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Phiri, Bizeck

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COLONIAL LEGACY AND THE ROLE OF SOCIETY IN THE CREATION AND DEMISE OF AUTOCRACY IN ZAMBIA, 1964 - 1991

Bizeck Phiri
History Department
University of Zambia

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COLONIAL LEGACY AND THE ROLE OF SOCIETY IN THE CREATION AND DEMISE OF AUTOCRACY IN ZAMBIA, 1964-1991.

By
Bizeck J. Phiri (Dr.)

Introduction

This paper explores the origins, growth and demise of autocracy in post-independence Zambia from a historical perspective. It does so from a macroscopic study of the nature of the political orientation of the nationalist party which secured a dominant electoral majority during the transition from colonial rule to independence—the United National Independence Party (UNIP), and its leadership from 1964 to 1991. The paper also explores society's perception of nationalist leaders and how that perception contributed to the emergence of autocracy in post-independence Zambia. The one-party state system of government in Zambia, and indeed elsewhere, was perceived as form of dictatorship. Yet, scholars were merely content to comment on the shortcomings of this system of government. Its origins were generally explained away as part and parcel of the intransigence of political parties which assumed political power at independence. Little was said about the impact of the colonial past and, indeed, the role of society in influencing the political direction of post-independent Zambia.

Crawford Young alluded to "the autocratic and hegemonic impulses which were the more enduring legacy of the colonial state," in his seminal work dealing with, *inter alia*, the issue of the one-party rule.[1] Yet, even in Young's work, the role of the masses towards assisting the "radical, mobilizational parties which secured a dominant electoral

position under terminal colonial rule," in becoming intransigent political monopolies was not explored.[2] This paper suggests, with specific reference to Zambia during the first and second republics, that politicians and the ordinary citizenry participated in bringing about autocracy in the country.

Larry Diamond and Dennis Galvan saw Zambia as an authoritarian one-party state manifesting "somewhat greater political freedom."[3] Yet, in the absence of legally constituted opposition parties, this freedom was largely a fallacy. As S.E. Finer noted, "without the freedom of association, it is impossible to see how [people] can get together in order to put up the candidates who represent their opinions".[4] In fact, lack of political freedom was the frequently cited example of the many evils of one-party state rule. As Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski pointed out:

> The truly distinguishing feature is that the ruler is not responsible to anyone else for what he does; he is the *autos*, who himself wields power; that is to say, he makes the decisions and reaps the fruits of them.[5]

There are six basic features which distinguish an autocracy from a liberal democracy. By liberal democracy, we mean "a political system characterized by regular and free elections in which politicians organized into parties compete to form the government, the right of virtually all adult citizens to vote, and by guarantees of a range of familiar political and civil rights."[6] An autocratic political system, however, is characterised by the following features: an official ideology; a single mass party led typically by one man; a system of

terroristic police control; a technologically conditioned near-complete monopoly control of all means of effective mass communication, such as the press, radio and television; a similarly technologically near-complete monopoly of control of all means of effective armed combat; and central control and direction of the entire economy through the bureaucratic co-ordination of its formerly independent corporate entities.[7] These features characterised Zambia's seventeen year one-party state history.

Zambia's official ideology, for instance, was Humanism. It was propounded and officially launched by President Kaunda in 1965. The declaration of one-party state in 1972 against protests from the African National Congress (ANC) was achieved amid fears of harassment by the much dreaded Special Branch. In the Zambian context, the Special Branch operated more or less like the well known secret policy in European dictatorships. According to former Lusaka Police Chief, Mwenda Muyunda:

> The special branch officers operated like people who were above the law. These officers though falling under the police had secret places where suspects were interrogated without our knowledge.[8]

The "party and its government" in Zambia, aided by several units of the state, had total control of mass communication, it controlled and directed the economy through the bureaucratic coordination provided by the Industrial Development Corporation (INDECO) and the Zambia Industrial and Mining Corporation (ZIMCO)—two corporations set up following the 1965 and 1969 Economic Reforms. President Kaunda was initially the Chairman of this pyramid of ultimate political control of the economic activity.[9]

UNIP was formed in August 1959 as an amalgam of the United Freedom Party (UFP) and the African National Independence Party (ANIP). Dixon Konkola was its first president. However, within weeks of UNIP's formation, Konkola was suspended and replaced by Paul Kalichini. Kalichini was also replaced by Mainza Chona who, together with others, had recently left the ANC. When Kenneth David Kaunda was released from prison, fresh elections were held on 31st January 1960, and Kaunda was elected national president. He remained the leader of UNIP until 1992 when he finally retired from active politics—of course following his electoral defeat in the 1991 presidential and parliamentary elections.[10]

Kaunda was generally considered the epitome of unity because of his strong anti-tribal politics.[11] He was the only one in UNIP who did not have very strong tribal affiliations. He was born of Nyasaland (Malawi) parentage among the Bemba of Chinsali in Northern Province. As such he was seen as a good compromise leader of the new party. It is plausible to suggest that other leaders may have initially thought they could use his neutral identity to their ends.

Under Kaunda's leadership, and because of its policy of immediate self-government and elections based on universal suffrage, UNIP soon emerged as the dominant African political party. As early as 1963 Kaunda was already seeking national unity through the ideology of togetherness among Africans. On 20 October 1963, for example, he asked Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, leader of the African National Congress (ANC), to dissolve his party and accept "an honourable and respectable" position in public life.[12] It is important to point out, however, that

the ideology of togetherness among Africans first found expression in Sikota Wina's confidential letter to Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula in 1959. Writing to Nkumbula, Wina asked him to:

> ...summon together the UNIP and ANC and declare that you are moving higher in the African leadership hierarchy and that you are prepared to declare unity of all Africans under one banner, that of the ANC of Northern Rhodesia. And that because of your pre-occupation with Legco matters you will take the post of National Guardian, leaving the entire administration into the hands of a president elected by both organisations.[13]

Kaunda was, therefore, asking Nkumbula what other UNIP leaders had previously requested Nkumbula to do. Nonetheless, this request was repeated several times thereafter. It was generally believed in UNIP circles that ANC was too compromising and counter productive.

The country became the independent Republic of Zambia on 24 October 1964, after which the *raison d'etre* for liberal democracy disappeared. Two issues immediately began to preoccupy the new UNIP government. First, UNIP was concerned about ways and means of maintaining it political dominance under a constitution which the departing colonial government had deliberately designed to guarantee liberal democracy. Since 1959 the country had operated a fragile multi-party political system which maintained competitive pluralistic institutions—a framework for power contest in the polity.

Secondly, this drive for continued political supremacy was entwined with UNIP's search for national unity which, was seen as the prerequisite for nation building. Consequently, UNIP's quest to dominate the political scene was increasingly articulated as a process aimed at national unity. President

Kaunda argued that although nationalism had successfully dislodged colonial rule, its future was uncertain because many Africans lacked any notion of national identity—"their loyalties were more restricted and fragmentary."[14]

Undoubtedly, since its formation in 1959, UNIP remained essentially a coalition of various interest groups. It was never a truly coherently inspired political party. It was initially held together because of the strong desire by most of its followers, who saw in UNIP the only hope of dismantling colonial rule. After independence, however, the various interests polarised. Thus, as Cherry Gertzel and others pointed out, "the most important level of political conflict, however, was not between UNIP and ANC, but within UNIP itself."[15] A few months later, therefore, President Kaunda openly stated that he favoured a one-party state, but that he would let the people of Zambia decide.[16] President Kaunda considered a multi-party political system a luxury the new state could not afford. He argued that multi-party politics unnecessarily divided people, thus impeded nation-building and national development. The ideology of togetherness was once again being pursued by the Kaunda regime. Uttered in the 1960s, these sentiments found many disciples and reflected the general thinking in most newly independent African countries. Analyzed from the perspective of the 1990s, however, the desire for one-party state rule by UNIP leaders suggests a deliberate strategy to dominate and sustain the UNIP leadership in power. More importantly, perhaps, one-party rule became the only surest way through which UNIP could remain in power. The "snowball and bandwagon" model had

clearly failed. This was manifested by UNIP's failure to capture four seats in the Southern Province by-elections in 1968.[17]

Roots of Autocracy in Zambia

> It is an established fact that in modern political experience, dictators have been able to rule only if the masses of their people have a fanatical faith in the Leader Principle.[18]

Few can deny that at independence the masses (and politicians as well) had "a fanatical faith in the Leader Principle". Long before independence, Nkumbula was considered the saviour by most Africans.[19] It is plausible to argue that Wina's letter to Nkumbula in December 1959 was inspired by similar feelings in order to "enhance [Nkumbula's] position in the Legco...."[20] Some even referred to him as father.[21] Thus the leader principle did not start with President Kaunda, even though the roots of autocracy in Zambia can be attributed to the fanatical faith in the leadership of President Kaunda. This was, obviously, further aided by the fact that at independence in 1964 Zambia had not experienced a long tradition of liberal democracy. The nature of colonial rule made it easier for the new African leaders to become autocratic.

Colonial rule in Zambia did not reflect the ideals of liberal democracy as they then existed in the United Kingdom. As J. S. Coleman pointed out, colonialism itself was essentially "bureaucratic authoritarianism" in which "politics, especially opposition politics, were barely tolerated".[22] Coleman's views echoed those of Northern Rhodesia's (now Zambia) Chief Secretary who in 1935 pointed

out that the Northern Rhodesian constitution did "not permit of an opposition or formation of absurd parties...."[23] Furthermore, "political parties are products of the western democracies" and "were hardly an accepted part of the new way of life of the various African societies when they gained political independence."[24] This comment by a South African writer correctly mirrors the colonial view that Africans had no democratic past upon which to build.

Yet, while pre-colonial political entities were diverse in nature, through them all the theme or spirit of a traditional type of liberalism pervaded in that rulers were expected to be answerable to the people and could be removed if they were not. As Kabunda Kayongo noted, "ancient people in Africa did not take kindly to any form of tyranny."[25] No pre-European Zambian, ruler, therefore, was an autocrat in the fashion of Shaka or kings of Rwanda, Buganda or Dahomey. If some colonial chiefs acquired the attributes of autocracy, it was precisely because colonial officials allowed them and even gave them that kind of power. For seventy years, therefore, Zambia did not experience any form of government remotely resembling a democracy in its traditional or European form. Thus, the roots of autocracy in post-independence Zambia can be said to have origins in the nature of the colonial political system which anathematized opposition parties. In Zambia, therefore, autocracy should not, and can not, be explained as part of the African heritage.

Consequently, at independence, neither UNIP nor the vast majority of politicians were sufficiently prepared to nurture liberal democracy which Britain had hurriedly put in place in

1958.[26] It was no surprise therefore, that within a year of Zambia's independence, President Kaunda, encouraged by "popular demand" was already advocating the creation of a one-party state. Furthermore, as he advocated the creation of a one-party state, the Leader Principle was also developing within UNIP for the reasons given above.

Zambians Mould an Autocrat

President Kaunda was not born an autocrat. Unlike many African leaders in the 1960s, who favoured what amounted in effect to one-man rule, he spent much of his energies on the constant task of keeping some semblance of consensus among his colleagues. However, policy differences, personality clashes and sheer personal ambition among the key political players of the day led to systematic changes in the body politic which entrenched power in the presidency as the supreme institution. He was made an autocrat by the masses and fellow UNIP leaders who individually and severally placed him above reproach. This was aided by mounting tribal dissention in UNIP and the growing administrative chaos in the government machinery. In response, therefore, President Kaunda took personal control of a vast range of government activity. He brought Foreign Affairs, the Civil Service, Defence and the running of the country's major commercial and industrial enterprises under his wing.[27] Already President Kaunda was being perceived as one who was beyond ridicule.

A test case to this effect came before parliament in July 1965, barely a year after Zambia's independence. Edward Mungoni Liso, an ANC Member of Parliament for Namwala

constituency, speaking in parliament on the Police Bill intimated that President Kaunda, at a rally in Chipata, had allegedly deplored the police for favouring the ANC. UNIP MPs were up in arms against Liso. They accused him of misusing his parliamentary privileges and ridiculing the President.

Sikota Wina, who was then Minister of Local Government and Housing and also UNIP Chief Whip in parliament, moved a motion to suspend Liso from the house for "false and unsubstantiated allegations concerning the conduct of His Excellency the President".[28] Wina continued thus:

> It is ... going to be positive proof that not only are we on this side [UNIP] not going to brook any nonsense in the running of the this country, but that once and for all the idea must be drummed home, and I mean 'drummed home', Mr. Speaker, that the name of His Excellency the President of this Republic must never be taken in vain.[29]

Wina was not alone in the pursuit of "justice". Ackson Soko, who was then Resident Minister for the Eastern Province, making his contribution to the motion to suspend Liso, said:

> As far as I am concerned, I remember when I made as mistake and apologised to my father, he said I have to whip you and after that I will accept your apology. This is the African way of life. We have to whip and then, probably the apology will be accepted later on.[30]

Soko further wondered:

> whether this western democracy is the right system for this country. It is either we adopt African democracy whereby only the headman has a say, or the chief has a say in that area, here we allow everybody, anywhere in the ... I think it is time that we took sterner measures ... This suspension which is proposed, to me is too lenient.[31]

Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe, making his contribution to the motion concurred with Soko and said:

> When you make a mistake with your father, he whips you, if you make the mistake with your mother, she will whip you, or you may not have food. This is

> our philosophy, this is our own foundation and we are going to continue because it is right.[32]

Undoubtedly, the motion was meant to intimidate and place President Kaunda beyond reproach. Little did Kapwepwe and other UNIP leaders realize that they were creating a personality cult around President Kaunda whereby his name became synonymous with "His Excellency the President".[33]

Kapwepwe further praised President Kaunda as "... the man who listens to all complaints small and big from rich and poor, the real humanitarian, a man that we may not find again in our generation". And continued, "...The hon. member for Namwala (Mr. Liso) should be punished for his untrue statement in this House against His Excellency the President".[34] Yet another UNIP Minister, Solomon Kalulu, argued that because Zambia's democracy was still at its infancy, it was "improper, [and] fatal at this stage to criticise the President because the President is a symbol of that undivided unity of this young nation".[35]

Because parliament debated issues of this nature on partisan lines, the motion was passed by 46 (UNIP) to 17 (ANC) votes. Liso was subsequently suspended from parliament despite having apologized to the Speaker. In retrospect, the Liso case had serious implications for the future of liberal democracy in Zambia. The motion to suspend Liso was less an act of restoring the respectability of the Republican President, but a deliberately calculated move to weaken the opposition, both in and outside parliament. UNIP evidently began to show signs that as a party it was against criticism, particularly if that criticism was directed at the presidency.

Inadvertently, the move contributed to the rise of UNIP's autocratic rule.

President Kaunda was thus created and defined by UNIP politicians who sought to control him and perhaps use him to their advantage. Unknowingly, the Kaunda image they created became equated to that of the nation, and therefore above them. It was too late when they realized that they had created a "Frankenstein Monster". This crystallized in 1968 when President Kaunda briefly resigned as President of UNIP and the Republic on 5 February.[36] The response by UNIP politicians to this episode, in fact, turned President Kaunda into a demi-god. It has been observed that Alexander Gray Zulu, tears in his eyes urged President Kaunda to withhold his final decision until the following day.[37] Nephas Tembo's reaction was equally flattering of President Kaunda's leadership. Tembo pointed out that:

> My first thought following the shock of Ken's resignation was the security of my family who were more than six hundred and forty kilometres away from this confusion....[38]

For both Zulu and Tembo, President Kaunda epitomised unity in Zambia, hence the fear that his resignation would lead to chaos in the country—a theme which persisted until 1991 when President Kaunda lost to President Frederick T.J. Chiluba.

Undoubtedly, these sentiments created a psychological feeling in President Kaunda that only he could lead the nation and provide security to families. It is therefore, plausible to argue that the Leader Principle within UNIP and the nation was boosted by the 5 February incident. It was a political gamble which paid dividends for President Kaunda who did not only emerge from the crisis politically stronger, but whose

image as a symbol of unity gained further weight. Later a Zambian scholar, Mwizenge S. Tembo wrote regarding President Kaunda's brief resignation:

> It had very grave potential implications for the four million people of Zambia at the time. This was a young and fragile country barely four years old. It was surrounded by white Rhodesia, racist South Africa, and white colonial Portuguese Angola and Mozambique. These regimes would have been more than jubilant to see turmoil and bloodshed in independent black Zambia. That would have been ammunition for these regimes' racist colonial campaigns.[39]

The theme that without President Kaunda Zambia would be plunged into chaos and bloodshed continued to sustain the Leader Principle as well as crystallize the ideology of togetherness. While President Kaunda carefully pursued the ideology of togetherness, he also tactfully continued to assume those tenants of an autocrat. His life having been already equated to that of the nation.

As Samuel N. Chipungu noted, "leaders became `saviours', `godsent' and `liberators'"[40] Leaders, especially the President, could not be questioned or, indeed, expected to be wrong. Consequently, Zambians "surrendered their right to make decisions and believed that what was right for the leaders was equally correct for them".[41] A personality cult had developed and was being unknowingly nurtured by Zambians themselves. President Kaunda was slowly, but surely being seen as infallible. Slogans were coined which made him appear demi-god. For example, the slogan *Kumulu ni Lesa, Panshi ni Kaunda* (In Heaven it is God, On earth it is Kaunda) portrayed that message.

Autocracy in Zambia was further strengthened in January 1969 following the first general election of December 1968.

UNIP won an overwhelming majority over ANC in parliamentary seats. On 22 January the Speaker of the National Assembly Robinson Nabulyato, refused to recognize the ANC as an official opposition in the assembly because it was too small a minority to constitute an official opposition. He argued that ANC could "form neither a quorum to execute the business of the House nor a government".[42]

The decision not to accord the ANC recognition as the official opposition had serious implications for the role of the opposition in both parliament and the nation. The decision ultimately destroyed the democratic process, since without an officially recognized opposition party Zambia became a *de facto* one party state.

Nabulyato's decision, however, should be understood within the context of the 1960s when ruling political parties in Africa were becoming increasingly intransigent. His decision was equally influenced by pronouncements by politicians in the ruling party against those in opposition parties.[43] President Kaunda had on 23 December 1968 warned that:

> I can not see how I can continue to pay a police officer or civil servant who works for Nkumbula.... How dare they bite the hand that feeds them? They must learn that it pays to belong to UNIP. Those who want to form a civil service of the opposition must cross the floor and get their pay from Harry Nkumbula.[44]

President Kaunda further ordered Justin Chimba, then Minister of Trade, Industry and Mines, to "ensure that none of the eight opposition MPs elected in Barotse Province was granted a new licence or had his old licence renewed.[45] Unashamedly, "Kaunda promised...to implement the economic reforms in order

to show that 'it pays to belong to UNIP'"[46] He was obviously behaving like a dictator.

Meanwhile President Kaunda was careful not to appear to be spearheading the crusade for declaring Zambia a one-party state. Yet, within months Zambia witnessed massive round-ups of political opponents. And as UNIP prepared for a one-party state, cleavages within UNIP continued to grow. In August 1969 President Kaunda issued a party presidential decree which dissolved the Central Committee and abolished the post of party president and vice-president. In their place he created a temporary National Committee to deal with routine party affairs.[47] He began to call himself Secretary-General of the Party. From the point of view of Zambia's constitutional set-up, President Kaunda had emerged as a virtual dictator.

He then appointed two commissions, one to redraft the UNIP constitution (which he blamed for the lack of stability and efficiency), and another to work on the question of discipline in the party. The president also reorganized and changed the relationship between the party and the government. Henceforth, the party was supreme over the government.

Simon Kapwepwe tendered his resignation as Vice-President of the party and government the same day saying:

> Some of my colleagues and fellow leaders have never recognized me as a properly elected Vice-President and have engaged in mud-slinging in the press, at public meetings and in dark corners ... The people from the northern part of Zambia—the Bemba-speaking people—have suffered physically .... They have suffered demotions and suspensions because of my being Vice-President. I cannot sacrifice any longer these people.[48]

However, on August 27, 1969 Kapwepwe withdrew his resignation from the government and said he would stay on until his term

expired in August 1970. Meanwhile factionalism continued to dominate UNIP politics.

In August 1971 Kapwepwe resigned from the government as Minister of Provincial and Local Government and Culture, and became leader of newly formed United Progressive Party (UPP). The UPP epitomised the tendency for intra-party competition in the guise of regional conflict which culminated in the secession from UNIP of some skilled politicians. The defections seriously impaired UNIP's capability for mobilizing votes.[49]

Although UPP was generally a Bemba-dominated party, it attracted those from UNIP who had always emphasized mass participation and popular control as opposed to those who emphasized the importance of unity and control from above as a basis for party organization. The former was usually Bemba dominated while the latter was usually Lozi dominated. This was the ideological basis for the founding of UPP. The new party attracted small businesspeople, middle-level civil servants, local elected councillors and some party militants from UNIP whose services during the anti-colonial struggle had seemingly gone unrewarded after 1964. The UPP was strongest on the Copperbelt. It is in this respect that Gertzel, Szeftel and Baylies argue that UPP was "an expression and consequence of competition for limited resources."[50]

Kapwepwe's resignation had a sobering effect on the UNIP leadership. A popular politician outside UNIP represented a real threat. President Kaunda was left with no choice but to go for the one-party state. What he now needed was a justification to make his move. He did not wait very long.

Because of the violence which followed, which was blamed on the new party, President Kaunda on 4 February 1972 proscribed UPP and detained Kapwepwe and one hundred and twenty-three leading UPP members.[61]

Kapwepwe was now receiving the same treatment he had helped to administer on Liso a few years earlier for challenging President Kaunda's leadership. The women who demonstrated were often stripped off semi-naked as a gesture of extreme insult directed at Kapwepwe. Kapwepwe had difficult holding meetings for his party because the police often denied his party permits. The police were afraid of reprisals if they granted permits to UPP.[62] Rumours were widespread that some UNIP members were actually followers of UPP. Yet, because of the oppressive card-checking campaign by uniformed UNIP party militants, few publicly supported UPP. The "It Pays To Belong To UNIP" mentality within UNIP prevailed. Those without UNIP cards were subjected to serious abuses of human rights. For instance, women without UNIP cards were barred from entering markets and shops. In some cases they were coerced into spending their housekeeping money on UNIP membership cards. Men without UNIP cards found themselves walking to and from work as empty buses drove away.[63]

The Times of Zambia carried a leading story about the harmful effects of the government's approach in dealing with members of the opposition. The editorials angered President Kaunda who, in January 1972 decided to replace the Editor-In-Chief, Danstan Kamana with Vernon Mwaanga, former Zambia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.[64] He told

the new Editor-In-Chief that the government did not expect to be confronted with the same thorn in the flesh.

On February 25 President Kaunda announced the cabinet's decision to establish a one-party state in Zambia through constitutional change.[55] A National Commission was set up under the Chairmanship of the Vice-President, Mainza Chona, to recommend necessary changes to the constitution in preparation for the introduction of the one-party state system. The Chona Commission reported in October 1972. Public debate was minimal.

The tenor of the Chona Report "suggested the 'liberal' influence of Zambia's new administrators and entrepreneurs, rather than the populist influence of the party."[56] The government, therefore, rejected most of the Commission's recommendations, which would have made Zambia's "one-party participatory democracy" have some semblance of democracy. The recommendation that the incumbent president be eligible to stand for a second five-year term, after which he or she would not be eligible to stand for office until yet another five-year period had elapsed, was rejected. The government also rejected the proposal for an electoral competition between three presidential candidates. Instead, the government White Paper[57] provided for one presidential candidate who was to be elected by the party's general conference.

In the end, the constitutional changes which ushered in the Second Republic reinforced party control over the presidency, while simultaneously providing for greater presidential control over the party. Contrary to President Kaunda's suggestion in March 1972 that "one-party

participatory democracy" would end the politics of patronage, the reverse was true. On December 4, 1972 the UNIP National Council discussed the Chona Report and accepted the Government White Paper on it. On December 8, by a vote of 78 to none, the National Assembly approved the second and third reading of the Constitutional Amendment Bill prohibiting all opposition parties. It established the ruling UNIP as the country's sole legal party.[58] President Kaunda signed the Bill on December 13 at a ceremony to mark its enactment.[59]

Under this Bill, no person was allowed to attempt to form a political party or organization other than UNIP. Further, no one was allowed to "belong to or assemble, associate, express opinion or do anything in sympathy with any such political party or organization."[60] While President Kaunda had in September 1963 openly turned down a proposition that he become Life President of UNIP (and *ipso facto* of Zambia),[61] the constitutional changes which ushered in the one-party state made him a *de facto* Life President. The current slogan was "ONE ZAMBIA ONE NATION; ONE NATION ONE LEADER, THAT LEADER KAUNDA WAMUYAYAYA."[62] President Kaunda never objected to the slogan. In fact he always began his political speeches by starting the slogan and letting his audience carry it to its logical conclusion.

Attempts by Nkumbula, Kapwepwe and Robert Chiluwe (a Lusaka businessman), in 1978 to challenge President Kaunda for the presidency were shattered when, by a show of hands, UNIP delegates at Mulungushi approved constitutional amendments. The most crucial amendment was the new requirement that a candidate for the post of president should have been a member

of UNIP for at least five years, with no criminal record. Such an aspirant also needed twenty supporters from each province amongst the delegates at the party congress.

The amendment effectively disqualified the three independent contestants.[83] Nkumbula had just joined UNIP following the dissolution of ANC. Kapwepwe remained outside UNIP since the days of his United Progressive Party which was banned in 1971. Chiluwe could not manage to raise the required number of supporters. Further more, Chiluwe was declared bankrupt after his bank accounts were frozen. By the law, therefore, he could not stand for the presidency or, indeed, any other public office. Within months Chiluwe was so pauperised that he could hardly afford bus fares. That is the price he paid for attempting to challenge President Kaunda.

The High Court turned down Kapwepwe and Nkumbula's appeal against their disqualification on 16 November 1978, thereby leaving President Kaunda as the only presidential candidate. He was subsequently elected with an 80.5 per cent vote of the total votes cast in a 66.7 percent poll.[84] President Kaunda had effectively become autocratic and repulsive of any democratic processes in the party and the nation.

President Kaunda's authority was further strengthened because he was seem as the only one in Zambia capable of securing allegiance from all the 73 tribes in the country. Having launched the one-party state, President Kaunda found himself with the task of performing a balancing act between UNIP old guards and new members from former opposition parties. Nkumbula joined UNIP following the signing of the Choma Declaration in June 1973.[85] President Kaunda appeared

secure, but silently worried about Kapwepwe's refusal to join UNIP.

While President Kaunda may have emerged as an autocrat, he was unquestionably helped by the behaviour of some cabinet ministers who more often than not showed extreme caution towards decision making. Because of too much consultation, they inadvertently concentrated political power in President Kaunda's hands. Earlier in his rule President Kaunda was willing to delegate, but his ministers were reluctant to take initiative.[66] No man can be a dictator alone. President Kaunda was surrounded by over zealous sycophants who went out of their way to show loyalty to the party and the President in particular.

The notorious uniformed party militants were allowed by the UNIP leadership to mete out punishment to anyone accused of disrespect for the party leadership. These individuals terrorised people at bus stops, at markets, shops and even at places of work. They were above reproach. UNIP, particularly under the one-party state rule, gave them a silent encouragement. Examples of their activities are many. As late as 1990, the party militants were still very active.

In January 1990 an Assistant Registrar in charge of Personnel at the University of Zambia became a victim of the party militants.[67] He was forcibly removed from his office at the University of Zambia and carried to a waiting van. He was then driven to the Civic Centre. His fate followed a report that he had relieved a University employee of her duties for constantly leaving her office to attend to party matters. The employee involved was, at the time, Women's

League Ward Chairperson, and Trustee of the University of Zambia Allied Workers Union. At the Civic Centre the Assistant Registrar was told that what sacked worker was doing while attending party meetings was more important than what he did at the University.[68] He was therefore ordered to reinstate her and told that "what you should know is that the University exists because of the party and you are supposed to respect it".[69]

Similar incidents are plenty in Zambia,s political history, particularly during the one party-state era. Because party militants helped to sustain the autocratic rule by President Kaunda, they were not disciplined for their actions against administrators who tried to enforce discipline at places of work. In fact, party militants were the law onto themselves. No one dared to challenge them, at least not openly.

The Demise of Autocracy

Throughout the period that UNIP was in power, more especially since 1968 when election of party leaders produced disaffection, the party did away with elections. This reluctance to hold free and fair elections for party posts remained perhaps the single most important evidence of lack of democracy in UNIP. Most UNIP leaders were uncomfortable with the idea of challenging President Kaunda for the presidency. He was perceived as the only one in the country who was best suited to rule Zambia.[70]

However, the transformation in the country's demography changed the way such opinions were perceived. As more and

more Zambians became permanently urbanised, and as the rural-urban links became weaker, people looked more to the state for survival. Initially the state was able to meet the needs of the urbanites through the policy of subsidising food and other societal requisites. However, as the long economic depression which began in the mid 1970s worsened in the 1980s, most urbanites became disillusioned with government performance. While it had been easy to satisfy the rural population, the urbanites were more difficult to buy off. The unemployed youthful urbanites became a source of worry for the Kaunda government. Several schemes were developed but they all failed to successfully solve the problem. Because of frustration, the urbanites became easily involved in food riots which rocked the late 1980s. These culminated in the June 1990 food riot which precipitated the Luchembe coup attempt.[71] It was this coup attempt which effectively broke President Kaunda's grip to power and led to the formation of a pressure group, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD).

Faced with these mounting challenges, President Kaunda felt insecure, vulnerable and excessively sensitive to criticism. Times had changed. Zambians had also changed their allegiance. They were more supportive of the ideas about the need to remove the one-party state system. MMD political rallies attracted thousands of people. Less and less people openly supported UNIP. Even the notorious uniformed party militants were no longer as forceful as was the case a few months earlier. Most had switched sides and were looking forward to change.

More importantly perhaps, the collapse of autocracy in Zambia can be better understood when one takes into account the fact that some leading members of the UNIP Central Committee declined to stand for re-appointment during the 1991 UNIP Mulungushi extraordinary conference. Those who offered to step down include Elijah Mudenda, Reuben Kamanga and Gray Zulu. Obviously, the retirement of these seasoned UNIP politicians from active politics extremely weakened President Kaunda's hold to political power. His efforts to replace them with young inexperienced leaders failed to sustain him in the position of power.

Furthermore, some of the more experienced politicians had already identified themselves with the MMD. People like H. Mulemba, the former UNIP Secretary General and then Zambia's High Commissioner to Canada, had since 1988 become an MP and increasingly critical of UNIP policies. He was among the first MPs to move over to the MMD and was indeed a founder member of MMD. The MMD also gathered further support from most of those who had suffered humiliation during the one-party state era. Even the recently pardoned coup plotters like Edward Shamwana supported the MMD.

President Kaunda's position was evidently weakened. Just as the Zambians had created and defined autocratic President Kaunda, they unmade the autocrat by simply denying him the support he always enjoyed. Consequently, from an uncompromising refusal to change from one-party state to pluralism, President Kaunda began to soften. He announced that there would be a referendum to decide whether or not Zambia should return to plural politics. Yet, as pressure

mounted, this was abandoned. Instead a national election was called for October 1991. UNIP and the MMD (which had been transformed into a political party) were to participate. This followed the change in the constitution to allow opposition parties to legally operate in Zambia.

With this newly found freedom, several other parties emerged. The most important being the MMD and UNIP. During the October 1991 presidential and parliamentary elections MMD overwhelmingly defeated UNIP. F.T.J. Chiluba was elected president, and on 1st November 1991 he was sworn in as Zambia's second republican president.

Chiluba's accession to the political throne in Zambia's political history marked the end of an era—the end of the long dawn—according to The Economist.[72] The twenty years of autocracy has also taught Zambians one major lesson. Zambians will never again surrender their political rights to one individual. Thus the success or failure of liberal democracy to day would depend on whether or not Zambians internalized the problems of one-party rule. In another decade or so, some one will be able to chronical the experience of the Third Republic. This paper has, nonetheless, shown that the concentration of political power in President Kaunda's hands was only possible because the people made it possible. The Zambian society hero-worshipped the president so much that with time, they managed to make an autocrat out of an otherwise democrat. With the return to liberal democracy, it is hopped that Zambians will guard against creating another autocrat out of President Chiluba by avoiding hero-worshipping him as they did President Kaunda.

NOTES

1. Crawford Young, "The African Colonial State and Its Political Legacy," in Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan (eds), The Precarious Balance: State and Society in Africa (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1988), p. 57.

2. Young, "The African Colonial State," p. 57.

3. Larry Diamond and Dennis Galvan, "Sub-Saharan Africa," in Robert Wesson (ed), Democracy: A World Survey (New York: Praeger, 1987), p. 84.

4. S.E. Finer, Comparative Government (Handsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 441.

5. Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 3-4.

6. Richard Sandbrook, "Liberal Democracy in Africa: A Socialist-Revisionist Perspective," Canadian Journal of African Studies, 22, 2 (1988), p. 241.

7. For detailed discussion of these features, see: Friedrich and Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy, pp. 10-13.

8. Zambia Daily Mail, Wednesday, 3 February, 1993.

9. For details see, Anthony Martin, Minding Their Own Business: Zambia's Struggle Against Western Control (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 215.

10. Kapasa Makasa, Zambia:s March to Political Freedom (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1985), pp. 115-116.

11. Kapasa Makasa, Zambia's March to Political Freedom, (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1985), p. 94.

12. Keesings Contemporary Archives, 14, (1963-64), 19889.

13. Party Archives, ANC 7/63, Sikota Wina to Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, 10 December 1959. At the time of writing Wina was a member of UNIP and his letter was secretly written to Nkumbula. Undoubtedly, these sentiments were meant to deal with the political situation at the time, but they nonetheless form the background to the ideology of togetherness as advanced by Kaunda.

14. Kenneth D. Kaunda and Colin M. Morris, A Humanist in Africa: Letters to Colin Morris From Kenneth David Kaunda (London: Longmans, 1966), p. 84.

15. Cherry Gertzel, et al The Dynamics of the One-Party State in Zambia (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 7.

16. Keesings Contemporary Archives, 15 (1965-66), 21511.

17. For a detailed discussion of this argument, see Thomas Rasmussen, "Political Competition and One-Party Dominance in Zambia", The Journal of Modern African Studies, 7, 3 (1983), pp. 410-411.

18. Anonymous, The Northern News, Tuesday, 27 January 1953.

19. Makasa, Zambia's March to Political Freedom.

20. Party Archives ANC 7/63, Wina to Nkumbula, 10 December, 1959.

21. PA ANC 17/63 M. Sipalo to H.M. Nkumbula, 11 November 1957.

22. J.S. Coleman, "Economic Growth and Political Reorientation", in Melville J. Herskovits and Mitchell Harwitz (eds), Economic Transition in Africa (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 396.

23. H.C. Donald C. Mackenzie-Kennedy, Northern Rhodesia Chief Secretary to Stewart Gore-Browne, 12 June 1935, cited in Robert I. Rotberg, Black Heart: Gore-Browne and the Politics of Multiracial Zambia (Berkeley: Los Angeles, 1977), 168.

24. J.J.N. Cloete, Emergent Africa: Political and Administrative Trends (Pretoria: Africa Institute, 1966), 11.

25. Kabunda Kayongo, "One-Party States in Pre-Colonial Africa," Multi-Party News, No. 2 (22 September-4 October 1990), 5.

26. PRO DO 35/4636/333 Draft White Paper on the Constitutional Proposals for Northern Rhodesia, February 1958, p. 8, para. 19.

27. Africa Confidential, September, 1969, p. 4.

28. Official Verbatim Report of the Debates of the Second Session (Resumed) of the First National Assembly, Hansard No. 4, 13th July to 22nd September, 1965, p. 182.

29. Hansard, No. 4, 22 July, 1965, p. 189.

30. Hansard No. 4, 22 July 1965, p. 210.

31. Hansard No. 4, 22 July, 1965, pp. 209-210.

32. Hansard No. 4 22 July 1965, p. 199-200.

33. Little wonder that President F.T.J Chiluba, Zambia's second republican president, declined to be refereed to as "His Excellency the President". Instead he preferred to be simply refereed to as "Mr. President".

34. Hansard No. 4, 22 July 1965, p. 201.

35. Hansard No. 4, 22 July 1965, p. 222.

36. On the details of this see Sikota Wina, A Night Without A President (Lusaka: Multimedia Publications, 1985).

37. Wina, A Night Without A President, 45.

38. Wina, A Night Without A President, 46.

39. Mwizenge S. Tembo, "Zambia by Zambians', Canadian Journal of African Studies, 22, 1 (1988), 151.

40. S.N. Chipungu, "The Third Republic Needs Democratic Vigilance", The Weekly Post, 5-11 June 1992, 4.

41. Chipungu, "The Third Republic", 4.

42. Keesings Contemporary Archives, 17 (1968-69), 23321.

43. Under different circumstances, Nabulyato made a different ruling in which he accorded UNIP the status of the officially recognized party in parliament, despite its decimal performance during the October 1991 general election. The Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) had made it very clear that they cherished an opposition, both in parliament and outside. The Speaker, Nabulyato therefore, made a ruling which reflected the atmosphere of the 1990s.

44. Keesings Contemporary Archives, 17 (1968-69), 23321.

45. Keesings Contemporary Archives, 17 (1968-69), 23321.

46. Fola Soremekan, "The Challenge of Nation Building: Neo-Humanism and Politics in Zambia, 1967-1969", Geneva Africa, 9, 1 (1970), 24.

47. Africa Research Bulletin, (August 1-31, 1969), p. 1494.

48. Africa Research Bulletin, (August 1-31, 1969), p. 1495. Kapwepwe's claims that the Bemba-speaking people suffered physically because he was Zambia's Vice president do not reflect African political realities. In fact the conflict within UNIP centred around the party leadership which reflected Bemba dominance. (See table VI). Because of the patronage system, Bemba-speaking people were more secure than is acknowledged.

49. Cherry Gertzel, et al "Introduction: The Making of the One-Party State," in Cherry Gertzel, et al (eds), The

Dynamics of the One-Party State in Zambia, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 14.

50. Gertzel, et. al "Introduction," p. 14.

51. Africa Research Bulletin, (February 1-29, 1972), p. 2377.

52. Kaunda had warned already that he would dismiss any police officer who appeared to have been serving the interest of the opposition.

53. Africa Confidential 1972.

54. Africa Confidential, 1972.

55. Africa Research Bulletin, (February 1-29, 1972), p. 2377.

56. Cherry Gertzel, et al, The Dynamics of the One-Party State, p. 18.

57. Summary of Recommendations Accepted by Government, Government Paper No. 1 of 1972 (1972).

58. Congress MP's walked out in protest and therefore did not participate in the voting.

59. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 19 (1972), p. 25676.

60. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 19 (1973), p. 25676.

61. Colin Legum (ed.), Zambia: Independence and Beyond, the Speeches of Kenneth Kaunda, (London, Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 154-155.

62. *Wamuyayaya* means "for ever and ever" in Chinyanja.

63. Keesings Contemporary Archives, 25 February 1979, 29450.

64. Caroln Baylies and Morris Szeftel, "Elections in the One-Party State", in Cherry Gertzel, et al (eds), The Dynamics of the One Party State in Zambia (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 198-), 29.

65. Africa Confidential, 14, 14 (1973), 8; London Times, 17 July 1973.

66. Africa Confidential, January 1973, 5.

67. See: Times of Zambia, Saturday 6 January 1990.

68. Times of Zambia, Saturday 6 January 1990.

69. Times of Zambia, Saturday 6 January 1990.

70. Such views continue to be held by some UNIP supporters long after President Kaunda's defeat in October 1991. Former UNIP MP for Chipili maintained during an informal discussion that there was no one in his view who was best suited to rule Zambia but Kaunda. (11 June 1992, at Marshlands, Lusaka).

71. See: Beatwell Chisala, Lt Luchembe Coup Attempt, (Lusaka: Multimedia Publications, 1991).

72. The Economist, 7 July 1990, p. 15.