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HISTORY WORKSHOP

LEGITIMACY AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN
NOTHERNMOST ZAMBIA, 1950-1960

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AFRICANA

Legitimacy and Democratization in Northernmost Zambia, 1950-1960[1]

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Constitutional irresolution or expectations of an imminent change in government bring to the surface a host of issues, sentiments, representations, and histories that otherwise mostly express themselves in non-political ways or remain unarticulated. To cope with the cross-currents of political consciousness in the decade of the 1950s in northernmost Zambia, a narrative can be constructed around the theme of chieftainship in relation to other kinds of leadership. I chose chiefs and chieftainship after flirting with the kind of argument presented by Benedict Anderson in Imagined Communities. Anderson lays stress upon literate elites, "creole" in commanding the ideas and language of the colonial metropole, but thwarted as full citizens and aspirants for office. This category of men generated individuals who turned to vernacular writing and projected an essentialized,

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[1]This paper remains a work in progress, based in ongoing research and reflection on the regional history of South Rukwa, spanning the Tanzania-Zambia boundary. It is also a contribution to a project, "Democracy and Democratization: Historical Reappraisals", led by Mohamed Mbodj of the Institute of African Studies, Columbia University We invite those with kindred interests to become corresponding members of this project. I am grateful to Jeremy Seekings, John Stoner, and members of the Columbia Univesity Seminar on Contemporary Africa for their responses to my very preliminary ruminations leading to the paper in its present form.

abstract national citizen. Such elites preferred republican constitutional models and plugged their formal political ambitions into idioms of nationhood which in turn tapped repositories of popular emotions, such as kinship and religion.[2] These insights capture many elements in the building nationalism of late-colonial Africa, but do not really prepare us to fathom the fluid concurrence of beliefs, justifications and actions such as flourished in the early 1950s.[3]

The literate elite of the African scenario has been associated with the progressive first generations of mission educated men, who under the conditions of Indirect Rule in the middle period of colonialism became firmly yoked with chiefs.[4] They occupied themselves with retrieving a pre-colonial past that would be servicable for neo-traditional ideologies in which chiefs were legitimate descendants of tribal rulers and the people were culturally coherent ethnic groups. A vigorous branch of modern historiography has documented the rise and the

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[2]Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, revised ed., London, 1991, p. 5.

[3]The triumph of the nationalist party has been more fully and richly documented in the case of Tanzania than Zambia. See John Iliffe, A Modern History of Tanganyika, Cambridge, 1979. Tanzania had the great advantage of a unifying vernacular, Kiswahili.

[4]In "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa", Terence Ranger draws substantially upon Northern Rhodesian archives. see chapter in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge, 1983. For a methodological criticism, see "Literacy, Indirect Rule, and the Political Role of Antiquity in Oral Tradition" in David Henige, The Chronology of Oral Trdition, Oxford, 1974

paradoxes of neo-traditionalism.[5] With this paper, I contribute to this genre only in the spirit of qualification. The strategy is also to turn away from the biography of the nation as the outcome of nationalist imaginings, remembering and forgetting.[6] Rather, I shall look upon the 1950s as conjunctural, with multiple sources of legitimacy deployed by contesting leaderships. The focus will be on chiefs and chieftainship, dynamic ingredients within the conjuncture. Before expanding on the applicability of conjuncture, I wish to herald the questions about chiefs and chiefship to which I will revert in conclusions: What, in the first flush of Zambian nationalism, did the term chief imply? What histories must be recounted in order to situate chiefs in relation to subjects? How did they compete or join with new party organizers and nationalist projects? How effectively subordinated were they to the administration? Were chiefs politicians, quasi-priestly ritual figures or puppets?

Legitimacy is to be understood as a popularly accepted

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[5]See in particular the collection edited by Leroy Vail, The Invention of Tribalism in Eastern and Southern Africa. The convergence of a petty-bourgeoisie and monarchism in interwar South Africa is, of course, well addressed in several places by Shula Marks, but see especially "Natal, the Zulu Royal Family and the Ideology of Segregation", JSAS, 4, 2 (1978)

[6]Anderson, Imagined Communities, ch. 11. Those who might be called biographers of the nation in the Zambian case include Henry Meebelo, REaction to Colonialism: A Prelude to the Politics of Independence in Northern Zambia, 1893-1939, Manchester, 1971 and Fergus MacPherson, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Lusaka, 1974. David Mulford contributed important detail in Zambia: the Politics of Independence, London, 1967.

claim to leadership and authority. Democratization, on the other hand, will be taken to be a process of channeling political participation and defining representation. The two may be normatively aligned or they may be unreconciled. Looking back from a post-colonial situation, political scientists have joined the people themselves in asking whether chiefs were not better than party functionaries at local governance. The real, continuing ferment about legitimacy may feed into a new osification of chiefs as stereotyped figures of authority. From the scholarly side, the danger is mitigated by an increasing attention to political culture at the local level.[7]

One way to avoid stereotyping is to see the analytical terms of reference as conjunctural, specific to a period in time. A conjuncture might, as in the present discussion, be a span of five to ten years, a pivot maybe, within which historical elements combine with special reference to the immediate situation.[8] This way of thinking is healthy for all historical work. It permits an approach to naionalism as a construct, in some times and circumstances more powerful than at others. It is also virtually indispensable to the portrayal of history in a region with ethnic groups bisected by an international boundary,

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[7]Norman Miller provided an early article on this theme, "The Political Survival of Traditional Leadership", reprented in I. L. Markovitz, ed., African Politics and Society, New York, 1970. Recent thinking by North American-based political scientists is contained in a special number of the African Studies Review, (37, 1 (1994) edited by Catharine Newbury, whose introduction is entitled "Paradoxes of Democratization in Africa".

[8]A debt to Braudel must be evident.

subject to two nationalisms, where superior chiefs claim some degree of legitimacy on both sides of the border.

Arena: Local, Regional or National?

The specifics of this discussion are drawn from an area that figures prominently in Zambian political history as the locale of the earliest proto-nationalist organization, the Mwenzo Native Welfare Association. One of its founders, Donald Siwale, remained central in the politics of northernmost Zambia from before World War I until 1960.[9] No discussion of legitimacy can neglect the interplay of Siwale and his well-educated aspirant petty bourgeois cohort and the colonial officials and chiefs. Siwale was the quintessential interpreter and mediator.[10]

What gave this region its political stamp? Northernmost Zambia is a peculiar artifact of late nineteenth century colonialism. Snug against Tanzania, the first administrative definition of the area was as the Tanganyika magisterial district. In due course, three sub-districts were defined,

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[9]The best overview of his life is contained in his "Autobiographical Sketch", African Social Research, 15 (1973) 362-373. Siwale shared his knowledge with every inquirer, whether missionary, official, or scholar. He continuously instructed his fellow-councillors in the African Representative Council concerning the entire span of colonial experience, of which he had been an intimate observer. Andrew Roberts conducted numerous interviews with an eye to preparing an biography. Charles Guthrie interviewed him at the very end of his life as part of a study of the Livingstonia-educated elite of Isoka District. See "The Emergence and Decline of a Mission-Educaed Elite in Northeast Zambia, 1895-1964", Ph. D., Indiana University, 1976.

[10]For the most succinct summary of this thread in Zambian history, see Andrew Roberts, A History of Zambia, London, Heinemann, 1981, ch. 11, "The Growth of a Nation, c. 1930-1964".

Mporokoso (which will not be treated here), Abercorn (the present Mbala) and Fife (the present Isoka). This clustering continued as the Tanganyika Province. Then, after World War II, it was amalgamated with the Awemba Province to form the Northern Province. To reflect the history of the Tanganyika Magisterial District as a separate arena, I will refer alternatively to northernmost Zambia as the Tanganyika districts. A transport route from Lake Nyasa to Lake Tanganyika began to give focus to the area after 1880. Along this corridor, the African Lakes Company established staging points and generated employment in porterage. The company also gave logistical support to missionary stations, most prominently the London Missionary Society's (LMS) key center at Kawimbe and the Free Church of Scotland (Livingstonia) Mission at Mwenzo (after 1895).[11] The White Fathers were present, but became preoccupied with the Bemba to the south and played a more marginal role in the shaping of elite values in the Tanganyika districts. The defensive posture of the corridor peoples against the Bemba in the nineteenth century continued to express itself in resentment of their minority status vis a vis the Bemba in colonial times.[12]

The three linguistically and culturally related ethnic

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[11]Robert Rotberg gave the area his early attention in Christian Missionaries and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia, 1880-1924, Princeton, 1965 and The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: the Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964, Harvard, 1966.

[12]This attitude comes through in demands, for example, that there be more respect for the customs of the area in the urban courts of the Copperbelt. ARC Proc., 13 July 1949, col. 34-37.

groups whose country the corridor route traversed were, from east to west, the Namwanga, the Mambwe and the Lungu. With the partition of the region between Germany and Great Britain (represented by the British South African Company), these ethnic groups became administratively divided. Crudely, the Namwanga, Mambwe and Lungu were of the same size numerically, but differently balanced between those to the north and south of the border. In 1953, the Namwanga (c. 42,400 in all) were 30% in Zambia, the Mambwe (c. 41,400 in all), 50% and the Lungu, 75%.[13]

In post-World War II Northern Rhodesia, as also in Tanganyika, chiefs were ranked in an administratively sanctioned hierarchy. Indirect Rule had been instituted in Tanganyika by 1927 and in Northern Rhodesia in the years following 1929. Through successive amendments to the ordinance, the Native Authorities were given increased responsibilities not only for collecting revenue and retaining a portion for local governmental purposes, but also for issuing and enforcing regulations of a technocratic nature, following colonial prescriptions.

The Tanganyika Districts in 1927 had been demarcated into reserves, with the vast bulk of the land declared to be outside the jurisdiction of chiefs, being either in the Tanganyika Estate owned by the British South Africa Company as successor to the African Lakes Company, or Crown Lands. The former District Officer at Fife, near Mwenzo, had testified to the Native

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[13]These figures are derived from Roy Willis, The Fipa and Related peoples of South-West Tanzania and North-East Zambia, Ethnographic Survey of Africa, Part XV, London, 1966.

Reserves Commission with respect to the Namwanga:

> They are essentially home people and extraordinarily attached to the small areas about which their villages move every three years or so - ech headman has his particular streams or plaiuns.... He and his people imagine it would be impossible for them to live happily in any other place.

Furthermore, he asserted, the poeple had criticisms of the performance of the colonial government:

> Instead of giving them education...and religion and prosperity, it gives them cattle regulations, taxes, the money from which is spent outside the Sub-District and ruin their home life by the enticement of their young men to distant places of work. They are also extremely suspicious of individual men and their motives, and easily misconstrue innocent saying and doings into something different.[14]

The rotation of villages followed the fallowing and tree-topping conventions of the citimene system. There was a longer-standing policy of citimene control, whereby the forest system of agriculture had been a leading object of political intervention, aiming to intensify agriculture and stabilize residential patterns.[15] From 1938, the redesignation of portions of the Tanganyika Estate and Crown Lands as Native Trust Lands paved the way for controlled resettlement from overcrowded reserves. Intensified management of people and resources after 1948 thus added to a long background of local suspicion and resentment over

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[14]J.L. Keith in Evidence, Northern Rhodesia Native Reserves Commission (Tanganyika District), 1927. ZNA ZP 1/3/2

[15]See especially Meebelo, pp. 102-117. For recent evaluation of citemene control in the Bemba setting, see Henrietta Moore and Megan Vaughan, Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition, and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890-1990, Portsmouth, 1994.,

access and use of land. A collision between dictates from above and protest from below led to heightened political agitation and contested legitimacy.[16]

To appreciate the practical politics of chiefs, it is useful to think of them in three ways, as salaried functionaries of the colonial state, as chiefs among chiefs contending sometimes with struggles over ethnic or territorial limits, and as local rulers of hereditary status who could be popular or unpopular with their people in a time when popular self-determination was being widely heralded.

In 1950, the three senior chiefs in the northern Isoka and Abercorn Districts were Chieftainess Wayitwika of the Namwanga, Chief Nsokolo of the Mambwe, and Chief Tafuna of the Lungu. These names were in fact titles. Each had personal names, but was usually known only by the title, with its implication of structural timelessness.[17] All incumbents had been in place by 1942. Of these, Wayitwika was regarded by the administration to be intractable, Nsokolo to be less progressive than his better educated councillors, and Tafuna to be a venerable figure

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[16]The "betterment" programs in South Africa after 1939 generated the same ferment and thrust chiefs into opposition in some cases. The work of Hirson brought the possibilities to my attntion. Beinart on the Pondo and Delius on Sekhukhuneland are also suggestive. As a primer, see Joanne Yawitch, Betterment: The Myth of Homeland Agriculture, Johannesburg, 1981.

[17]Only a beginning, given the scantiness of the record, can be made in restoring fullness to these personages. William Watson was contributing in the last period of his life, working through the extremely prolix Lungu royal history. See Watson, "The Lungu", ms. and "Note on Lungu Chiefly Succession" ms.

entirely cooperative with the colonial authorities.[18]

Abercorn, since the 1890s the administrative center for the northern tier of districts, was situated on the plateau above Lake Tanganyika, surrounded by Lungu reserves and white settler farms, small in number, but enough to provide an immediate reference point concerning the intentions of colonists. It was a significant administrative and commercial center even after the Tanganganyika Province became incorporated into a single Northern Province. The town of Abercorn in 1950 was the site of the regional headquarters of the International Red Locust Control service. Lunzua, a nearby agricultural station, serviced both Africans and settlers. In the town itself, a growing African population supported a variety of tradesmen, who together with the educated elite made up the Abercorn Native Welfare Association.[19]

Politics in the first half of the 1950s in the northernmost Zambia were affected by conjunctural conditions of considerable complexity. In brief, these included intermittant years of drought and much diminished harvests, amidst a general post-war boom and heightened demand for marketed food. The accelerating world economy entailed unparalleled expansion; profits from

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[18]See district annual reports, SEC 2/94 ZNA

[19]See Abercorn District Report, 1950. SEC 2/94. The Lunzua Agricultural Research Station deserves to be the focus of a special research project. The Mwenzo Native Welfare Association revived in the early 1920s but became moribund in the later 1920s, in part because the District Office had been moved from Fife, near Mwenzo, to Isoka, seventy miles to the south. See Guthrie, p. 184. See also Meebelo, ch. VI.

mining and cash crops like coffee soared. North of the border, the Namwnga, Mambwe and Lungu were less subject to agricultural and other regulation than they were in Northern Rhodesia. Overtly and covertly, livestock and food, especially millet and beans, moved southweard. Northern Rhodesian currency circulated in the north, lubricating trade.

Namwanga, Mambwe and Lungu men in earlier colonial times had usually engaged with the colonial economy as migrant laborers. The Mambwe had been leaders in seeking waged employment, first as porters along the corridor. Even in the post World War II period, men from these areas tended more often to go to work in Tanganyika on sisal plantations or settler farms, than they were to go south to the mines and other colonial employment in the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia or South Africa. Yet some, typically men with a greater degree of literacy, went south. The uneducated, or scarcely educated migrants returning from the sisal estates settled quietly. It was those who returned from the southern mines and towns that sometimes carried with them a radical consciousness and political rhetoric. Generational differences became more exaggerated after World War II, with return of African servicemen from overseas. What may be called the Veteran generation soon challenged the venerable generation.

The conjunctural features of the years 1950-1955, then, included economic intensification and fuller integration of northernmost Zambia and adjacent Tanzania into the sub-

continental and world economy. From 1950 to 1953, African resistance to the relentless progress toward an unwanted federation of Northern Rhodesia with Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland was expressed in an organized fashion by the African National Congress of Nortern Rhodesia and by its members and others in the African Representative Council.[20] People in remote villages in norternmost Zambia either had been themselves or had relatives who had been to Southern Rhodesia and knew it to be dominated by settlers with no concept of sharing power with Africans. Equally, those with experience in Tanganyika could observe an alternative course of decolonization in which the territorial integrity of the state was not being altered and the eventual self-determination of Africans remained a fixture.

Rural villagers received more current news than ever before through the newly established vernacular radio services. Mambwe, Lungu and Namwanga listeners had to know Bemba in order to comprehend the broadcasts aimed at the Northern Province.[21] But they also encountered Bemba as the language of teaching in primary schools and as the popular lingo of the Copperbelt. Rumors had been a vigorous form of political communication for decades before the early 1950s. This mode came to a peak, for

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[20]See Roberts, "The Rise of Congress", A History of Zambia, pp. 208-211. The name evolved. For simplicity, I call it the ANC throughout.

[21]See H. Franklin, REport on the Development of Broadcasting to Africans in Central Africa, Lusaka, Government Printer, 1949, p. 20 for an example of Bemba language broadcast program. See also Report on "The Saucerpan Special": The Poor Man's Radio for rural Populations", Lusaka, Government Printer, 1950.

example, in accusing African broadcasters or those politically aligned with white-led political parties with being Banyama, or vampire men bent upon abducting and selling Africans to European blood suckers. An ANC meeting in Lusaka in 1952 passed a resolution asking the government to take action against the Banyama.[22] Another widespread rumor had it that the Northern Rhodesian settlers planned to exterminate Africans by putting poison in white sugar.[23] This more contemporary view of malevolent whites captured a certain popular understanding of "responsible government" placed in the hands of the unofficial white community.

The conjuncture of 1950-1955 can be usefully compared with an earlier time of major uncertainty, 1915-1920. The 1914-1918 war had profound ramifications in northermost Zambia. The boundary became a front line of action between the Germans and the British, villages were obliged to resettle in inhospitable areas further south, a number of persons profited from the employment and prices given by the military presence and the requisite massing of food reserves and recruitment of men for military labor.

By 1917, the war still ongoing, enrichment and

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[22]Mwelwa Musambachime, "The Impact of rumor: the Case of the Banyama (Vampire Men Scare in Northern rhodesia, 1930-1964", IJAHS, 21, 2 (1988), p. 212. For a more extended treatment of the rumor in its earlier phase, see Luise White, "Tsetse Visions: Narratives of Blood and Bugs in Colonial Northern Zambia, 1931-1939", forthcoming, JAH.

[23]ARC Proc., 19 Dec. 1952, col. 77-78.

impoverishment were confusingly present and the demand for ever more transporters was unremitting. Daily life and routines were upset, tho more so by failed harvests in 1915-16 and rinderpest in 1917. Chiefs were subordinated directly to the colonial state through legislation in 1916. Wayitwika, the Namwanga chieftainess, was effectively dismissed, being removed from her village in order to prevent communication with her brother, the paramount chief Mkoma in German territory.[24]

The decision of the Southern Rhodesian authorities in 1917 to deal with the Watch Tower movement in part by deporting alien African activists brought home to northermost Zambia a radical leadership. In 1917 and 1918, preachers gained large followings though their calls to reject all earthy authorities, most immediately African chiefs. Watchtower communities became enduringly established just to the east of Namwanga country among the related Iwa people, and in Mambwe country. By 1922, the most dissident leaders had been prosecuted and jailed. A modus vivendi had already begun to emerge. Christian elders in the Mwenzo kirk session in 1920 called for tolerant coexistence with Watchtower.[25] African chiefs and the district authorities also opted for laissez-faire. Watchtower villages in the Isoka District remained fundamentally autonomous and self-regulating, a

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[24]Siwale recalled that the Wayitwika's authority in 1914 was immediate in two villages only, one on each side of the border. Interview 13 Aug. 1972.

[25]Guthrie, p. 168, fn. 37.

reservoir of radical anti-government ideology.[26] In Abercorn District, the Mambwe Watchtower "companies" gradually came under royal control. Converts of royal blood became responsible for their co-religionists.[27] The practical politics and ideological tension nevertheless kept the chiefs limber.

The outbreak and unresolved state of war in 1914-1918 prompted questions about the political future and economic stimulation pressed social relations in the first conjuncture, while preparations for federation and responsible government dissolved tenuous structures in the second. The newly Christianized population split into orthodox-moderate and sectarian-radical elements. Both in World War I and after 1938, the colonial government tightened its control over chiefs.

The several parallels between 1915-1920 and 1950-1955 include a disruption of normalized colonial relations. the existence of an articulate African educated elite and a literate migrant element, circulating to the more economically differentiated and politically challenging loci of an African proletariat and petty bourgeoisie. Ex-migrants again in 1950-1955 were to lead in militant protests, while the educated elite moderates with vested interests in the local area still advocated reform to preserve law and order.

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[26]See Karen Fields, Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa, Princeton, 1985.

[27]Watson, Tribal Cohesion, pp. 200-203.

Donald Siwale as Spokesman on the Nature of Legitimate Authority

Donald Siwale had formed his aspirations at the turn of the century in the exciting times of education and progressive prospects for selected young men of no special family distinction. The Scottish missionaries took education very seriously and introduced their students and teachers-in-training to knowledge of the world and a sense of self-confidence in handling it. While they linked modernization with Christianization, they also confirmed acceptable local customs and counted on their cohorts of teachers and evangelists gradually to bring the people around to Christian values.

The theory and practice of church governance instituted in the African Presbyterian church was of course Calvinist, laying with deliberations and decision-making by elders. Because this lay management is associated with the rise of a bourgeoisie, it is sometimes linked with democracy. Yet oligarchy is an even more natural outcome and republican might be the best term for the fundamental outlook of the Livingstonia-educated elite of the Tanganyika districts.[26] These incipient republicans, organized as Welfare Associations in Mwenzo and Abercorn, petitioned for redress of grievances or improvements. From positions as councillors in Native Authorities, they could advance to Provincial Councils and (from 1946) to the territorial African Representative Council. The status of representative was never

[26]The London Missionary Society also sent their first generation of advanced students to Livingstonia.

at this time the result of popular elections. In turn, the ARC chose the African members of the Legislative Council. Siwale insisted upon his representative role, sometimes acting on the instructions of the Northern Province Council, more often simply invoking his acquaintance with the villages. He studiously reported back to his constituency, first through briefing Chieftainess Wayitwika, then meeting with people in villages or special assemblies of the Namwanga "tribe".[29] He also spoke in Abercorn and Chinsale.

Donald Siwale's glory years as a nationalist came in 1951 to 1953, when he was designated to lead in several important oppositional motions in which the African Representative Council were unanimous, against responsible government and against federation. Federation was flatly rejected. Indeed, it was the political issue that united future Zambians as never before. The discussion of responsible government was more revealing of the nationalist discourse of the time. Siwale was the spokesman for the educated elite. To some extent, this group was creolized by acculturation and acceptance of western constitutional and bourgeois values, yet their aspirations were specifically thwarted by an increment in white settler power.

As the spokesman for the entire body of African representatives when he demanded parity, equalizing in the Legislative Council the numbers of African and white non-

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[29]Siwale, "Autobiographical Sketch", p. 371.

officials, soon: "next year".[30] The position of the ANC at that time, however, was far short of insistance on a universal franchise. Siwale tended to speak of "the country" as embodied in the people of the Northern Province and Abercorn and Isoka Districts and only cautiously to generalize to all Northern Rhodesian Africans as a single people. A profound localism and sense of cultural specificity blunted the abstraction of imagined nationalism.

This moderation was that of the ANC of the time. Yet it was also a product of a class position. He was on the side of improvement, distinguishing men like himself, who could grasp the value of conservation measures, from the common people who did not yet understand or accept them. Central government policies were not bad, he suggested, but it was wrong to use Native Authorities as the instrumentality. When they passed orders dictated from above, which they could not effectively enforce, they courted illegitimacy.

In the several years prior to 1951, Siwale had expressed two divergent opinions about how to resolve the tensions in local life brought on by the interventionist policies of the colonial state. On the one hand, he suggested that the District Commissioner take direct responsibility for the enforcement of forestry or agricultural rules. Chiefs who feared a loss of popular respect should they not have the power to issue such

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[30]ARC Proc., 19 Dec. 1952, col. 77.

orders, he suggested, were mistaken and shortsighted."[11] On the other hand, he wished to see an extension of the local government's authority, so that Native Authorities would be in charge of Native Trust Lands as well as reserves.

Under conditions prevailing in about 1950, he complained, it was the Agricultural Officer who effectively ruled in Native Trust Lands. The Native Authorities ought to be allowed to impose levies in order to raise money for such conservation measures as were obviously necessary to halt erosion. In this case, he stressed the importance of not reviving 'mulasa', unpaid tribute labor for chiefs:

> This practice was stopped by Government. The common people in the country are very glad and they appreciate what the Government has done there. ...the chiefs are not pleased at being stopped and deprived of their mulasa labour. They will try to oppress the poor people... and that will be unfair to the country. I therefore suggest that the imposition of a levy will work very well indeed."[12]

This ambivalent attitude toward chiefs followed a basic desire to strengthen Native Authorities as effective forms of local government managed by the educated elite.

In 1952 and 1953, in the heat of unified African opposition to the Central African Federation and REsponsible Government, Siwale defended chiefs who had been suspended and deposed for behavior that sprang, he asserted, from the underlying fact that they opposed Federation. Once Federation was an accomplished

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[11]ARC Proc., 9 July 1948, columns 226, 233

[12]ARC Proc., 16 July 1949, columns 168-169

fact, heightened popular fear of expropriation led Siwale to underscore that the chiefs were the ultimate owners of the land. He elaborated on the concept of the chiefs' hereditary quality:

> It is not very easy to translate this word into English. ...The nearest I can get is to use the word "dedicated". A chief is a dedicated man."
>
> Well, there are two or three categories of chiefs, the first category is tribal chief, or what I call a dedicated chief.
>
> [Then there are sub-chiefs, subordinate, titled, Mwanamfumu not equal to the paramount but also not to be deposed without reference to the people in their charge.]
>
> Then you hve another category, appointed chief, which you call "mulasa".[33] It may please the chief who is the tribal chief to appoint his son, his nephew or to appoint a commoner in the country to go and administer a part of the country, of an area, and this is "mulasa", appointed chief.[34]

The idea of monarchs as dynastic rulers ritually and irrevocably consecrated at their coronation had been part of colonial propaganda.[35] Siwale used the implications as an ideological counter to the rights of eminent domain invested in the colonial state, increasingly dominated by land-hungry settlers. The ideology of chiefs as owners of the land served as a momentary weapon against the colonial regime. The subordinate assertion within this construct was that chiefs did not have the right to displace occupants who were using the land. Two years later, when the chiefs had generally been brought into line by

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[33]The identity of this word with that for tribute labor is not accidental.

[34]ARC Proc., 8 June 1955, columns 318-319

[35]See in particular Ranger, in The Invention, pp. 229-236.

the colonial government, Siwale once again insisted that their basic nature was being compromised:

> Well, what is a chief? You call him a chief, myself I call him Mfumu. And I know Mfumu, and what it means is not an employee.[36]

At this time, he was once again apprehensive about chiefs' self-interest in seeking higher salaries and sealing their dependence as mere administrative chiefs.

These definitions sought to fix chiefs in constitutional categories. In fact, chiefs were also political actors. The case of Chief Nsokolo of the Mambwe came to Siwale's doorstep (see Appendix).

Nsokolo's Challenge

"Towards the end of the year Chief Nsokolo lent so ready an ear to the agitators that at public meetings he made clear his intention of sabotaging the Mambwe Rules and Orders in connection with 'chitemene' control and contour ridging. Warnings were of no avail, and such irresponsible and mischievous conduct has since led to his suspension".[37] The Abercorn District Report had commented on a polarization, alleging that Nsokolo, "jealous of his educated and mature councillors, allied with young, unqualified men".[38] In Donald Siwale's view, he could have helped Nsokolo find a way of reconciling the conflict between the

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[36]ARC Proc., 6 June 1957, columns 37-38

[37]Item F of elements expunged from Northern Province annual report, 1952. ZNA Sec 2/96

[38]Abercorn Report, 1952. ZNA Sec 2/96.

people and the government, so that he might keep his chiefship. But Siwale was not given the chance, indeed may have been maneuvered out of participating.[39]

From Mambwe country, a far more detailed and fascinating account of this chief's resistance comes through William Watson's contemporary anthropological observations. Watson makes clear the dual quality of Mambwe chiefs in the mid-twentieth century. Three chiefs were "administrative chiefs", with Nsokolo as the senior and two salaried chiefs below him, Mpande and Mwamba. These three were of royal lineages, but so were several chiefs who were excluded from the official Native Authority hierarchy. Those without salary and official function had ritual authority to pray for rains and otherwise appease the spirits of their deceased forebears. Chiefs and headmen controlled access to land use rights, but the power of the administratively excluded royal chiefs lay only in the spiritual realm. Chief Kela, one such chief, finally took the extreme step of committing suicide in a village containing persons who had offended him. The failure of rains in December 1952 caused a panic in Mambwe country, far beyond the notional sphere of Kela's spirit-territory, and preparations were made for a pan-Mambwe gathering to ritually appeal to his spirit to cease punishing the people.[40]

Nsokolo's resistance was not surrounded by metaphysical elements. In mid-1952, he came under great pressure from Mambwe

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[39]ARC Proc., 23 July 1953

[40]Watson, Tribal Cohesion, p. 91, 164-165.

public opinion to take on an explicitly representative role. Money was gathered very widely to support his journey to Lusaka in September 1952 to participate in the anti-federation conference called by the ANC. He carried the mandate of his subjects to oppose the proposed federation and at the end of the conference joined the committee to coordinate further resistance among chiefs. Returning home, he found the people ever more agitated by the enforcement of agricultural-conservation measures. Official pressure upon the Mambwe to expand production of food was not complemented by favorable weather. The failure of rains, alledly brought on by Kela's wrath, pinpointed the responsibilities of chiefs to secure their people's well-being. Nsokolo acted as a secular leader, aligned with the people against the regime. Suspended in December for three months, he was thereafter deposed. His son and others were prosecuted for inciting defiance of the regulations.[41]

Nsokolo became an example of the unforgiving attitude of the Government, just as the ANC convened its second meeting with chiefs in March 1953. The administration left no doubt that chiefs were to be brought to heel:

> The misguided men who have been suspended, and any other persons who may have been influenced by them, will realize now, I trust, that the Government will not tolerate flouting of the law and will deal firmly with any contravention of it.[42]

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[41]Watson, Tribal Cohesion, p. 217.

[42]Chief Secretary's statement in Legislative Council, quoted by Watson, Tribal Cohesion, fn. 2, pp. 217-218.

The Mambwe Native Authority was dissolved, its functions assumed by the District Commissioner until later in 1953 when a new Nsokolo was imposed and the Native Authority reconstituted. The designated man was eligible by descent, as the son of a previous Nsokolo. Like his dissident cousin, the agitator, he had been a migrant on the Copperbelt. But he had returned home to join the agricultural bureaucracy and was a proven loyalist to the government an indoctrinator of the merits of just those interventions that riled the Mambwe.[43] Watson has quoted the sentiment of the Mambwe at this time: "When Chief Nsokolo of the Mambwe was deposed in 1953 and an obscue relative put in his place, a Mambwe asked, 'Why don't they just kill Nsokolo? As long as he is alive, he is the chief and no one will obey this man they have put in his place'".[44] For the government, Mambwe opinion did not matter. Officials stepped up agricultural propaganda and dealt severely with those who did not conform to regulations.[45]

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[43]Born in 1912, schooled at Kawimbe and then at Senga Hill by the London Missionary Society, passed standard III and became a teacher. Married March 1929 at age 17, the same year he began paying poll tax. In 1930 went as a recruited laborer for seven tickets at Mufulira. Returned upon closure of mines woing to the Great Depression, then went to the Lupa goldfields in Chunya, Tanganyika as a washboy, returned to Mambwe home in 1934. Was a miner at Mufulira from 1939 to 1945. Became court assessor and a Kapasu, Native Authority employee in 1946-47. From December 1948 an Agricultural Demonstrator at the Nsokolo Demonstration Center, became Agricultural Kapasu in December 1951. Assumed interim responsibilities as Councillor in Charge and in August 1953 became Senior Chief. Abercorn District Book, ZNA KTN 1/1

[44]Watson, "Note on Lungu Royal Succession" ms.

[45]Northern Province Report, 1953. Sec. 2/97.

Native Authorities became to focus of oppositional nationalist politics in Northern Rhodesia in the last years of the 1950s. The ascendant nationalist party, UNIP, conducted its campaign in rural areas by repudiating the legitimacy of such creatures of colonial policy. Faced with militant action and polarization, Native Authorities often moved closer to the colonial establishment. The administration in the mid to late 1950s used its police forces and convicted prominant nationalists demanding immediate self-determination through an inclusive franchise. The same colonial regime courted chiefs and flattered their sense of legitimacy as opposed to the commoner upstarts and agents of disorder.

Tafuna Challenged

At the time of the Mambwe unrest, the Abercorn authorities found only a small dissident element in the Lungu Native Authority and complacently believed by 1954 that it had evaporated along with the Mambwe protest movement. Events of the following year proved them wrong. In 1955, the ANC organizer, Wind Mazimba, stirred up the people of the fishing villages along the Tanganyika lakeshore. Protest reached the level of riot, exceeding the capacity of police serving the Tafuna and the Native Authority and leading to deployment of territorial mobile police forces.

Mazimba was not acting alone. As Mulford asserts:

> A.N.C.'s chief organizer in the province, Robert Makasa, adopted tactics which later became widespread among rural orgnizers, especially after ... 1960. Makasa's approach was to attempt to split the

> Native Authorities from the Boma by impugning the chiefs as creatures of the Government. At the same time, Makasa issued circulars to all chiefs in the province urging them to give a lead to their people by ceasing to show respect to government officials and taking the initiative in forming small A.N.C. groups to tour their respective areas fomenting discontent on a wide range of local issues.[46]

Further work is required before composing a fuller account of all the local issues at play on the Tanganyika lakeshore where Mazimba had such success. For the present, Robert Rotberg's summary will give the flavor:

> At the behest of the commissioner in charge of the Abercorn District, Tafuna forbade public meetings without his express permission. But Hardings Wind Mazimba, a rather unscrupulous young trader and sometime mission teacher who also erved as orgnaizing secetary of the Congress in the district, addressed gatherings in the Chisanza section of villages near the lake and provoked protests against license fees that Tafuna's Native Authority had imposed upon the ownership of fish nets and the felling of trees-both common pursuits in the area. After all, Wind Mzimba [sic] said, "God put fish into the lake and planted trees around it."[47]

Mazimba was certainly a picaresque figure, who well deserves to be treated as the political entrepreneur he was, tapping into multiple sources of legitmacy.[48] These included status in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the assembly point for nationalists of the LMS and similar background who wanted to

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[46]Mulford, p.40

[47]Rotberg, The Rise, pp. 273-4

[48]Paul la Hausse has captured a similar figure in "So who was Elias Kuzwayo? Nationalism, Collaboration and the Picaresque in Natal", in Philip Bonner, et.al., eds., Apartheid's Genesis, 1935-1962, Bramfontein, 1993.

assert African leadership without sacrificing orthodoxy.[49] He also belonged to the younger militants of the ANC determined to take positive action, and thus had a generational backing as well as a political party position. Lastly, he was a Mazimba, a member of the royal clan. Drawing upon this source, he gathered support from influential elders in clans opposed to the machinations of the Tafuna seeking to secure his son's succession to the chiefship.[50]

The elderly Tafuna, independent of any wider political current, had begun in the early 1950s to campaign for his son, insisting upon the option of patrilineal rather than matrilineal succession to the title of Tafuna. All the old grievances dating from the civil wars of the last half of the nineteenth century were brought back to form an important conjunctural ingredient.[51]

The incumbent of the Tafunaship, the ritual ruler of the Lungu people, was a man of considerable colonial experience, both

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[49]See Walton Johnson, "The Africanization of a Mission Church: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in Zambia" in George Bond, et.al., eds., African Christianity: Patterns of Religious Continuity, New York, Academic Press, 1979.

[50]Upon the death of the Tafuna in 1968, the furor only increased. The government finally brought in a technically eligible man from a Lungu enclave which had been outside the main politics of succession for the past century. Mazimba, in the early 1970s a candidate for Parliament, took over as much as possible the management of oral history, using Douglas Werner and myself, fairly naive historians, as an aspect of his campaign. I came to know this charming, very intelligent and articulate person well.

[51]Watson, Note on Lungu Succession, records that he was given misinformation by Tafuna in 1953.

in Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika, having been a mission teacher, carpenter, interpreter, tax clerk, and trader before becoming Chief Chungu in 1936. In 1942, he acceded to the Tafunaship and by 1944 had executed all the appropriate rituals of installation.[52] Tafuna tried to get the support of the Tanganyika Lungu for his project, but with little success. Among those who opposed him, and indeed rejected the entire validity of his Sikazwe lineage's claim to the title at all, were the Sinyangwe clan. The Sinyangwe were particularly strong in Chisanza, the area of Mazimba's successs.[53]

When the territorial police were called in, Wind Mazimba fled to Tanganyika. Despite their rejection of Tafuna's schemes, the Lungu had no commitment to Mazimba and gave him up to the Sumbawanga District authorities, who returned him to Abercorn for trial. He was convicted and spent three years in prison.

Wayitwika's Move

"Chieftainess Wayitwika is still as stubborn as ever and coming more and more under the influence of her hereditary [sic] coucillor, Donald Siwale".[54] In 1952, Siwale was a man to be watched. Chieftainess Wayitwika held a key position in the

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[52]Abercorn District Book. ZNA KTN 1/1

[53]See Jephries M.C. Nsangu to Abercorn District Commissioner, October 13, 1959 in Abercorn District Book, KTN 1/1 ZNA. Interview by Douglas Werner, T.O. Ranger and Wind Mazimba with Kazwala, Chisanza, 1972, Interview by Marcia Wright with Solomon Nsangu (Sinyangwe clan leader) and Rev. John Chifunda, 7 Aug. 1972

[54]Item C of the elements expunged from the published annual report of the Northern Province, 1952. ZNA Sec 2/96.

apparatus of local government in Isoka District. The Namwanga Native Authority was one of the most vigorous and competent in the country, thanks to the activism of the well educated elite. In former years, the administration had extended the jurisdiction of Wayitwika as the senior chief, bringing a number of "mixed tribes" under her authority.[55] The development of the Isoka District Council released her from this sub-imperial responsibility and allowed her to devote herself more completely to the affairs of the Namwanga.[56]

The Wayitwikaship was a respected office with an uusual history. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the king of the Namwanga, Mkoma Chikanamulilo, had developed a practice of his predecessors of designating his sisters as representatives in outlying areas. The appointments were for life, thus bringing a degree of stability to Namwanga governance since these royal family members continued to serve even if the king died and was succeeded. Although there were a number of these female chiefs at the beginning of colonial rule, the Wayitwikaship survived and became enhanced because she was recognized as the chief responsible for the Namwanga in Northern Rhodesia. The burial grove of Musyani, founder of the dynasty, was south of the border, near Mwenzo and close to her usual residence. The

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[55]W. J. J. Hudson, "Local Government Reorganization in the Isoka District, Zambia", Journal of Local Administration Overseas, IV, 1 (1965).

[56]W. J. S. Hudson, "Local Government Reorganization in the Isoka District, Zambia", Journal of Local Administration Overseas, IV, 1 (1965)

Kasichila priests attending the gravesite constituted a ritual reminder of the continuity of the kings, figures that in life had had many sacral powers. Thus, multiple sources of chiefly legitimacy were at work in the political culture of the Namwanga. No feature was static, however. Kasichila village, at the grave-site of the great Musyani, also contained in the early 1950s a cluster of impatient younger men of the Veteran generation.[57]

Wayitwikas and other female representatives did not have autonomous ritual responsibilities.[58] Nor were they self-reproducing. Upon the death of an incumbent, she would be replaced by a princess chosen by the reigning Mkoma from among his sisters or nieces. The Wayitwika in 1952 was a mature women. Her appointment in 1938 at the age of eighteen had been made by Chief Chipansya, Mkoma IV, who had taken many steps to preserve dynastic power against the homogenizing tendencies of Indirect Rule as an administrative apparatus.[59] Once installed in Northern Rhodesia, however, the Wayitwika had to deal with the local situation as it had evolved through time. The practice of annual visits by Mkoma IV to meet with an assembly of Namwanga must have eased her succession. But she also became part of the

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[57]Guthrie, 248 ff. For a study of Kasichila from the standpoint of the 1980s, see Owen B. Sichone, "Labour Migration, Peasant Farming and Rural Development in Uwinamwanga", Ph.D., Cambridge University, 1991.

[58]Surrogate ritual actions were performed, especially in opening moments in the agricultural cycle. Wayitwika interview, 14 Aug. 1972.

[59]See Mbeya District Book and Acting D.O. Mbeya to P.C. Iringa, 12 Oct. 1935. 157/26/20/I TNA.

Northern Rhodesian administrative system. As such, she not only served as Senior Chief of the Namwanga reserves, but also performed extended supervisory and appeal functions with respect to the smaller ethnic groups of the Isoka District, as mentioned above. Her senior councillor was Donald Siwale, who with his venerable circle had made and continued to make the Namwanga Native Authority one of the most effective in the country.[60] Siwale knew how to observe conventions, but he privately believed tha the status of the Wayitwika as Senior Chief was entirely the consequence of his own arranging.[61]

In the early 1950s Siwale had accompanied his chieftainess to the Copperbelt to hear the grievances of the Namwanga and other Isoka peoples. He had delivered her to the ANC-convened meeting of chiefs in 1952 to protest Federation.[62] He had kept her in the camp of the moderate ANC as the more militant nationalists began to engage in confrontational actions. The tactics of the Northern Province organizers in 1955 in targeting the Native Authorities as part of the colonial state had begun, nevertheless, to drive a wedge between chiefs and the local government. Younger men of the Veteran generation, concentrated in villages near Mwenzo, responded to Makasa's call to action, but did not yet have the ability to rally a large following.

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[60]See Guthrie, Ch. 7, "Rural Leadership and the Beginning of Development".

[61]Siwale interviews, 10 Feb. and 13 Aug. 1972

[62]Guthrie, p. 238.

The Namwanga Native Authority, however, was becoming more and more obviously the instrument of the privatizing farmers. The district officials in 1952 recognized that the chances for agricultural improvement was most likely to come not from the communal reserve areas but from the aspirant commercial farmers.[63] Siwale had been the pioneer in this category of "improvement" as in many others. He spoke for the individualized holdings of farmers in the African Representative Council, asserting that beyond the 30 arable acres, farmers would need to have their pasture lands also separate from the commonage.[64]

The frustrations of the Namwanga elite in their appeals to the Agriculture Department and political administration to assist them in differentiated, commercial farming had contributed significantly to their nationalist zeal. With the pro-farmer activities, including the development of a whole agricultural complex at Fife, they were much appeased. At present, there is no evidence of a deep political motive. The new policy came from much larger tendencies.

Coffee was emblematic of the new collaboration of the farmers with the colonial state. Siwale was among those in 1956 who began to plant coffee with official support. In 1958, when Kenneth Kaunda broke definitively from the old ANC to form the more militant UNIP, he immediately carried the southern parts of

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[63]Guthrie, pp. 223-224.

[64]ARC Proc. 24 July 1953, col. 185-186.

the Isoka District.[65] In the north, and in Abercorn, the old guard still held on. The UNIP strategy in courting chiefs, appealing to them to join the nation, boycott indirect elections and support unconditional democracy, reached the Wayitwika, who joined the future. UNIP not only claimed many Namwanga, it was a political movement paralleled by TANU, which was further along the road to mass-franchise independence in Tanzania. In 1960, she aligned herself with UNIP, abandoning the ANC and leaving Siwale to the reprisals of the UNIP youth who uprooted his coffee.[66]

Conclusions

Some tentative answers may now be provided for the battery of questions posed at the outset. The term chief in about 1950 had by no means a static or uniform meaning. The efforts of the administration to rank and within ranks to homogenize salaried chiefships were successful, but insufficient to capture the politics of royal descent. Siwale's definitions, similarly, were transparently constructed abstractions from a more complex history and contemporary ferment. Chiefs dealt with pressure groups in their areas, not with faceless, generalized subjects. As the Lungu case reveals, dynastic intrigue could become entangled with anti-colonial grievances. Finally, chiefs had to redefine themselves, yet again, as both ritual leaders and

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[65]UNIP assumed that title after a time as the ZANC. See Guthrie, pp. 254-255.

[66]kSiwale, Interview, Aug. 14, Isunda, "autobiographical Sketch", p. 373. Guthrie, p. 225, 248.

office-bearers in a colonial state.

Finally, it is easier and more satisfying to expose the contests over legitimacy than to chart the perilous course of democratization. The tolerance of a Siwale for apprenticeship and gradualism ought not to be read as the posture of a collaborator and future comprador. He genuinely believed in African initiative and self-possession. Yet no doubt can exist of his individualism and class aspirations. They were clear and unapologetic. By 1960, the new politics swept away the tentative structures of representation in which he had participated. The African Representative Council had been disbanded in 1958, prior to elections conducted under a new constitution that still did not achieve racial parity in the Legislative Council, let alone the universal franchise. The national bourgeoisie of the post-independence period held power on the basis of majority rule achieved through elections, but had none of Siwale's tenacious commitment to rural constituencies.

A closer look at the period of UNIP's domination of the Zamnbian state and the local politics of northernmost Zambia in the post-migrant era will entail examining other conjunctures. Certain elements that became prominent in the early 1950s, such as a filigree of cross-border trade, will continue to be subtle and elusive, but very important to women in particular. Chiefs are definitively sidelined. Allegations of witchcraft now capture the limelight when local competition and values are

explored. This form of involution was not new and would figure more in this paper, had space allowed. But the idiom of witchcraft has become magnified, I conclude, as leaderships have become demoralized, dependent on state functions and payrolls, and do not compete for legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

Appendix Donald Siwale, seconding a motion opposing revision of the Native Authorities Ordinance permitting the deposition of chiefs, in the African Representative Council, 23 July 1953, said inter alia:

The mover has touched on the word "chief". I myself find it very difficult to explain this word to the Council. .... The chiefs in this Territory, I mean Northern Province,...it may apply to the whole of Northern Rhodesia, are tribal chiefs (Hon. Members: Hear, hear!) It is a great pity to see this Native Authority Ordinance which enables the Governor to depose the chief or to remove him....

I am speaking on this motion about chiefs not because I am related to chieftainship, but as a representative I must explain that I feel, and that I have been feeling for a long time, how important chiefs are. (Hon. Members: Hear, hear!) .... According to the customs of the Northern Province, it is a very rare thing to remove or to depose a chief even if he has made a mistake (Hon. Members: Hear, hear!) but there are elders who could go and talk with him nicely, and show him the right way of treating the people of the country. That was the only punishment given to the chief, as far as I remember. By deposing, removing or suspending a chief from chieftainship, the Government thinks, perhaps, they will teach Africans of Northern Rhodesia to behave well. I do not think so. It is only causing misunderstandings among the Africans and Europeans. (Hon. Members: Hear, hear!) I would like to tell the Councillors that there was a chief called Nsokolo, and the people were saying that his brother, his cousin, was going to be the chief while Nsokolo was still alive. Many people were disappointed, and they were very angry, and I heard some of them say that if this new man will be a chief, he will be a chief that belongs to Europeans, but Nsokolo, whom they appointed will continue to be their chief as long as he lives.

....If the Government wants to see the country always in peace they should consult that tribe of that chief, if he has made a mistake...and the mistake will be put right.

I am now going to say something, because I am here as a representative, and the Government is always asking for co-operation in this Council. .... Before Nsokolo was suspended we had arranged with a good gentleman who is the District Commissioner at Abercorn, Mr. Keigwin. Perhaps he thought I could help Nsokolo not to be troubled. I willingly offered myself, saying that we should go to see Nsokolo together with his people because I realised that it was my duty, but the arrangement that we had made was destroyed. When we were leaving for Abercorn from Kasama, where we had been attending a development team meeting, Mr. Keigwin told me that he was going to fetch me from the location. Then he sent me a note saying that he was not going with me to Abercorn. I saw the District

Commissioner the next morning, I finished with him what he wanted me for, and then I went to Abercorn. During the time I spent at Kasama, my friend Chief Nsokolo was removed or suspended. I was very sorry. I thought that this was arranged by the Government. The District Commissioner from Abercorn did not think any more about the arrangement he had made with me. We always hear that prevention is better than cure. I think that if we had approached Nsokolo with his people we could make things work very well. I think that would have been much better than suspending a chief from his chieftainship.