent on regular rainfall for the harvest. It must also be said that many farmers did not appreciate that a loan was not a grant, and had to be repaid, with interest. Where farmers defaulted on loans they were usually able, through political leverage, to prevent any action being taken against them for recovery, with the result that the impression gained ground among farmers that default need not be taken seriously. In turn, this made it difficult for creditors to make new loans available, as scarce capital was lost in unpaid loans. A study of the Lima Bank showed that, in one year, only 4% of farmers repaid their debts, while, in another governmental lending institution, it was even lower, at 2%. In the same year, a group of women who had borrowed from a small co-operative credit union comprising no more than a hundred members had a 100% repayment rate among its borrowers. Very few women could borrow from commercial or government banks, even though they were the backbone of the farming industry. When they set up their alternative system they made a success of it. There had to be a message there.

A major plank of government policy since independence was to keep food prices low, if necessary by using subsidies. It was good short-term politics, but bad economics and bad long-term politics. After twenty-five years, the economics caught up with the politics. A paper presented by the Minister of Finance to the 1988 UNIP annual conference stated that, in 1988, 85% of government borrowing went on food subsidies. He went on to state that while, in 1978, subsidies cost the country K42.1 million, in 1988 the cost would be K1, 156.4 million. (12) (It must be said that figures given in the paper were inconsistent with themselves and also with other government figures, but the overall picture was probably fairly accurate.) One mystery was why anyone would lend money to a government that spent 85% of it on food subsidies, and how they expected it to be repaid. If the creditors had read a newspaper (13), they would have seen that 30% of subsidized food was being smuggled out of the country by black marketeers who could well afford to bribe border guards and customs officials to look the other way. Zambia was, in effect, subsidizing Zaire, Namibia and Malawi out of its foreign borrowings. Faced with the choice between the self-discipline of responsibility and the imposed discipline of the IMF and World Bank, UNIP dithered, chose neither - and printed money. That brought Zambia closer to the third possibility - collapse. The economic good of the country was sacrificed in the interests of getting the Party through the elections of October 1988. UNIP was running scared at the time; at the Party conference in August, price controls were re-imposed and the delegates cheered; the Constitution was amended giving the president more power and they cheered again. The problems were piled higher and decisions postponed further; it was great fun for the Party faithful, who were rewarded with gifts of blankets - but it was no way to run a country.

Conservation (14)

Fortunately, the days are gone when conservation was regarded as a fad of middle-class nature freaks or a matter only for the so-called “developed” world. Zambia, like other Third World countries, has its conservation problems.

About 70% of the country's area is savannah, open grassland with scattered bush and trees. Of this, about 10,000 square kilometres is cleared annually for agriculture (15), and, at a conservative estimate, another 150 sq. km. for the making of charcoal. The annual rate of net attrition of the country's forest has been estimated at about 2%. All the indications are that this rate will increase with population growth. One estimate was that 90% of all rural homes use wood for fuel, while, in the urban areas, 87% use charcoal. (16) In rural areas, it was mostly deadwood, such as fallen branches, that was used, but wood was used also for building. In urban areas, especially around Lusaka and the Copperbelt, the problem reached a critical level in the eighties, with a radius of about 200 km around those centres having already been cleared of trees. (17)

A further problem was created by slash-and-burn agriculture, whether the modest *chitemene* method which allowed most trees to live or the more severe one of burning everything but the stumps. Furthermore, the practice of burning off grass late in the dry season added to the problem. Early burning of grass can be beneficial: it kills germs, fertilizes the soil with ash, removes heavy matted clumps of grass, stimulates fresh growth and ensures that forest rather than scrub develops. However, in Zambia, late burning was widely practised, with serious consequences. About 75% of trees under three years were destroyed by it, making natural regeneration of forest difficult. (18) Healthy, mature trees were easily set on fire in the latter part of the dry season, as everything was tinder dry and the temperature of the fires greater. Ground nesting birds were destroyed and the habitat of wildlife eroded. Both before and after independence, efforts were made for several decades to persuade farmers to burn early instead of late, but without success, whether the efforts relied on persuasion or on fines.

There was little reforestation although the scope for it was vast and it had potential as a source of productive employment. A very few small-scale forests were planted by the State but they were tiny in relation to the need. Sometimes Zambians seemed to regard trees as natural enemies; perhaps it was some recall of the distant past, when the forest rapidly reclaimed abandoned gardens and villages, that made it seem as a threat, an enemy to be fought against. Whatever the explanation, Zambians showed great enthusiasm for chopping down trees and - most uncharacteristically - could be roused to anger at the sight of someone planting them. Such efforts were commonly vandalized. And, among some tribes, even fruit trees would not be planted because of a belief that the planter would not live to eat the fruit. An incident in the life of the Lozi chief, Liwanika, illustrates something of this attitude. He showed the missionary, Coillard, the beauty of the Barotse Plain, saying, ‘How beautiful! Not a tree! Not one!’ (19)

The short-term effects of this were already evident in the eighties. Soil erosion was a serious problem in some areas. In others, dams built for watering cattle became useless through sedimentation. The price of charcoal constantly increased above the level of inflation, partly because of the cost of transporting it ever longer distances from the sources of supply. One direct consequence was that people began to cook food less than it needed, with a consequent decline in standards of nutrition, and water which should have been boiled,

e.g. in mixing milk powder, was not. The increased time spent making charcoal meant less time for agriculture and also less money for other necessities. As the forest receded so did wildlife, and with that the tourist industry's future became more doubtful.

In the longer term, large-scale deforestation brings with it the possibility of climatic change, such as reduced rainfall and lengthier periods of drought. This was a particular problem in areas such as the Western Province, which was originally part of the Kalahari Desert. There, the process of desertification began in the eighties. The province was the largest in the country, with the smallest population, so there was a possibility of arresting the problem, provided that there was a change of public attitudes. If there was no change, then the province, usually regarded as the least developed in the country, need not concern planners as it could disappear in a hundred years. Its thin and fragile layer of soil on top of an average 80-100 metres' depth of sand was unlikely to withstand indefinitely the assault made upon it.

Efforts were made in school to educate children to a change of attitude, but little came of them. Partly, this might have been that it was not regarded as today's problem, and the benefits of planting trees would not be seen for a long time.

What of the future?

Zambian agriculture was a gloomy record of failure, relieved by only a few rays of hope. The future would be no better than the past, possibly worse, unless the mistakes of the past were learned. ‘Those who do not learn from the mistakes of history are condemned to repeat them’. (Santayana) A first step would have been to recognize that mistakes were made, to identify them and their causes and to name them. Then it would have been possible to move on to a realistic and practical strategy based on the realities of rural life in Zambia. Exhortations from politicians to work harder would not help; they only irritated people.

Zambia could have looked at and learned from some of other African countries. Botswana built a healthy economy on cattle, Kenya on tourism, Côte d'Ivoire on coffee and cocoa, and Malawi, a much smaller country with a larger population, on agriculture. They recognized that people are essentially self-interested, and they channelled that fact constructively instead of preaching at it, as President Kaunda did so many times. They saw an entrepreneurial instinct as a creative force to be welcomed, not a moral disease to be extirpated. The result for them was relative prosperity and economic growth.

While it would be naïve to suggest that there was any single step that would have solved Zambia's agricultural problems in one fell swoop, there was a good case for arguing that the country might have been able to feed itself - a basic requisite for real independence - if, instead of channelling resources into ponderous State agencies, most of them chronically inefficient, it had simply got out of the way of the small farmers' productive instincts. Farmers in Zambia had initiative, but were not allowed to exercise it. Their ready acceptance in the past of maize, sorghum and cassava was evidence of initiative; so was their acceptance in recent decades of new hybrid maize and sorghum seeds, of rice and cashew nuts. If the basic necessities of agriculture such as seeds, ploughs and their spare parts, and fertilizers,

together with the basic necessities of a human life such as clothing, soap, sugar, salt and matches had been made available, without excessive profit-making, through the existing network of small village stores, that would have constituted a large boost to popular morale and have made rural life more acceptable. If, in addition, the marketing of agricultural produce had been released from State control, prices would have found a more realistic level and the appalling waste of an annual 30% of the harvest would have been greatly reduced. At its simplest, what the Zambian farmer wanted was a market that would pay a fair price for a crop.

The changes above would have cost the government nothing; on the contrary, they would have released it from a large burden of expense. They would, however, have called for a political re-orientation. Ultimately, Zambia's problems were political. Could a political leadership which, for over a quarter century, had headed in one direction do a U-turn and take a new course? It seemed doubtful. The change from ideology to pragmatism would seem like a betrayal to the high-minded - but there were few of those outside the sheltered walls of State House. President Kaunda had often demonstrated that if the facts did not fit the theory he would ignore or suppress the offending facts. While that approach might be satisfactory for Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass*, it did not meet the needs of hungry people who could not be expected to see its humour.

The need for change was increasingly in evidence as the eighties went on; the willingness to bring it about was not.

Chapter 6 DEVELOPMENT

What is development?

Europeans who came to Africa in the nineteenth century commonly described their role as that of bringing civilization to the native. David Livingstone, for instance, spoke of ‘Christianity, commerce and civilization’. Colonial administrators spoke similarly. Yet rarely in their writings was an attempt made to define what the term “civilization” might mean. It was as if they assumed the term was so clearly understood by everyone that no explanation was needed. If it were possible to pursue the point and ask them what they meant by it, they might have answered that it meant ending inter-tribal warfare and slavery, or introducing European government, or perhaps teaching people to wear European-style clothes and to eat food with a knife and fork, instead of with fingers. The term was far from univocal.

In the twentieth century a somewhat similar situation existed in regard to the term “development”. It was a compulsory part of the jargon, as “civilization” had been, but one had to search hard to find definitions. Again, the assumption seemed to be that no explanation was required. But, if one pursued the point, a wide variety of meanings emerged. For some, development might mean more schools, hospitals, factories and roads; for others, it might mean increased life expectancy, greater *per capita* income, an enhanced rate of literacy, or a hard-to-define net economic well-being; while for still others, development might be measured in terms of relationships rather than functions, people more than projects. Once again, one must say that the term was not univocal.

Considering the vast resources, both human and financial, which are expended in the name of development, it was, perhaps, surprising that the term was not more sharply defined so as to avoid scattering effort over such a wide spectrum that there was no depth in the enterprise. If ideas were not clear, then it was unlikely that efforts based on them would be focussed. At the risk of being cynical, it must be said that there was room for the suspicion that the issue was sometimes deliberately fudged in case the goals, and the means of achieving them, might be subjected to an examination from which they might not emerge with much credibility. It might be found that the activities engaged in under the label of development were actually leading to people's degeneration. By obscuring the issue, people might not notice that the agenda of “development” was not very different from that of nineteenth century “civilization”, that, in fact, it meant trying to make them like us. After all, the First World was “developed” and the Third World was “developing”. The Semantic Fudging Department let that one slip through; it gave the game away. When they were “developed”, they would be like us. What the missionary called “converting”, and the colonialist “civilizing”, the aid worker called “developing”.

To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln on democracy, it might be said that development was ‘of the people, by the people, and for the people’. Human development was what was at stake. It means creating those conditions in society that would enable people to realize their potential.

It recognizes that people are the first and fundamental resource of any society. It is people who develop themselves; they do the work of "development", and, in doing so, they develop themselves. Development was not, and cannot be, something done to people or for them, like a hospital patient receiving an injection, which produces its effect even if the patient knows nothing about it. In development, people are active agents, not passive recipients, subjects not objects. Otherwise, there simply is no development, no matter how many projects are completed. As Gandhi said, 'The end must be prefigured in the means'. If the end in view was a people whose potential was fully activated, then that would not be achieved by spoon-feeding them as if they were helpless, even if that was done in the name of being kind. In his seminal work, *Small is Beautiful*, E. F. Schumacher recognized this when he sub-titled the work *Economics as if people mattered*.

In Zambia, government officials and others saw development as a matter of money, technology and technical skills given by the West to Zambia. What mattered was to have projects; people were an afterthought. Government and agencies alike would make room for some nominal consultation after decisions had already been taken, and then give people a few slogans to shout as a substitute for participation. The ordinary Zambian, too, had not learned that if one wants clinics, classrooms, and so forth it was necessary to create an economic base that will provide and sustain them. It was clear that Zambians wanted those facilities, and others as well; what was not clear was whether people understood that a change of work practices was necessary in order to fulfil that desire.

Development workers, for the most part, come from cultures which value quick results, which hold in high esteem the person who gets on with the job and delivers the goods. They are under pressure to complete projects so that governments at home can assure voters that they are truly committed to the Third World, that they respond to those TV pictures of starving children. They found that it was quicker to work *for* people with the use of high technology and lots of money, that it was to work *with* people using appropriate technology and a labour-intensive system. As a consequence of this, Zambia and many other countries in Africa are studded with abandoned or neglected "development" projects, which never had a real base of local support in the needs, the participation or the commitment of the people. When the external props were withdrawn, projects folded up, and frequently, the local people were then blamed for being stupid, lazy or irresponsible. That was a lesson that has often been taught in Zambia but not often learned. Marx is quoted as saying, towards the end of his life, 'I'm not a Marxist' when he heard of some of the plans put forward in his name. Similarly, some of the things done in the name of development were counter-productive if the goal of development was to enable people to become more fully human, to be responsible for themselves, and to become shapers of their own destiny.

Models and Strategies for Development

In the pursuit of development, Zambia borrowed models from different situations. The USSR heavily influenced its economic model, especially after 1968, with its emphasis on State ownership, a minimal private sector, five-year plans and all the bureaucratic apparatus of centralized planning. It had its *apparat* and its *nomenklatura* that resisted change, and its

Party faithful who voted by the thousand with dreary unanimity at Party conferences, but it had not got an economy that met people's basic needs. While ordinary people were all too painfully aware of their problems, and felt bitter frustration at the evident decline of their country, there was no sign that the leadership was prepared to acknowledge that there was a need for change. Zambia had its Brezhnev-like era of stagnation from the early seventies to the early nineties.

Zambia also looked to China as a role model. As already mentioned, the Rural Reconstruction camps were based on the agricultural communes of the People's Liberation Army. Their failure was a reminder that development models cannot be transplanted from one culture to another without critical assessment. This did not mean that Zambia had nothing to learn from China - far from it. There was a valuable lesson to be learned in that China, in the first five years of the leadership of Deng Hsiao Ping, increased food production by one-third, through the use of the profit motive.

Zambia also borrowed from Tanzania, especially when it was under the rule of its philosopher-president, Julius Nyerere. He evolved a philosophy of development called *Ujamaa* that sought to blend traditional African values with Western technology on a self-help basis, with the village as its focus. *Ujamaa* was a failure, and acknowledged as such, with remarkable candour, by Nyerere himself. If the baby was not to be thrown out with the bath water, however, it was important to analyse what it was that had gone wrong, and why. Although Zambia did not try *Ujamaa*, the idea of a marriage of African and Western values was worth serious consideration.

In most other aspects of development, such as the civil service and technology, Zambia borrowed heavily from Europe in general and from Britain in particular. It was often sad, and sometimes pitiable, to see situations where Zambia's lack of self-esteem and self-confidence led it to mimic what was European as if that were the standard by which everything should be assessed. One striking illustration of this, though not directly related to development, was the State opening of a new session of the National Assembly. It was imitation-Westminster throughout, as one watched the procession of judges in powdered wigs, army officers parading their medals and gold braid, the mace-bearer, the Honourable and Right Honourable Members of the House, and the President in an imitation Roman toga (or was it imitating Nkrumah of Ghana?) enter the Parliament building to Souza military marches from a brass band. One felt like screaming, ‘Be yourselves!’ The whole dismal scene was of a State unsure of itself, which didn't know where it was going, and which was afraid to be itself without apologizing to the rest of the world. When Africans tried to be Europeans, it was as foolish and sad as Europeans trying to be Africans, and it doesn't work very well.

The problems of development were Zambia's and so must the solutions be. The country needed to develop the self-confidence to work out its own development strategy. The various national development plans did not constitute such a strategy; they were an example of the bureaucracy talking to itself as if people did not exist. The government gave the impression of being punch-drunk and not knowing what to do or where to turn. There was a need for a Zambianization of ideas and strategies so that people would find a place in the process. Instead the government abdicated its responsibility to its people to such a degree that, in some parts of the country, one could be forgiven for asking just who it was that governed this or that area. The government appeared, *de facto*, to have abandoned large areas of the country

and several sectors of its development, to overseas governmental and non-governmental organizations. There was something of a territorial carve-up reminiscent of the nineteenth-century scramble for Africa, but, this time, the initiative for the hand-over had come from within.

The development agencies

Zambia received aid from a variety of governmental and non-governmental agencies. Those sponsored by a foreign government almost invariably carried with them an unpublicized political agenda. When China, for example, built the Tanzania-Zambia railway from Dar-es-Salaam to Kapiri Mposhi, and offered assistance to other African countries, it was understood that the *quid pro quo* was that those countries would vote in the UN for the expulsion of Taiwan and its replacement by mainland China. Once that goal was achieved in the late seventies, China lost interest in Africa. Similarly, the USSR provided the Zambian National Defence Forces with some modest weaponry; in return, Zambia supported it and its proxies with UN votes and muted its criticism of the Soviet role in Afghanistan. Arab oil exporters sold oil to Zambia at preferential rates; in return, Zambia broke off relations with Israel after the *Yom Kippur* war of October 1973, regularly denounced Israel and Zionism and declared its support for the Palestine Liberation Organization. The USA and the European Community gave Zambia over 90% of its foreign aid; in return, they receive the benefit of trade links in the form of an outlet for exports, and a modest measure of political good-will, though, in general, they were less successful in extracting concessions than the Eastern bloc.

Zambia's relations with international agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF were not smooth, though the differences between them were often more a matter of posturing for public consumption than of substance. The IMF tried to instil a sense of realism into economic thinking, but the government ran into the political problem of the unrealistic expectations it had fostered in the people. The World Bank showed itself insensitive in Zambia as elsewhere to environmental and cultural factors in development. As a result of widespread criticism, it improved its record in environmental affairs, but, in cultural matters, it continued to display the arrogance of power and money with an attitude of ‘We're paying the bill, so the job is going to be done our way whether you like it or not’.

Zambia knew how to play off East against West so as to get the most out of both. It knew and used the psychology appropriate to each. It flattered Eastern bloc countries, aware that criticism tended to harden their attitudes; furthermore, since they had not had African colonies, there was no sense of guilt to play on. So, for example, before going to East Germany, President Kaunda would applaud that state's commitment to democracy and human rights and would stress that Zambia was committed to the socialism. He would be rewarded with a new fleet of IFA trucks for the army and police. With the West, the approach was different: the president would vigorously, and with all the vehemence of offended innocence, denounce the evils of racism, imperialism, colonialism, fascism, Zionism, capitalism, apartheid, and the exploitation of man by man. (I think I’ve got the litany right.) He sometimes reduced himself to tears in doing so; well, if that didn't make them feel guilty so

that they salved their consciences by coughing up cash, nothing would. He would then undertake a journey to the West to appeal for aid and come back amply rewarded.

Government-to-government aid had special problems, particularly in the area of accountability. From years of bitter experience, embassies in Lusaka learned that pouring money into government projects was like trying to fill a sieve with water. The money would disappear and no one knew where. If an embassy raised awkward questions about this, the reply would be a lecture about non-interference in the internal affairs of another State. Accountability in such aid all but vanished and the point came when the president, in an address to foreign diplomats, demanded that aid be given unconditionally. It was remarkable that someone asking for help would dictate the conditions to the donor. The result was that countries became progressively less willing to grant aid. Even the ever-patient Nordic countries finally began to lose patience and to insist on accountability, but they did not get it, so they, along with others, reduced aid. Japan, a late arrival on the aid scene, but with a yen for world approval, came disbursing money generously with a cast-iron determination to learn nothing from the mistakes of other countries, but to repeat them faithfully.

There were many non-governmental aid organizations in Zambia; some would say there were too many. They did not appear to co-ordinate closely with one another, with the result that groups in Zambia which sought aid were sometimes able to play off one against another as politicians did at the international level. It also happened, though not often, that one and the same project was funded by two separate agencies, each of which thought it was theirs alone. In a few cases, supervision was so haphazard that money was assigned to projects which did not exist except in the imagination of an enterprising conman who had pocketed the foreign exchange assigned to the project before anyone was the wiser. It was said ruefully by an aid worker about one particular gentleman - a senior bishop - that he could take a gold filling out of your mouth while you were laughing at him!

The agencies had a particular problem in liaising with government. Everyone agreed that the co-ordinating agency for development work should be the government and its local representatives. But aid workers knew from long experience that, if money fell into the hands of local UNIP or government officials, then that was the last that would be seen of it. It would disappear and nothing would be done. That was especially the case since the government adopted a policy of decentralization of authority to local Party officials. If aid workers did not maintain genuine accountability regarding expenditure, they broke faith with their donors. If they tried to do so in their relations with UNIP or the government, they would be accused of not trusting the people and having a colonial mentality. Local UNIP officials sometimes successfully demanded a percentage of food aid for themselves as the price for not obstructing food distribution in time of famine. It was not surprising, therefore, that for many agencies a major problem was the demoralization of their staff who came to see development as a sordid rip-off by the politically powerful.

The field staff of aid agencies were, for the most part, idealistic young people with a genuine commitment to promoting the advancement of the Third World. They were sincere and dedicated. Few, if any, had a knowledge of local language or customs, which was understandable if they came, as most did, on short-term contracts of one, two or three years. One of the spin-off effects of this was that, unwittingly, they spread the use of English in rural areas. Doing so might be good or bad, but it was hardly ever taken into account when

considering the desirability of undertaking a particular scheme of work. Likewise, one result of a development project in a given area might be that it left behind a network of roads. Again, that might be helpful or unhelpful, but its social impact was rarely considered as part of the whole package. If, for instance, a project was undertaken in a remote rural area to promote employment in order to reduce the drift to the towns, it should at least have been asked whether roads might not have the effect of simply facilitating the exodus.

Zambians, with good reason, increasingly questioned the role of aid workers. They saw them as frequently being wasteful, with a money-is-no-problem mentality. They saw the evidence, and the consequences, of their inexperience, as when aid workers spent a good deal of time and money learning what local people already knew, or when the end result was a report which simply collected dust on an office shelf, and the local people, who had given time and effort to answering questionnaires or attending meetings, derived no benefit from it. Zambians also saw, and were angered by, the arrogance of those to whom it did not occur that they might have something to learn from local people who, after all, had lived in the area for generations and could reasonably be assumed to know something useful. Zambians resented it if they felt they were being used as research fodder by someone whose real interest was in getting a Ph.D. in anthropology or some such subject, or if it seemed that the young person was just having a good time at others' expense or merely coming to have an "experience". If the aid worker, as was not infrequently the case, was paid a salary which could have been more than a hundred times that of his Zambian co-workers - a differential without parallel in colonial times - and if, in addition, he reaped maximum personal benefit at the country's expense by working the black market in foreign exchange, then Zambians were entitled to ask just who it was that benefited by the process of aid. If foreign aid programmes were to be more than a system of outdoor relief for unemployed graduates from Europe, there needed to be a serious examination that related intentions to achievements. There was a need to learn from mistakes so that the situation would no longer exist by which the errors of missionaries and colonial officials were repeated by foreign aid workers in the name of development.

An example from a different context illustrates one of the dilemmas. In the Sudan, there were over 200 hundred foreign non-governmental aid or development agencies. The money for their operations came from abroad in highly valued foreign exchange. If that foreign exchange were changed legally into Sudanese pounds in a bank, it helped to finance the ongoing civil war, the consequences of which the agencies had come to the country to relieve, because the exchange rate was artificially pegged by government decree, and banks were government-owned or controlled. If, on the other hand, the conversion were made illegally on the black market - at a rate much more favourable to the agencies - then, while they had more money to use, they contributed by doing so to undermining the country's economy through an effective devaluation of its currency.

Was it aid?

In examining development work, one needed constantly to ask the question, 'Who will benefit by this?' - and to give an honest answer. One needed to ask, for example, whether a

programme was simply creating a market for the donor country's exports. Was it creating new and artificial needs that would simply be a burden to the recipient? How did it affect what was already there? Did it allow government to abandon responsibility to its people? If goods were given for free distribution, who benefited when they were sold on the black market? Had the social, cultural and environmental consequences of a project been examined as well as the economic ones? All those questions, and others, had a direct relevance to the situation in Zambia.

Perhaps the most important question to ask was what kind of attitudes and relationships would be left behind at the end of an aid programme. Take a simple example: suppose that used clothing were distributed free of charge. That solved people's immediate problem of finding something to wear. But one should ask whether it reinforced their sense of helplessness and dependence, instilling a feeling of being a second-grade human being for whom someone else's cast-offs were good enough. Similarly, to provide people with free food would give them a few meals. But it might deprive them of self-respect, and it would surely do so if it became a permanent feature of life, leaving them in a relationship of dependence on others. One should ask how those attitudes and relationships then affected the effort to help people to become self-reliant and responsible for themselves. In the actual reality of life in Zambia, one not uncommonly saw situations where adults were reduced to the level of children, independent people to scroungers, and honest people to liars and thieves - in the name of human development! It should not have been so; it need not have been so. Development workers really did need to open their eyes and look frankly at what they were concretely bringing about. Good intentions were never enough.

Two problems called for special attention. One was that of unrecognized assumptions. For example, development workers, who went to an area where food was scarce and malnutrition rife, might readily, but perhaps wrongly, assume that people there wanted to find ways of increasing food production. They might see it as their role to facilitate this and might be puzzled or hurt by a lack of response to their efforts. The need that was so obvious to them, they might assume to be equally obvious to others. That might not be the case. People knew that food shortages recurred from time immemorial; they might be accepted as a normal part of life just as a European accepts that winter is cold, wet and miserable.

A second problem was that of the paternalistic attitude of some development workers, particularly, but not exclusively, those with religious motivation. Paternalism among aid workers was a symptom of a loss of confidence in the message - human development or the Gospel or whatever - and of loss of hope in those to whom it was addressed. It was not development but a bogus substitute for it and it impeded it. Its practice reassured the paternalist that s/he was wanted and was doing a worthwhile job, and that reassurance was what s/he sought. The price to be paid for this by the recipients was that the circle of dependent clients was kept in a state of psychological infancy. At base, paternalism was a form of contempt for people. It was a way of saying that they could not be treated as adults but as children from whom adult behaviour could not be expected. It created and perpetuated its clientele and their accompanying attitudes of servility, childishness and self-centeredness. It belittled people, no matter how good its intentions might be. It was a vote of no confidence in them. Some development workers were ineradicably paternalistic: they worked for people as patrons, not with them as partners. They expected little from people and accepted less. People, knowing that little was expected of them, lived up - or rather down - to this

expectation, thus creating a self-perpetuating cycle of dependence. A programme that was content with so little sold itself short, provided no challenge, and did not penetrate below the surface to the level of real change. But the greatest paternalist in Zambia was the State.

The aid agencies had also their practices of institutionalized paternalism as when, for example, they committed themselves to a programme which had nothing more than a nominal degree of local support. The agency concerned, not wanting to be seen as having backed a loser or to withdraw part-way through a project, would sometimes pour in money regardless so that it could have an opening ceremony to show its backers. There was a vested interest in completing the job whatever the consequences. This was especially the case with projects funded by governmental organizations where the status and prestige of the donor country was seen to be at stake. Aid workers, too, had to be seen to spend money or the rationale for their presence would come to be questioned.

Factors impeding development in Zambia

The factors impeding development are both attitudinal and structural. The paragraphs that follow list them under those headings. Some of the points have already been mentioned but are included here to try and give an overall picture of the situation.

Attitudinal limitations to development: -

A deeply entrenched hand-out mentality, with the expectation that government should provide whatever people needed. The connection between work and taxation on the one hand, and the supply by government of goods and services on the other was not adequately appreciated.

The bureaucracy stifled initiative. In part, this was because bureaucrats themselves did not understand or believe in the system that they were trying to operate. One effect of this was that they became rigidly inflexible; it was safer to go by the book than to take the risk of following a flexible, but more realistic, interpretation.

There was deep-seated mutual mistrust in society. People were afraid to take the risk of believing in someone for fear of being deceived.

Corruption became entrenched to the point that people expected it of a person in power and came to regard it as normal.

There was an attitude that only the present mattered. The past was gone, the future had not yet come. So people did not plan for the future or reflect on and assess the past.

Initiative was seen by those in power as dangerous since it might lead to a diminution of their control.

There was real fear among people that, if they succeeded, they would arouse jealousy among others, who would use witchcraft as a way of hitting back at them to keep them at the common level.

Zambians' lack of self-confidence was a psychological haemorrhage that debilitated the body politic.

Drunkenness was widespread, in part because of easy-going, permissive attitudes towards it.

There was a well-founded feeling that the system was loaded against the small man, that only those with political connections could get ahead.

Manual work, especially in agriculture, was despised as inferior.
People were fatalistic in their attitude towards nature, seeing it as something beyond their control.
People were patient to the point of being passive. They allowed their rights to go by default, as they didn't assert them.
Many people were lethargic and seemingly unwilling to try. Seen - sometimes correctly - as simple laziness, it was probably more often due to discouragement, bad leadership, personal loss such as the death of several children, or to malnutrition, especially in towns.
The individual was dominated by the group and had not emerged into autonomy.
Authority was seen as the power to dominate rather than to serve.
People had not developed a work ethic that gave priority to doing a job over the claims of conversation.
There was deep-seated disillusionment with the fruits of independence as it was seen as having let people down.
A high proportion of those discarded by the school system saw themselves as failures.
People were caught in the turmoil of a change of culture. They did not know how to sort themselves out between the old and the new, the African and the European, and lost direction.
People of African culture were trying to operate a system based on European ideas, attitudes and assumptions.

Structural limitations to development: -
Independence led to a European elite being replaced by an African one. Of the two, the European was the more responsible, efficient and hard-working.
The education system was not geared to development.
There was a lack of involvement in the political system. Power worked from the top down without a complementary bottom-up process.
The drift to the towns drew life away from the rural areas where Zambia's hope of development lies.
The dilapidated state of the country's transport system made the normal functioning of an economy difficult.
Under-nourishment, disease and poverty became a self-perpetuating vicious circle. The sheer burden of the present made it difficult to find energy to think about the future.
The rise in violent crime encouraged the departure of expatriates whose skills were needed in the country.
The extended family system, as it actually operated, penalized success.
In some areas, there was no functioning authority structure. UNIP was despised, the civil service was inefficient, and the tribal system had been stripped of power.
The system of decentralization was without responsibility or accountability.
Local bureaucrats harassed, frustrated and delayed anyone who did not play the game their way.
It was difficult to find anyone who could be relied upon to handle money or goods without helping himself to them. (It was usually a man; women were seen by men as reliable.)

What was the alternative?

Zambia desperately needed to find alternatives. If it failed to do so, its decline could become irreversible. So what could be done? At the risk of being presumptuous, the following ideas are put forward for consideration: -

1) To begin with, Zambia needed to make a realistic assessment of what went wrong - and why. It had seen the past, and it did not work. That could lead to the recognition that a change of political direction was needed since the problems were ultimately political. That would be the moment of truth that called for courage.
2) Zambia did not need more money for development. It needed less money better spent, for example, to direct money towards small-scale projects that responded to people's basic needs, especially in rural areas. There needed to be real local involvement in those projects, not some nominal gesture as a public relations exercise.
3) A gradual, co-ordinated elimination of foreign aid over a period of ten to twenty years would help Zambia. It would help people to accept responsibility for themselves and their future. It would cut the umbilical cord that tied the people to a crippling sense of helplessness and dependence, and would restore the self-respect that hand-outs had destroyed. Since the end of World War II, Africa received about 2½ times as much aid *per capita* as Asia. Although both continents started from a similar base of post-colonial and post-war poverty, Asia, especially the Far East, went well ahead of Africa, perhaps because of strong religious and cultural systems, relative peace, a work ethic, making education a high priority and close family bonds in which each member helped the other.
4) The slogan "Trade, not Aid" has become a cliché. But there was truth in it. If Zambia were paid a just price for its exports, then it would be in a position to become economically self-sustaining and to enjoy the self-respect that goes with it. To bring that about would need a move, at the international level, away from an unfettered free market economy.
5) Zambia needed to recognize that people were at the heart of development. They were the problem and they were the solution; their progress was the end in view and they were the means of achieving it. Zambia needed credible structures of political participation.
6) Zambia needed to welcome initiative. Why should parents, who built a school on a self-help basis, have to wait several years for a district education office to give them grudging permission to use it?
7) Zambians needed to find the courage to trust one another; there could be no human development without it.
8) They needed, too, to change from seeking excuses to finding remedies: - for example, Zambians often blamed their parlous state on the fact that they had been a colony. But, if one looked at two African countries which had little or no colonial past, namely, Liberia and Ethiopia (the latter a colony for just six years), and saw their truly desperate situation - worse than Zambia's - one could hardly settle for blaming colonialism.
9) Zambians also were too ready to use tradition and culture as an excuse for resisting innovation. When one heard a Zambian talking about preserving culture, it usually meant that s/he did not want to face the challenge of change.
10) Zambians needed to assert themselves and throw off the passivity that was for long perhaps their most striking characteristic. If they could do so, then they might succeed.
11) An end to the Big Man syndrome would be welcome. Zambians admired the Big Man - a politician or businessman who had made a name for himself - and readily sought to attach

themselves to such a person as clients. No questions would be asked about the morality of how he achieved his position. The Big Man was admired, deferred to, loved and respected; he was also hated and held in contempt, and his downfall would be anticipated with eager expectation. The Big Man syndrome belittled people; it expressed and reinforced low self-esteem. The pomposity and self-importance of so many Zambian men, who saw themselves as the local version of the Big Man, no matter how non-existent the basis for it, was acknowledged and mocked in the Zambian proverb of the cock standing on a dung-hill, crowing, 'This is *my* village!' ('Munzi wa ka ki wo!')

12) What little development took place in Zambia was mostly done through and by women. That needed to be given practical recognition and built on. In Zambia, men were talkers; women were doers. But there was a critical lack of solidarity among women that limited their effectiveness; they could be their own worst enemies. I recall trying and failing to persuade the Board of Management of a Teachers' Training College to change a rule whereby a female student who became pregnant would be expelled. I expected women to support my proposal and men to oppose it. My experience was the opposite: men on the Board supported the change, but women were unalterably opposed to it. They said, 'Those girls are sleeping with our husbands and breaking up our marriages. If they get pregnant, expel them! It might teach them a lesson!'

On another occasion, I saw a prostitute being beaten with sticks by soldiers because she had taken a blanket in lieu of the payment she had not received. I intervened, trying to persuade the soldiers to stop beating her, and got beaten myself for my trouble. But, as the soldiers beat her, the local women, who were standing round in a circle watching the spectacle, cheered, jeered, clapped, laughed, danced and sang with exultantly at the woman's humiliation.

The practice of "property-grabbing", whereby, on a man's death, his brothers and their families come and take his property for themselves, leaving his widow destitute, was deeply unjust to women. But women themselves participated in it; they grabbed property also.

President Kaunda might have recognized something of the above, at least at the conceptual level, when he said, 'Some food aid… was killer aid…. I am referring to the type of aid that kills the productivity of the people'. (1) If that comment was valid regarding food aid, it was no less so in relation to technology, credits, personnel and institutional structures. The drug of dependence was habit-forming, and Zambia needed to break the addiction. Outsiders can not do for a country what its people are not prepared to do for themselves. There was no alternative to Zambia's facing the challenge of finding a way by its own light and efforts.

Chapter 7 THE RULERS AND THE RULED

The political background

Human life probably began in Africa; it is the oldest inhabited continent. Not a great deal is known as yet about Zambia's early history but there is archaeological evidence of Iron-Age settlement dating back at least 1000 years, though "Broken Hill" man was much earlier. Future research will doubtless throw more light on the country's past.

In the nineteenth century, explorers, hunters, missionaries and traders began to enter the country, in part because of the published accounts of Portuguese travellers of the previous century. The Victorians were great diarists and left a large literature of nineteenth century "Zambia" that was more comprehensive and readable than for some periods of the twentieth. Following the wars sparked off by the Zulu leader, Shaka, the southern African continent was deeply disturbed and there were successive waves of inter-tribal wars, large-scale movements of population, and the depredations of Arab and Portuguese slave-traders. Slavery and the slave trade also existed in and between African tribes. Some areas enjoyed relative peace and prosperity but the overall picture was disturbed. Zambian writers of recent times have been frank in acknowledging that the nineteenth century was not Zambia's best; they contrast it with the stability and calm of earlier periods when there was trade, migration and inter-cultural contact.

The British South Africa Company (BSAC) controlled Zambia from 1890 to 1924 under the terms of the charter which Cecil Rhodes had received from the British crown. Its interest in the country was in mining, in providing part of the Cape-to-Cairo railway which was to remain an unfulfilled dream for Rhodes, and in preventing the Portuguese from linking their eastern and western colonies of Mozambique and Angola. The company, with the help of missionaries, ended inter-tribal war, slavery and the slave trade. (In South Africa, as a different means to the same end, it started several wars, such as the "rebellions" of 1893 and 1896 which resulted in the Shona and the Ndebele losing their land and cattle, also the Jameson Raid and the second Boer war.) It set up a police force and introduced taxation. In Britain, it represented its operations as a philanthropic exercise in civilizing the native in darkest Africa; at a more mundane level, these measures were a necessary pre-condition for commercial development. Colonialism was privatized, and virtue was most admirable when it turned a profit.

The policies of the BSAC were calculated to serve the interests of the Company, not the country. Revenue from taxation went to provide a substantial part of the infrastructure, and that was geared directly to the commercial needs of the Company. Although committed by the terms of the charter to developing the territory, the Company did virtually nothing. It spent almost twelve times as much on jails as on schools. In its final year of control, total spending by the Company on education, for both black and white children, was £348. During the period of Company rule, Northern Rhodesia (the name was derived from Rhodes) as Zambia was then known, was widely regarded as the most underdeveloped and neglected

British territory in Africa. Company rule terminated on 31 March 1924, and the British Colonial Office took responsibility the following day. It has been remarked that it was appropriate that Company rule ended with the financial year and colonial rule began on April Fools' Day! Although the period of British rule in Zambia was short, only seventy-five years from 1889 to independence in 1964, a mere hiccup in the life of the continent, it had, without doubt, the greatest impact for centuries.

The Protectorate of Northern Rhodesia was ruled by the British Colonial Office from 1924 to 1953. Official policy on the colonies was based on Lord Lugard's concept of "the paramountcy of native interest." But the practice was that the colonies were to be ruled so as to benefit the “Home” country. Between 1930 and 1940, the British government received about £24 million in taxes on copper royalties from Northern Rhodesia, and, in the same period, gave £136,000 in development grants. (1) The African population paid in full for every government service rendered to them. Racial discrimination was deeply entrenched in the social structure: in 1930, the government spent more on the education of 879 white children than on 79,131 black, a ratio of over 90 to 1.(2) It made little difference what party was in power in Britain - the underlying pattern was constant. In 1947, Sir Stafford Cripps, the Labour Party Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated, ‘The whole future of the sterling group and its ability to survive depend in my view on a quick and extensive development of our African resources’. (3) But Colonial Office rule was an improvement on that of the BSAC.

In 1953, Colonial Office rule ended and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland came into being. Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) had enjoyed a considerable degree of local autonomy under white rule since 1923. It had a substantial population of white settlers who had technical and administrative skills and experience. Its agriculture was outstanding. Nyasaland (now Malawi) was very poor and its economic role was that of a labour reserve for the south. Northern Rhodesia was enjoying a boom in copper prices and had plenty of capital for development. A *ménage à trois* of skills, labour and capital seemed like good economic sense. As the Federation actually operated, however, one was forced to ask the question, ‘Who benefited by this arrangement?’ The average wage of an African miner was one-tenth of a European's. (4) Average spending on the education of white children was 11.4 times greater than on black. (5) Discrimination was deeply ingrained throughout the system. One apologist for the Federation sought to represent the relationship between African and European in the Federation as that of a partnership, illustrated by a poster of a horse and its rider. Guess who was the horse? Guess who was the rider? The first Prime Minister of the Federation, Sir Godfrey Huggins, later Lord Malvern, had earlier stated, ‘The history of the world suggests that there is *prima facie* evidence that there is something wrong with the Bantu branch of the family’. That was fairly representative of the champions of "responsible government" and "partnership". (6)

Northern Rhodesia lost out financially in the Federation. During the ten years of the Federation's life, 1953-63, it suffered a net loss of £97 million to the other two partners. (7) The point was not lost on Northern Rhodesians, whether black or white, that their role in the Federation was to pay the bills. This was made unambiguously clear when the Federal government, contrary to guarantees given in writing at its foundation, decided that the first large-scale hydro-electric project in the Federation would not be the Kafue scheme in Northern Rhodesia but on the Zambezi at Kariba, bordering Northern and Southern Rhodesia. As if to underline the point the turbine buildings were on the southern side of the border. For

many white Northern Rhodesians, that was the signal that the leaders of the Federation at the Federal capital in Salisbury (now Harare), were protecting themselves in anticipation of independence in the North. Perhaps more than any other act, it undermined confidence in the future of the Federation.

Public opinion in Europe in the years during and after World War II moved steadily in favour of independence for colonies. During the war, President Roosevelt of the USA had made it clear to Churchill that the USA was not fighting a world war for the preservation of the British Empire. He believed in, and was committed to, the principles of democracy and self-determination for colonies no less than for Europe. The changed mood of public opinion was reflected in the "Winds of Change" speech by Harold Macmillan, then British Prime Minister, in Cape Town, South Africa, on 3 February 1960. Furthermore, the Monckton Commission of Enquiry reported that there was, in fact, no real partnership between black and white in the Federation; the whites had full control.

A general election in Northern Rhodesia in October 1962 gave the United National Independence Party (UNIP) 14 seats out of 37 in the Northern Rhodesian Parliament. With a further 7 seats held by the African National Congress of Harry Nkumbula, there was a majority in favour of independence. Also in 1962, Nyasaland left the Federation and became independent as Malawi under President Banda. New elections under a revised constitution, held in December 1953, gave UNIP 55 seats and the ANC 10. With an overwhelming majority favouring independence, events moved swiftly. Kenneth Kaunda became Prime Minister of Northern Rhodesia on 23 January 1964 and then took office as President of the Republic of Zambia on 24 October 1964.

Perhaps the single most powerful motivating force behind the independence movement was the fact of racial discrimination. At the organizational level, the prime movers were teachers, trade unionists, members of local welfare associations, and, later, political parties such as the African National Congress and the United National Independence Party. But it was racial discrimination that gave them a rallying-point, a focus of unity among different tribal groups. From the viewpoint of crude *realpolitik* it was foolish of whites to hand blacks on a plate an issue which united them; they seemed to forget the old rule of "Divide and conquer" which tribalism had so often facilitated in the past.

There were many types of discrimination. In every nation, there is discrimination between rich and poor, educated and uneducated, powerful and powerless, and between men and women. But it must have been particularly galling to be discriminated against in one's own country by people whose right to be there was, at best, questionable. Zambians were treated as second-class citizens in their own country by people who had come, without invitation, from another country and culture, and, in some cases, only a few years before. If an African entered the bar of the Lusaka Hotel, even in the nineteen fifties, he would be confronted by a notice reading, 'No dogs or Africans allowed'. Was he to be expected to accept that as "a good sport" and not make an issue of it?

Until 1929, for example, Africans were prohibited by law from operating a shop. Legislation passed in 1943, and not rescinded until 1958, prohibited Africans from becoming industrial apprentices.(8) In Livingstone, which was Northern Rhodesia's capital until 1935, a municipal ordinance prohibited Africans from walking on the footpath - footpaths were

“white” and Africans were to walk in the gutter; in one month in 1930, forty-three Africans were arrested for using the footpath. (9) A former Speaker of the National Assembly, Dr. R. Nabulyato, had the experience of being kicked off a footpath by a policeman. (The probability that the policeman was an African would not have made it any less difficult to take. The saying of the South African black consciousness leader, Steve Biko, was relevant: ‘The most powerful weapon in the hand of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed’.) An African was required to have a pass to stay in a town after 5 p.m. Nor could he stay at all unless he could prove that he had a job there. (10) Under Colonial Office rule, Europeans appointed by the Governor represented Africans on the Legislative Council (known as Legco). There was discrimination in some churches also; although it was not as severe as in most of society, it might have hurt more as Africans expected better of them in the light of Christian teaching. (11)

If one reads the accounts of nineteenth-century travellers in Zambia, one notices that, generally, their relations with local people were open and friendly, to the extent that was possible with differences of language and custom. They were the guests, Africans the hosts. Discrimination was a later development. With the passage of time, relations between European and African became, *de facto*, relations between employer and employee, ruler and ruled. As conditions became more settled, and more Europeans arrived with their wives and families, and began to replicate their home environment, an Upstairs-Downstairs mentality began to insinuate itself. It has been said that ‘Those who kick up kick down,’ and the firmest proponents of segregation were blue-collar workers who, in Europe, had inched their way up the social ladder. Conscious of their new status, they kicked down at anyone coming behind, namely, at Africans.

A striking example of this, though from South Africa, was when white miners in 1922 demonstrated under the Communist Party banner against the employment of black labour in the mines with the slogan, ‘Workers of the world, unite for a white South Africa!’ (12) European women were particularly aggressive advocates of segregation. (13) Some demanded legal penalties for European men found to have a black girl friend. (14) Among white Northern Rhodesian copper miners, some 75% were members of Masonic lodges. It was common for Europeans, both men and women, to refuse to shake hands with an African, or to return a greeting from one. An attempt was made to legitimize this “pigmentocracy” by an appeal to Darwinian theory: the African just had not evolved; he was not as far up the evolutionary ladder as the white, and that was “scientific fact”.

Africans came increasingly to realize that the mentality of white supremacy would never acknowledge them as equals and, if they wished to be treated as human beings, they would have to create a new political order and that meant independence. Some of the driving force behind this came from soldiers who served in the British army in the Second World War. Though they shared all of the hardships and dangers of their white comrades, they received second-class treatment during and after the war. Although the independence movement never enjoyed mass participation, it did have mass support, and the motivation for that was racial discrimination.

Kenneth Kaunda: the man

Kenneth David Kaunda (15), or KK, as he was universally known, was born at Lubwa near Chinsali in the Northern Province of Zambia on 28 April 1924. His father was a minister of religion and, with his wife, brought up their children as Christians. The young Kaunda was one of the few young men of his time to attend school. A companion of his in those early days was Simon Kapwepwe, who later became Vice-President. On completing his secondary education, Kenneth Kaunda began a course of teacher training. At about the same time, he took an interest in the activities of the Welfare Associations which were common at that time. Those associations, almost entirely African in membership, undertook to provide certain services for those of their members who were in need, especially at a time of bereavement. It seems likely that his involvement in this work gave KK an understanding of the social problems of his time. In addition, he could not fail to be aware of the constant presence of racial discrimination. Either alone or with others, he actively opposed it, challenging the ruling that Africans were not allowed to enter a shop, or to select goods, but would be passed what they required through a hatch in a wall. He was repeatedly in trouble with the authorities for challenging this practice, even though he did so peacefully and without attempting retaliation of any kind. It was the beginning of his political education.

His teaching career began in the British Army, but he was fired after only one day, perhaps because of his political views. He worked with ex-servicemen in the years after the Second World War in what might later have been called a black consciousness movement, taking as their starting-point the experience that ex-servicemen had had of a second-class deal for blacks who had fought alongside whites during the war. He also became involved in a co-operative farm. For relaxation, he played football, sang and accompanied himself on the guitar.

Meanwhile the Welfare Associations formed a federation in 1946, which developed in 1948, into the Northern Rhodesia Congress, a political organization. In 1951, it became the Northern Rhodesia African National Congress, known as the ANC, under the leadership of Harry Nkumbula. In 1953, Kenneth Kaunda became its secretary general. Two months later the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland came into existence. Africans opposed it because they saw it - correctly - as a step towards independence under the rule of white colonialists and the latter were more reactionary and racist than the British Colonial Office. It had been imposed on them without consultation, and their rights in law, already limited, were further eroded under the new Constitution, at the insistence of Sir Godfrey Huggins, the first Federal Prime Minister. But African opposition was ineffective; it was insufficiently organized and the settlers controlled the media and used them in full to promote the Federation.

The young Turks of the ANC, Kaunda and Kapwepwe, prodded a reluctant Harry Nkumbula into mounting a nation-wide challenge to racial discrimination by going into shops in large numbers and insisting on being served as whites were. The authorities jailed the young “trouble-makers” - and made heroes of them by doing so. Harry Nkumbula was losing support because of his willingness to take part in segregated elections which guaranteed a continuing but minority role for Africans, and also because his repeated drunkenness rendered him unable to exercise effective leadership.

The ruling settlers were under pressure from the black population in Northern Rhodesia, while, in Britain, some Conservatives (they were then in office) were converted to belief in majority rule. The Labour Party, from the safety of the opposition benches, was able to occupy the high moral ground, and came out in support of the ANC. In Lusaka, the government was looking for credible black leaders that it could negotiate with, but, since it had jailed them, it was forced into a humiliating climb-down. It had to release them and then begin negotiating with those whom only a short time before it had denounced as agitators. In 1958, KK and the young Turks left the ANC and formed their own Zambia African National Congress, later re-named the United National Independence Party (UNIP).

The ideals that KK set before his followers were service, sacrifice and suffering. His commitment to non-violence was probably in part idealistic, partly pragmatic. He wrote, 'We have no intention at all of making our people cannon-fodder for colonialist guns'. (16) The factors which led in a few years to independence under KK and UNIP were strong united leadership, the firm moral purpose of the people to live with dignity in their own country, and the strength of public opinion internationally and in Britain in favour of independence for African colonies. The voice of practical politics might also have said that, since the Zambian economy was tied closely to Britain's and future trade links favourable to Britain were assured, there was nothing to be gained and everything to be lost by Britain's holding out against independence. One clear sign of the moral strength of the African people was that, in the years after independence, they did not retaliate against the white population, nor harbour feelings of bitterness or vindictiveness against them. Instead they set out to build a genuinely multi-racial society with fair treatment for all, and, in that, they largely succeeded.

What kind of man was Kenneth Kaunda who, after a short spell as Prime Minister of Northern Rhodesia, became President of Zambia in October 1964 and remained in office until 1991? He was a committed Christian who consulted a Hindu guru, Dr. A. M. Ranganathan; a socialist who played golf with big businessmen; an earnest idealist who worked the political machine with professional skill; an emotional man who used to cry publicly at the thought of apartheid in South Africa but ran a tight political ship at home. All things to all men, he was, and remained, a popular figure in politics at home and abroad.

KK: his message

KK had probably the best image of any African statesman. He was seen internationally as a gentle, liberal, Christian democrat. He stood out among his peers for his graciousness, his courtesy and his humility, the latter a rare quality in politics, the trade of egotists. Much of the above was real; some of it was a *persona* bestowed by the Western media who wanted a black African angel to contrast with the white devils of *apartheid* to the south. His role in what were called the Frontline States, that is, those close to South Africa, and in helping to found organizations such as the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference and the Preferential Trade Agreement, and especially as chairman of the Organization of African Unity, gave him a unique position in African political life. His sheer durability in a continent racked by coups and tribal wars was impressive evidence of his political skill. In the late seventies, there was war in six out of Zambia's eight neighbours; it was no small achievement to keep Zambia out of those wars and internally stable. He did not murder his political opponents - President Banda in neighbouring Malawi arranged a road "accident" for four

ministers - nor engage in large-scale political repression. He achieved internal stability partly through tribal balance in appointments, and Zambians appreciated that. He worked steadily and successfully to make Zambia a multi-racial society and was consistent in his opposition to *apartheid*, and in supporting the liberation movements in Rhodesia (previously Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe), South West Africa (now Namibia) and the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique. That support cost Zambia dear: estimates of the cost to the Southern African region of the tension with South Africa in the period 1980-85 vary from ten to twenty-five billion US dollars. (17) Whatever the real figure may, the price was high, especially in view of Zambia's land-locked position.

The image he projected to the world was one of maturity and responsibility, of calm and sanity, of stability and security. If a vote had been taken for the most respected African statesman he would probably have won it.

KK: his method

Essentially, KK's method was to control, manipulate or co-opt the power groups in the country.

The chiefs were the traditional rulers in Zambia. KK took them on board by requiring that they be members of his Party, UNIP. The State paid their salaries and those of their staff. The more senior chiefs sat in the House of Chiefs, a body as toothless as the stone lions outside the High Court in Lusaka. Their sons and daughters were given jobs in the Party hierarchy or in State companies. Two chiefs were made members of the Central Committee of UNIP. With such obvious advantages to be derived from cooperating with the system, the chiefs were not going to rock the boat.

For many Zambians, local loyalties came first and “tribalism” was widespread despite official opposition to it. But what does that cover-all term “tribalism” mean? Is there any real difference between it and racism? How does it differ, if at all, from what is called “regionalism” vis-à-vis Scotland in the UK, the Basque country in Spain, the Balkans or Northern Ireland, or the ethnic vote in the USA? And as for politics being local, isn't that what they are almost everywhere? ‘It's the economy, stupid’ was Bill Clinton's campaign slogan in 1992, and you can't get more local than the pocketbook.

Among Zambia's tribes, there was no obvious candidate for the role of the Igbo in Nigeria, the Kikuyu in Kenya or the Chagga in Tanzania. The Bemba would have liked to see themselves in that role but their performance did not measure up to it. Political appointments took serious account of the need for balance among the tribes so that none had a reason for feeling aggrieved at any exclusion from power. All were given a stake in the system. Where “tribalism” openly expressed itself, it was firmly, but not brutally, quashed. Civil servants, or other public appointees, knew that one of the fastest ways to end a career was to leave oneself open to a credible accusation of “tribalism”.

KK's approach to the trade union movement was carrot-and-stick. The Zambian Congress of Trades Unions was affiliated to the ruling party and therefore required to support it. The miners' union leader was made a member of the Party Central Committee and thereby co-

opted into the ruling circle. The trade union movement became divided among those who, for want of better names, might be termed moderates and militants: moderates who co-operated - some said too closely - with UNIP, and militants who were prepared to push for a more radical approach. Where and when it felt threatened, the government invoked emergency powers against unions, confiscated the passports of union leaders, and used aggressive police methods to break up strikes.

The churches, as previously indicated, were drawn into the ruling elite and thereby neutered as a potential source of criticism. They defended the *status quo* while proclaiming themselves the voice of the voiceless.

The mass media had two basic rules: the first was that the president was never to be criticized, only praised, and then generously; the second was that the leading role of the Party (UNIP) was never to be questioned. Mild criticism of the failings of individual politicians was allowed, but nothing more. The strict self-censorship of the media restricted the flow of information, resulting in rumour, gossip and suspicion. Suspicion generated secrecy, which in turn generated more suspicion, and people came to suspect the worst. The credibility of the mass media became so low that, even if they did tell the truth, no one believed them. Without the free flow of information, comment and criticism, there was no outlet for the free expression of public opinion (except when drunk!) and without that there was no democracy. Where people could not, or would not, say what they believed, democracy could not live. UNIP had total control of the media, and that was nowhere more evident than at election time when newspapers - the country had only two dailies, both government-owned - used be saturated with advertisements by State-owned companies urging people to give KK another 'Massive Yes' vote. For his birthday celebrations, the papers, which normally had about twelve broadsheet pages, would include a sixty-page tabloid supplement of praise of the president which was evocative of the near idolatry accorded to Kim IL Sung, ruler of North Korea. It was an example of overkill that belied the image of humility and discredited KK.

The police force was demoralized and undisciplined. It was powerless to control the crime wave, much less constitute a potential threat to the ruling system. When serious rioting broke out in the Copperbelt in 1986, some police actively joined in looting. They enjoyed little public esteem because of their seemingly chronic inefficiency, the savagery of their riot control methods and the "instant justice" they practised in the cells of their stations. The corruption of some senior officers further alienated them from the public. While KK need not have feared that the police would ever become an effective opposition, neither could he rely on them in a time of crisis.

Official political jargon in Zambia spoke of "the Party and its government". (In the eighties, a newspaper was severely reprimanded for using the acronym PIG; perhaps it was reminiscent of Napoleon in *Animal Farm*!) The Government was not a decision-making body; it was the executive arm of the Party and was totally subject to its control, especially since a programme of decentralization in the early eighties. Zambia had three overlapping systems of administration: the Party, the government with the civil service, and the tribal system. The Party had supreme power but, at least in the nineteen eighties, little popular support; the government was well meaning but ineffective and its hands were tied by the Party; the tribal system had the loyalty of many Zambians, especially in rural areas, but had

no power. The result was a bureaucracy that produced immense confusion and, in the end, negated itself. The three systems frustrated each another into impotence.

The economy of the country was overwhelmingly under State control with the Zambia Industrial and Mining Corporation (ZIMCO) as the holding company. KK was chairman of ZIMCO; its director-general was a member of the Central Committee. The economy, like other aspects of life, was under KK's control.

The 120-member National Assembly was, in practice, subordinate to the Central Committee of UNIP, and its function was to rubber-stamp decisions taken by that body. In the elections of 1988, members of the outgoing Assembly who were considered by UNIP to have been critical of the government were not allowed to stand as candidates. Unquestioning acceptance of Party decisions, future as well as past, was the pre-requisite for selection as a candidate. The result was the election of a tame discussion group. In November 1988, at the opening of the newly elected National Assembly, KK told members they had no role in the formulation of policy; they were not to criticize the government; their task was to implement Party decisions.

One exception to the pattern of acquiescence was the Speaker of the National Assembly, Dr. R. Nabulyato, (the man kicked off the footpath), who acquired a reputation for courage, integrity and an insistence on following parliamentary procedure, even within the narrow limitations stipulated. One Prime Minister, Nalumino Mundia, who jumped the gun by implementing new tax measures before the required legislation had even been presented to the National Assembly got a public dressing down and was forced by the Speaker to scrap the legislation altogether. But such independence was rare.

A further instrument of official control was the Office of the President, the secret police. Trained by East Germans and Czechs, it received KK's close personal supervision and was responsible for nipping in the bud at least two planned coups, the first in 1980, and the second, planned, it was said, from within State House, the President's official residence, in October 1988. The OP, as it was called, had close links with the Party, and, at local level, it often operated through the Party organization. It was quiet, ubiquitous and effective. It was feared and hated for the torture that it practised in its new multi-storey Lusaka headquarters and in the basement of State House.

In few areas did KK show his political skill so well as in his control of the armed forces. Battalions were not recruited on a regional basis, since they would then be, *de facto*, tribal units. They were recruited nationally, and English was required of all recruits. Political officers, as in the Soviet Union, kept an eye on their fellow-officers and had independent radio links with Lusaka, as did the OP, so that they could, undetected, report any signs of disloyalty. Officers were transferred frequently and promoted rapidly with good pay; they suffered none of the shortages which commonly affected the rest of the population. Zambia had a large crop of retired generals who held jobs in State companies or ministries in less politically sensitive areas of government. If considered unreliable, they would be safely removed from the scene by being made ambassadors, where a combination of money, status and perks usually disarmed them of any unruly intentions. The existing military brass was taken on board the political bandwagon by being made members of the Central Committee of the Party.

Kenneth Kaunda was a perfect example of the benevolent dictator whom some saw as the answer to the problems of the developing world. He played the political game with great skill to consolidate power in his hands and to quietly negate or remove opposition. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the political system existed to sustain him in power. He created a situation such that, if anyone asked what alternative leaders there were to choose from, the answer had to be that there were none.

Over and above those tactics for the maintenance of his rule, the one means which, more than any other, gave him a strong hand was the one-party State fully under his control. In this respect, he was a first-rate disciple of Lenin's. (The role of the Party will be considered in a later section of this chapter.)

KK: his measure

KK knew the tricks of the political trade. He used carrot-and-stick, the power of patronage, the threat of an external Enemy (always in upper case in the printed media) never identified lest the alleged threat be subjected to rational analysis, cabinet re-shuffles, periodic purges of State institutions, structural changes to upset any nascent alternative power bases, and so on. He kept power entirely in his own hands. A word from him could make or break a career. One skill which he did not have was that of persuasion: he was a poor speaker and quite at a loss when it came to discussing issues on their merits. When faced with that challenge, he descended into personal abuse.

Of course, the turkey is fattest before Christmas. With total power came total responsibility. Yet he showed great skill in shifting blame onto others when things went wrong. Like a medieval king, he could do no wrong. If the economy was in a mess, it was not his fault: he had been badly advised, or his instructions had not been carried out; if he had only known what was happening he would have dealt with matters because he loved the people. He succeeded in pinning the blame for the country's parlous economic condition on a variety of factors, while refusing to acknowledge that his doctrinaire adherence to state capitalism was a primary cause.

He had created a political system which secured his continued rule at the cost to the country of suppressing drive, energy, challenge or change. The political system was a mixed blend: a bicameral legislature mimicked the Westminster model; a powerful presidency with a subordinate prime minister claimed its origins in the French Constitution of 1958; the official paranoia about "security" which was used to justify everything from a soldier's idle curiosity about the contents of a suitcase to arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, and torture was reminiscent of the South American national security regimes of the seventies, though on a less vicious scale; the one-party system was derived from the Soviet model and was valued above all else as *the* means of staying in power; the presidency itself was a monarchy in all but name, surrounded by the sycophancy, adulation, ritual, titles and dynastic character of a royal court. The dynasty began with the election to the National Assembly in 1988 of one of KK's sons, Wezi, and his immediate appointment to a cabinet post. What was missing from the above was the engagement of the traditional African model of an *ndaba*, a tribal assembly in which all adults had a voice. The National Council of UNIP was supposed to fulfil this role

analogously but it never went beyond being a stage-managed claque. The real model underlying KK's presidency was the tribal chief; the chief's tenure came to an end only with death, whether natural or assisted.

The electoral system was structured in KK's favour. While he insisted repeatedly in public that he would step down if people no longer wanted him, he ensured that he would be the only candidate in presidential elections. Voters were asked to vote Yes or No on the ballot, and, by law, a candidate required not less than 51% of the votes cast in order to win. It did not escape the notice of Zambians that, in 1978, while calling loudly for free and fair elections in Ian Smith's Rhodesia, KK made last-minute changes to Zambia's electoral laws so as to disqualify the other three candidates in the presidential election, and, for good measure, put them under house arrest for a few weeks before and after the election. In 1983 and 1988, nothing was left to chance; he was the sole candidate and had total media support. One man, one vote - what could be more democratic than that?

The full irony of the situation was that he was truly popular and would probably have won a genuine election had there been one. Such a victory would have conferred real credibility whereas the system he created was merely an expensive farce. In 1983, with about two-thirds of voters taking part, he received a Yes vote from about 93% of the voters; in 1988, some 56% of voters cast their ballot, and there was a 95% Yes vote. With that level of support, one would have thought that he need not have feared a real election.

While KK took a firm and consistent stand against tribalism, the same could not be said for other forms of discrimination. There was clear bias against non-UNIP Party members. A regular occurrence was that so-called Party militants - thugs from the youth wing of the Party with official backing - prevented those without Party membership cards from entering State shops, or boarding buses, or, in some instances - fortunately not many - even entering a hospital for treatment. The Party publicly condemned such practices but, from the fact that they continued year after year, one could reasonably conclude that they had at least tacit official sanction.

In another significant area of life, KK let down the Zambian people: he utterly failed to tackle the problem of corruption. It grew by leaps and bounds, yet his response was mostly a matter of sermons on patriotism and duty. There were two official bodies for dealing with the problem: the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the Special Investigations Team for Economy and Trade. Those bodies assiduously pursued the small fry while allowing the sharks to roam free. There were on record a good number of cases of members of the Central Committee getting away scot-free with the embezzlement of large sums of public money. There was in addition, considerable public resentment over the business dealings of Mrs. Betty Kaunda, KK's wife, especially in relation to a large supermarket in Lusaka that never seemed to be short of high-priced luxury goods, no matter how scarce foreign exchange might be. The involvement of one of the President's sons in drug trafficking was clearly established by a commission of enquiry, but no action was taken. In 1979, the international weekly magazine, *Newsweek*, stated that KK was the richest man in Africa after Mobutu of Zaire (now DR Congo), and that his re-election campaign of the previous year had been part-financed by South Africa. KK threatened to sue but did not do so. In the absence of accurate information in the public domain, suspicion abounded, and Zambians came to assume as a matter of course that public officials stole from public funds while in office. This widened the

gap between the rulers and the ruled, especially when people could see and contrast the relative effectiveness of official opposition to tribalism with official inertia regarding corruption.

President Kaunda increasingly gave the impression of being out of touch with the realities of life in Zambia. It was not surprising that this should have been so after many years of isolation from the public and constant official adulation. His judgment of character was doubtful, at least if one went by the pathetic cronies with which he surrounded himself. Particularly low in calibre were the district governors: with few exceptions, they were men who could not have found themselves a job anywhere else. His admission during the 1983 election campaign that he never knew there was such poverty in Zambia was an acknowledgement that he did not know his own country. His speeches reflected his up-in-the-clouds-mindset, assuming, as they appeared to, that most human beings were idealists prepared to work unselfishly for the common good without thought for themselves. That's the stuff of which sermons are made, and indeed it was often said that his speeches were more like sermons than political addresses. KK did not seem to grasp the fact that no number of shoulds make an is.

Part of this unrealism, coupled with his high-minded idealism, led him gradually to believe in his indispensability. The election of 1988 was scarcely over when he began speaking about standing as a candidate for a seventh term in 1993. He seemed genuinely to think that he was irreplaceable and that he always acted in Zambia's best interests. Such noble unrealism was dangerous: history was replete with examples of well-meaning idealism bringing ruin in the train of good intentions.

KK, in short, became a dictator, though a well-meaning and mostly benevolent one. In part, he was forced to do so by the passivity of the people. When they were dissatisfied, they would complain in private but, in public, would profess to be happy. Zambians did not grasp that, where civil rights are concerned, one either uses them or loses them. There is no democracy without democrats. Democracy exists where people have the courage to think for themselves, to speak their minds openly, to assert their rights, to criticize government and demand reform. This did not exist in Zambia, with its deeply ingrained tradition of respect for hierarchy and authority, and perhaps it was too much to expect that it would. But a start had to be made and KK was not the one to do that.

In the gradual erosion of civil rights and freedoms in Zambia during KK's rule, there was no occasion on which people openly expressed dissent and demanded change. People acknowledged this readily and said they were afraid. (Amnesty International's calls for the release of Zambia's political prisoners met with no internal support.) One can only contrast that with the vigorous expression of public opinion in West Africa. The people, in one election after another, let freedom be taken from them. The most striking example of this - one indeed which would be incredible but for the fact that it happened - was when people approved by referendum a constitutional amendment which removed the need of any future referenda for constitutional amendments! The National Assembly was given the power to amend the Constitution. Then, to compound that, people voted in 1973 for a one-party State, thereby foreclosing the possibility of future change in the political system. And the office of Vice-President was abolished at the same time, enhancing the image of KK's indispensability.

Zambians lost their freedom because they did not defend it. The huge majorities of Yes votes for KK in subsequent elections cannot be blamed (or credited, if one prefers) solely on the UNIP machine. The people's passivity and fatalism was also a large part of the picture. The Christian churches, in their effective opposition to the introduction of so-called Scientific Socialism (Marxism) in the early eighties, had shown that where there was real and determined opposition with organized backing, KK and UNIP would change their policy. But, if the lesson of that experience was learned, it was soon forgotten.

The one-party State

The United National Independence Party (UNIP) was Zambia's only political party from 1973 until the formation of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) in 1990. It was founded by KK in 1958 and won fifty-five of the sixty-five seats in the pre-independence elections, the other ten going to Harry Nkumbula's African National Congress (ANC). In the years after independence, UNIP continued to hold a very large majority, with the ANC drawing support only from its base in the Southern Province and, to a lesser extent, from the Western Province. The ANC was the party of the Tonga and some of the Lozi.

In 1968, serious divisions developed in UNIP along tribal lines. When those divisions burst into the open at a Party conference in February of that year, KK resigned the presidency of the country in frustration at what he saw as regression to a tribalistic mentality. However, his colleagues persuaded him to revoke his decision and he remained in office. (Was such a move constitutionally valid? - an interesting question which went unasked.) Whether his move was genuine, or a calculated tactic, it had the effect of shocking the Party into a realization of the harm that could come from tribal division, and it prompted leaders to think of ways of ensuring that the country remained united. It might be that the Nigerian civil war, then beginning, illustrated dramatically what could happen when such divisions got out of hand. (KK, with his *penchant* for backing the wrong horse in foreign affairs, supported Biafra in that war. He later supported Nkomo in Zimbabwe, UNITA in Angola, and the Soviet Union in the Cold War.)

Between 1968 and 1973 the decision was gradually reached that Zambia should become a one-party State, and negotiations were begun with the ANC to bring that about. It seemed more than likely that leaders of UNIP were aware of the fact that a one-party system was the ideal way of ensuring that those who had power would keep it. It removed the challenge of opposition. Negotiations continued until KK and Harry Nkumbula made a joint declaration at Choma in the Southern Province on 27 June 1973 that UNIP would absorb ANC. It was an *Anschluss*. Following this, a new national Constitution was adopted on 13 December 1973, and Zambia formally became a one-party State. People supported the change because they saw it as the way to avoid tribalism, division and coups. It was seen as the best practical way of ensuring that the national motto, ‘One Zambia, One Nation’ became a reality.

The theory that lay behind the one-party system was adapted from Lenin. People – “the masses” - were encouraged to join the Party and become involved in it. Their wishes would be channelled through section, branch, ward, district and provincial meetings to the national

level where they would be co-ordinated and passed to the government for implementation. That was what underlay the phrase “the Party and its government” and the idea of “democratic centralism”. The Party theoretically represented the people, and the government was its executive instrument. After the president, the most important political figure in the country was not the Prime Minister but the secretary-general of the Party. The Prime Minister was third in the hierarchy. The most important policy-making body was the Central Committee of the Party. It made decisions and passed them to the National Assembly to be enacted into legislation. The Assembly never refused to do the Party's bidding; to do so would have been to act against “the people”.

When a general election took place, the Party selected all candidates; no one who was not a Party member could stand. The Party eliminated candidates it considered unsuitable; in 1988, some 18% of candidates chosen locally were eliminated, leaving about five hundred candidates for one hundred and twenty seats. The Party decided when campaigning would begin, it paid all expenses so as to give poor and rich candidates an equal chance, and public meetings and rallies were held under the direction of the district governor who would decide on the topic to be discussed. All candidates appeared together and were required to urge the people to vote for KK's re-election as president, presidential and parliamentary elections taking place on the same day. Then the voters chose from among them. Voters showed in elections that they were well aware of the personalities and the policies, the performance and the promises involved. In 1988, for instance, four cabinet members lost their seats, and it was normal for a good number of sitting Members of Parliament to be rejected. If the system was defective, it was not because of a lack of political discernment on the part of voters.

Defenders of the system used to say that the one-party State was the only alternative to tribalism; the multi-party system, they said, was a tribal party system. There was some truth in that contention, but it overlooked the existence of other possibilities and, of course, it did not examine the debit side of the balance. Zambia avoided the inter-tribal wars that did so much harm in Nigeria, Zaire, Uganda, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and Ethiopia, to name only some. It sought unity but instead got a dull, colourless uniformity in which there was no political debate, no politics, in fact, only administration. Authority worked from the top down; the president made the decisions and Party and government alike existed to keep him in office and carry out his will. Instead of public debate, decisions were taken behind closed doors by KK and the old guard of the Party who had held positions of power since independence. In this inward-looking circle, criticism was seen as disloyalty and the concept of a loyal opposition as a contradiction in terms. The result was a lack of new blood or fresh ideas, an inability to break out of existing moulds or to chart a realistic new path for economic recovery.

(Before blaming KK and UNIP for any of this it should be borne in mind that they had no role models to guide them. There had never been parliamentary democracy in Zambia. The colonial administration, whether in the form of Company rule, or a Legco of white members appointed to represent Africans, or the frankly racist parliament of the Federation were undemocratic.)

The effect on the people was one of cynicism as they came to realize that the so-called "One Party Participatory Democracy" was a sham. I recall, during the 1978 elections, being told by a candidate that he had been chosen by "H. E." to be the new Member of Parliament

for the local constituency. My first reaction was one of puzzlement, as the only H. E. I could think of was the military abbreviation for high explosive. Then it clicked: H. E. was His Excellency - the President. How could he be chosen, I asked, since the election had not yet taken place? The candidate just laughed - and he *was* elected. In the 1988 elections, the Party, following its usual practice, ensured that there would be an adequate supply of basic commodities in State shops for a few weeks beforehand. In one place, people chose a voluble local lunatic as delegate to the annual Party conference. They said simply, 'The Party makes fools of us; now we'll send them a fool'. It was a tongue-in-cheek protest that expressed frustration, but it carried no weight.

In the 1988 elections, KK was, as usual, the only presidential candidate. He had been chosen unanimously by over six thousand delegates to the Party conference. He then announced that he was increasing the number of members of the Central Committee from twenty-three to sixty-eight. Delegates noticed that he did not *propose* this but *announced* it as a decision, even though the Party constitution required a debate and vote on the matter. But the Party gave its assent just the same and went on to approve further changes to its constitution by a majority of 99.3%. There were wry comments from the public that they, too, would have approved of constitutional change if, like the Party delegates, they had been able to buy two cheap blankets each, a scarce commodity in the country at the time. In the presidential elections, the public were told that they were free to vote Yes or No for KK, but the identity of anyone voting No would be discovered and they would be punished as traitors. In the Southern Province, a UNIP official went so far as to threaten to necklace anyone who voted No. (A 'necklace' was a petrol-filled tyre placed around a person's neck and set on fire; it was used in South Africa during the struggle against *apartheid*.)

The Party grew progressively more authoritarian with its prolonged period in power. In the sixties, young people had joined it enthusiastically, seeing it as the natural vehicle for the development of the nation. There was genuine interest in it and idealistic commitment to the good of the country. But the young came to understand that the Party was simply using them while their ideas were set aside as inconsequential. The Party became repressive: people were required to join it and would face harassment if they did not do so. They were dragooned into attending meetings and voting for resolutions handed down from the top. The end result was that UNIP came to be despised by the people; it was an empty shell, a structure without a base of real support. Surprisingly, a member of the Central Committee of UNIP stated publicly in the mid-eighties that the Party was dead in Luapula Province. It concretized (literally) its contempt for the public by beginning construction of a vast multi-storey headquarters in Lusaka at a time when clinics were without medicine and schools without books, desks or chalk. The public came to see it as the natural home of cynics and opportunists, of people who would shout for KK one day, but who, in a changed political situation, would just as readily shout support for anyone who overthrew him. People were deeply frustrated because they knew that, while they could remove a few individuals such as unsatisfactory members of the National Assembly, they could not change the system itself. They saw through the pretence and the posturing, the lies and corruption, but they knew they could not change it. They saw clearly what the bottom line was: behind all the talk about national unity, the real agenda of the one-party State was an assured, permanent grip on power. Zambia had its Brezhnev; it awaited a Gorbachev.

One Zambia, One Nation

Zambia's national motto was a statement that prompts a question: 'Was Zambia a nation?' The answer would seem to have been "Not yet". Zambia was a State in search of a nation. A sense of nationhood was there in germ, and it was growing but with a long way to go. The development of a civic society was undermined by absolutist politics and the cynicism of those who saw public office merely as an opportunity for personal enrichment. No province of Zambia could stand on its own: the Copperbelt, for instance, had the advantage of copper revenue but it imported most of its food. The other provinces, by themselves, were incapable of forming the basis of a State. If Zambia had a future, it was as a united country. The use of English, the country's principal official language, was growing and it contributed to cohesion and unity. Government policy was to downgrade the status of the tribe, (it became fashionable for young people to speak of themselves as being "detribalized") but, as a means of fostering national unity, that was about as useful as trying to solve South Africa's racial problems by spraying everyone light brown.

A sense of national unity could never be achieved by trying to pretend that differences did not exist, but rather by channelling them constructively in the pursuit of commonly agreed goals. If all citizens have a stake in society, and benefit by its progress they will work for it without the need of being preached at about the virtues of hard work and self-sacrifice. The search for national unity was going down a *cul de sac* if it involved suppressing cultural difference in the interest of some neutral *mélange*. In the interest of national unity Zambia rightly opposed tribalism, but it was a mistake to go further, as UNIP did, and oppose the tribe; it was as much an over-reaction as opposing chauvinism and ending up belittling patriotism. Zambia would have done better to see differences between people as a source of mutual enrichment rather than a potential political threat. The differences existed and they could have become a positive and constructive building block in the fostering a sense of nationhood. It was a difficult challenge to political leadership but the result would have been a greater measure of national unity and security than either denying the reality of diversity or trying to suppress it.

I can add a personal anecdote that is relevant here. In the late eighties, I prepared for publication a book in a local language. UNIP heard about it and sent me an instruction not to proceed any further. I ignored it and had the book published and distributed. Nothing happened and no harm came of it to anyone.

Possibilities for the future

As the eighties drifted into the nineties and Zambia's slide into chronic economic, social and political dereliction seemed irreversible, people increasingly began to ask what the future might hold for their country.

One obvious possibility was that Zambia would have more of the same, that is to say, more malnutrition, unemployment, inflation, bad housing, dismal education, notional health care and political repression. KK made it clear that he was not going to follow the example of Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and step down voluntarily. It also seemed unlikely that, after a

quarter century in power, he would be capable of a change of direction in policy to a degree that would make an appreciable difference. Those who shared power with him were in a similar mould; his immediate associates were yes men who were not going to risk their positions by pressing for change. A change of leadership was a pressing necessity but someone like Grey Zulu, UNIP's secretary-general, would have been no improvement on KK.

Another possibility was a military coup. One was attempted in 1980 when, according to the government's version of the story, the plan was for the Air Force to bomb the south-western border town of Sesheke, blame South Africa for it, and then send the bulk of the army to repel the "invasion". While it was on its way there, those army units involved in the coup would remain in Lusaka and take over without opposition. In October 1988, the government announced that it had uncovered another coup plot, said to have been led by General Tembo, a former army commander then serving as ambassador in West Germany. The military guard on State House, the president's official residence, was said to have been involved, with the complicity of the staff of the house. But, in the absence of free media, nothing could be said with certainty about those stories.

The Zambia National Defence Forces numbered some 30,000 men and women and it was said, though never confirmed, that it received about 35% of the annual budget. Its military equipment was outdated and, through abuse and neglect, it regularly destroyed its transport within a year or so of acquiring a new fleet, much to the relief of Zambians who had good reason to fear the drunken drivers of IFA army trucks. The officers were an elite who looked after themselves well; they were allowed to beat their personal batmen, and other soldiers, too, whose status was not very different from that of serfs. Soldiers could and did beat civilians with impunity. The army was ineffective as a fighting force; indeed, in its encounters with the armed forces of neighbouring countries it could only be said of it that it lived to fight another day. Despite this, there was no other force in the country that could stop the army if it wished to take over and could get itself organized.

Could the army have mounted a coup? The answer was probably yes, especially as Arakan barracks was just across the road from State House. The senior military men were unlikely, though, to be enthusiastic about such attempts in the light of previous failures, but younger officers might have been willing to give it a try. But one could not be certain: the effort of Lieutenant Lungu (also known as 'Captain Solo') was semi-lunatic; he was unclear whether he wished to be president or a disk-jockey! In some barracks, there might well have been a budding Master Sergeant Samuel Doe, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, Captain Thomas Sankara, Sergeant (later Field Marshal) Doctor Idi Amin Dada, or Colonel George Papadopoulos.

If the army had taken over, it would likely have been in its own interests. It was an elite, concerned with its status and perks. If the government version of the 1980 attempted coup was correct, it showed that the army was prepared to kill innocent people in order to gain power. If that were the case, it would, most likely, have been willing to kill them in order to retain power. Whether the army would do a better job of running the country than the civilians was very much open to question. The precedents in other African countries or in South America were, for the most part, not encouraging, Jerry Rawlings of Ghana perhaps being an exception. The dynamics of the barrack square are not those of political life, and parade-ground orders were as unlikely to achieve results where they mattered, such as in

agricultural production, as was UNIP's shouting of political slogans. Politics are an inescapable part of social life and, in the end, are about persuasion, not about bellowing orders. If anyone seriously thought that soldiers would have done better than civilians, they need only have looked at the Rural Reconstruction or National Service camps; no one could derive confidence from them about the army's abilities in those areas of life. For the most part, neither did the performance of army officers serving as district governors, State company managers or government ministers. They were no worse, but also no better, than civilians. In addition, the not infrequent beating of civilians by drunken or drugged soldiers did nothing to inspire public confidence in the prospect of military rule.

Despite this, there were signs that pointed to what might have been a creeping, institutionalized coup. There were many army officers, active and retired, in positions of power in the country at all levels and in every branch of administration. And in late 1986, it was the army that suppressed the food riots in the Copperbelt when the police force disintegrated; that must have given it political leverage. Having cleaned up the politicians' mess, it would not have been too big a step to claim a share in decision-making.

Another possibility was that of a popular uprising, whether spontaneous or instigated, due to discontent about conditions of life in general and food prices in particular. A likely focus for any such action would have been the Copperbelt, and likely victims of any violence would have been UNIP leaders. The Copperbelt was more compact, closely-knit and organized than any other part of the country; fifty years of mining had produced some hard men who were capable of organization and action. During the 1986 riots, a primary target of demonstrators' anger was government buildings, and there was a lesson in that for anyone with the sense to learn it. But such an uprising, however popular or forceful it might be, would not, of itself, have solved any problems. In 1986, the government had panicked and over-reacted; if it did so again, the end result might have been anarchy or civil war, and there are no winners there. But such an uprising could have been a catalyst for something else.

Despite its frozen rigidity, it was just possible that a move could have been made from with UNIP to oust KK. Indeed, some held that this was what lay behind the attempt in the early eighties to introduce Scientific Socialism. The view was that, using this ideology as a cover, the Party would be purged of all those not on the far left, and Marxists would then be in control, even while retaining an isolated and powerless KK as a figurehead and symbol of continuity. He would be a puppet on their string. Fortunately for Zambia, the then secretary-general of UNIP, Mainza Chona, who had been entrusted with the task of introducing Scientific Socialism, bungled the job by alienating the churches. They reacted in a common resistance to it and succeeded in having the idea buried.

An imponderable factor on the scene was the Office of the President, the secret police. Who guards the guardians? That must always be a question on the minds of those who saw Park Chung Hee of South Korea and Indira Gandhi of India assassinated by their bodyguards. From earliest times, the praetorian guard has always been a source of unease to the head that wears the crown. The OP was better placed than any other organization to have the information to judge well the time, place and manner of any move to overthrow KK. Information is power. The OP could probably have mounted a coup with the support of some army units. Whether it would have wished to do so was a matter of some doubt in view of its role in crushing earlier coup attempts. What if it had done so, and succeeded? Secret police

forces are not fertile ground for growing democrats. There was no point in having a change that did not fully engage the public, at least after the event, and a picture of the OP setting out to win minds and hearts was an unlikely one.

How change came

In the end it was external factors that impacted on Zambia and brought about much-needed change. The process began with the choice of Mikhail Gorbachev as secretary-general of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985. Within a few years came an end to the Cold War. One-party States propped up by the Soviet Union toppled all over the world. International financial institutions, like the IMF and World Bank, pressured states to have free and fair elections, and made loans conditional on them. Zambia's elections, not due until 1993, were brought forward to November 1991.

And there had been developments within Zambia in tandem with those abroad. In the politically sensitive Copperbelt, miners were becoming restive. So were other workers in the province and in Lusaka. They had a leader in Frederick Chiluba, a former communist, (he had named two of his sons, Tito and Castro) and born-again Christian, who had been head of the 300,000 strong Zambia Congress of Trade Unions for 17 years. Along with other interest groups they formed the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy which gradually evolved into a political party of the same name, the MMD. Under mounting external and internal pressure, KK had finally agreed to an amendment of the Constitution dropping the one-party clause.

In the election campaign of 1991, KK predicted a landslide victory, and there was one - but neither for him nor for UNIP. Frederick Chiluba won 81% of the vote, Kenneth Kaunda only 19% in the presidential contest. In the elections to the National Assembly the MMD won 135 seats and UNIP a mere 15. A few months later, having learned nothing from its defeat in the national elections, UNIP went into local elections insisting that people were obliged to vote for it as it was, they said, the country's only party. It received a renewed drubbing.

For Kenneth Kaunda, it was a humiliating end to his presidency of the republic. Though he had lost touch with reality, he did give grace to the transition by the speed and dignity with which he relinquished office as soon as the results became clear. In his first ten years in office, KK had ensured that every district in Zambia had a hospital and secondary school; that was a real achievement. It was a pity that he did not maintain that pragmatic element to his leadership; a pity, too, that he did not voluntarily leave office after two or three terms and allow an organic process of change to evolve. In the world of What Might Have Been, he could have been remembered as a man of greatness who had enhanced his country. As it was, he was remembered as one who did not know when to let go, and who, by clinging to power, had reduced his country to ruins. It was a sorry political epitaph.

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15) Kapembe Nsingo, "Problems and prospects of economic structural adjustment in Zambia", *The Courier*, (Bulletin of ACP/EC), No.111, October-November 1988, p.83; 30%, according to Cawardine, *Op. cit*., p.16.
16) Richard Hall, *Zambia*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1965, p.39.
17) 1988 budget figures in *The National Mirror*, March 1988.
18) 1989 budget figures in the *Sunday Times of Zambia*, 27 November 1988, pp.4, 9.
19) ILO, *Basic Needs*, p.8.
20) Richard Hall, *Op. cit*., chapter 8.
21) British Information Services, *Northern Rhodesia*, New York, 1962, p.24.
22) ILO, *Narrowing the Gaps*, p.12.
23) Kapembe Nsingo, *Op. cit*., p.83.
24) See Uche Mbanefo, "Why Africans are Poor", *The National Mirror*, 7 February 1987, pp.6-7.
25) Official figures vary widely, depending, it seemed, on the political point being made at the time; the figure quoted here is from international trade sources.
26) Gabriel Mabunda, cited in the *Times of Zambia*, 16 November 1988, p.4.
27) ILO, *Basic Needs*, p. xxvii.
28) Mark Cawardine, *The Nature of Zambia*, International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Gland, Switzerland, 1987, p.40. Much of the material in this section comes from Cawardine.
29) Map by John Arrowsmith in W. D. Cooley, *Inner Africa Laid Open*, Longman, London, 1852, where the falls are named Mosi-wa-thunwa.
30) David Jeffery, "Pioneers in their own Land", *The National Geographic*, February 1986, p.274.
31) *The Courier*, (Bulletin of ACP/EC), No. 97, May-June 1986, p.66.
32) *Ibid*. but, according to Kapembe Nsengo, *op. cit*., p.80, the figure for 1986 was 105%. Kapembe Nsengo, *op. cit*., p.84.
33) *Ibid*. p.82, states that the cost of the civil service at provincial and national level rose by 18.5% between 1986 and 1987.
34) The members of SADCC were Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Chapter 5 Agriculture

1) ILO, *Basic Needs*, p. xxvii.
2) *Ibid*. p. xxvi.
3) Josef Lutke-Entrup, "Limitations and Possibilities of increasing Market Production of Peasant African Cattle Holders in Western Province", UNZA Institute for African Studies, 1971, *Communication* No. 7, Table X, p.33.
4) Jacob M. Mwanza, "Rural-Urban Migration and Urban Employment in Zambia", in Ben Turok (ed.), *Development in Zambia: a Reader*, Zed Press, London, 1979, p.35.
5) Statement of the National Food and Nutrition Commission, Lusaka, 1988; see also Cawardine, *Op. cit*., p.48.

6) Cawardine, *Op. cit*., p.16.
7) *Ibid*. p.48.
8) *Ibid*. p.53.
9) *Ibid*. p.52; see also Lutke-Entrup, *Op. cit*., Tables IV and XXIII.
10) Cawardine, *Op. cit*., p.52.
11) President Kaunda, "We want to develop our own resources", *The Courier*, (Bulletin of ACP/EC), No.111, September-October 1988, p.77.
12) Zambian Finance Minister, Mr. Gibson Chigaga, reported in the *Sunday Times of Zambia*, 28 August 1988, p.3.
13) Zambian Finance Minister, Mr. Gibson Chigaga, in the 1989 budget speech, paragraph 71, reported in the *Sunday Times of Zambia*, 27 November 1988, p.4.
14) Cawardine, *Op. cit*., p. 14. This sections draws heavily on his work.
15) *Ibid*. p.43.
16) *Ibid*. pp. 41, 42.
17) *Ibid*. p.58.
18) *Ibid*. p.44.
19) Coillard, François, *On the Threshold of Central Africa; a record of twenty years' pioneering among the Barotse of the Upper Zambezi*, translated by C. W. Mackintosh, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1902, p.547.

Chapter 6 Development

1) President Kaunda, "We want to develop our own resources", *The Courier*, (Bulletin of ACP/EC), No.111, September-October 1988, p.77.

Chapter 7 The Rulers and the Ruled

1) Andrew Roberts, "The Political History of Twentieth Century Zambia", in T. O. Ranger, *Aspects of Central African History*, Heinemann, London, 1982, p.165.
2) Fergus Macpherson, *Anatomy of a Conquest: the British Occupation of Zambia 1884-1924*, Longman, London, 1981, p.230.
3) Cited by Ronald Segal, *The Race War: the world-wide conflict of race*, Pelican, London, 1967, p.75.
4) Richard Hall, *Zambia*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1965, p. 171.
5) *Ibid*. p. 172.
6) Reported in *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, 18 February 1949; cited by Richard Hall, *Op. cit*., p.145.
7) Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia*, Heinemann, London, 1976, p.214.
8) Andrew Roberts, "The Political History of Twentieth Century Zambia", in T. O. Ranger, *Aspects of Central African History*, Heinemann, London, 1982, pp.162, 182-183.
9) Richard Hall, *Zambia*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1965, p.117.
10) Anthony St. John Wood, *Northern Rhodesia: the Human Background*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1961, pp.88-90.
11) *Ibid*. p.75.
12) Davidson, Slovo and Wilkinson, *Southern Africa: the new Politics of Revolution*, Pelican London, 1976, pp.155-157.

13) See George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Penguin, London, 1949, p.12: 'It is always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the party, the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers out of unorthodoxy'.
14) The Rhodesian Women's League, quoted in *The Livingstone Mail*, 28 April 1921, cited by L. H. Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society: the Development of Northern Rhodesia under the British South Africa Company, 1894-1924*, Manchester University Press, 1961, p.186, n.1.
15) See Kenneth Kaunda, *Zambia shall be Free: an autobiography*, Heinemann, London, 1962.
16) Kaunda, *op. cit*., p.153.
17) Roger Martin, *Southern Africa: the price of apartheid*, Economic Intelligence Unit, London, 1988, estimated a cost of $10 billion, including the following: - $3.06 billion extra on defence; $2 billion for lost economic growth; $1.6 billion war damage; $0.9 billion for higher transport and energy costs. The UN secretary general, Javier Perez de Cuellar, gave a figure of between $25 and $30 billion for the period 1980-1986.