

Between Ideology and Policy: Dilemmas of Leadership in the Postcolonial 1960s in Zambia

Lynn Schler

ABSTRACTS

Im postkolonialen Afrika wurden Prozesse des nation-building in zahlreichen Staaten mit sozialistischen Strategien zur wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung angegangen. Nach einer Dekade jedoch waren diese sozialistischen Entwicklungspläne gescheitert und wurden dann aufgegeben. Das Schicksal dieser Projekte verkörpert viele der größeren politischen Herausforderungen in den 1960er Jahren. Kafuba und Kafulafuta waren von Israelis gegründete Kooperativensiedlungen im Kupfergürtel Zambias, die den israelischen Moshav-Siedlungen nachgebildet waren. Sie wurden zu Vorzeigeprojekten der Ideologie des humanistischen Sozialismus unter Kenneth Kaunda, wurden aber aufgegeben, als sie in Konflikt mit Zambias übergeordneten geopolitischen Ansichten gerieten. Diese Fallstudie veranschaulicht, wie politische Führer zwischen Ideologie und Politik verhandelten und letztendlich zentrale Aspekte ihrer nationalistischen Ideologie aufgaben.

Throughout postcolonial Africa, processes of nation-building were inaugurated with socialist strategies for achieving economic development, but by the end of the first decade of independence, socialist development schemes had failed to produce anticipated benefits and were abandoned. The fate of these projects embodied many of the broader challenges facing postcolonial leadership in the 1960s. Kafuba and Kafulafuta were cooperative settlements established by Israelis in the Zambian Copperbelt and modelled on the Israeli moshav. These successful schemes became the flagship models of Kenneth Kaunda's humanist ideology, but Kaunda cancelled the projects when they came into conflict with Zambia's broader geopolitical concerns. This case study provides insights into how leaders negotiated between ideology and politics, and ultimately abandoned key aspects of their nationalist ideologies.

In many parts of the world, the 1960s are remembered as a time of revolutionary change. Particularly in the United States and Europe, the 1960s was a time of new possibilities, new solidarities, new ideologies of liberation. As an era characterized by Jameson as one of “unexpected political innovation” and shifting “conditions of possibility”, the 1960s saw the emergence of social and political forces staking out new claims for various kinds of freedom and justice.¹ Jameson places Africa at the centre of global forces setting the radicalized tone, and claims that resistance to colonialism was a trigger for mass movements for social and political change in the first world.² For historians of Africa, the charge that the roots of the revolutionary era in the West can be found in the process of decolonization in British and French Africa can raise some serious questions about what kinds of revolutions were actually brought about within the continent itself over the course of the 1960s. Looking back at this era from African vantage points, we see a highly divergent trajectory from the leftist, anti-war, feminist, and civil rights rebellions that left indelible marks on societies in North America and Europe. As Allman wrote claimed, “for African countries that won their independence in the decade before 1968, the late sixties and early seventies were, more than anything and with few exceptions, years of reversal and retrenchment.”³ Indeed, by the end of first decade of decolonization, it seemed that the idealist visions of national liberation had given birth to a host of disappointments, reversals, and broken promises.

Historians are increasingly turning to the 1960s to answer the question, “what went wrong?” How did lofty visions of social justice and freedom so quickly produce a host of authoritarian, gatekeeper, and patrimonial regimes that discarded popular agendas in struggles for consolidation and survival? Why did visionary leaders give up (so quickly and completely) on the political, economic, and social imaginaries of decolonization, and immerse themselves instead a narrow set of deliberations that reflected immeasurable ideological and practical concessions and compromises?

Particularly with regard to socialist agendas, the dramatic failures and abandonments of the visions that ushered in decolonization was particularly pronounced. Throughout postcolonial Africa, processes of nation-building were inaugurated with socialist strategies for achieving economic development and social justice, but by the end of the first decade of independence, the failures of socialism to produce material and social benefits led to disillusionment and disappointment across the continent. Leadership was unable to successfully mobilize socialist strategies to deliver on the promises of anti-colonial resistance, and the reasons for these failures have increasingly preoccupied historians. We have much to learn from close scrutiny of postcolonial policies and their abandonment. The fate of socialist projects in postcolonial Africa embodied many of the broader paradigms and trajectories that characterized the 1960s in general. Thus, an investigation of

1 F. Jameson, *Periodizing the 60s*, in: *Social Text* 9/10 (1984), pp. 178–209, at pp. 182–183.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 180.

3 J. Allman, *The Fate of All of Us: African Counterrevolutions and the Ends of 1968*, in: *The American Historical Review* 123 (2018) 3, pp. 728–732, at p. 730.

these agendas and their outcomes can provide a useful point of entry for understanding the broader dilemmas and challenges that shadowed and curtailed the imagined futures of national liberation movements.

This article will investigate the rise and fall of the Kafuba and Kafulafuta cooperative settlements established in the Zambian Copperbelt regime under the regime of President Kenneth Kaunda (b. 1924). These cooperative settlements were modelled on Israeli *moshav* settlements, and established and run under the supervision of Israeli technical advisors who were brought to Zambia. After overcoming some initial obstacles, the schemes emerged as highly successful producers of surpluses in the agricultural and poultry sectors. Kaunda was immensely pleased with this success, and he often boasted that the Israeli-led settlements were the key to the success of his vision for democratic socialism known as “humanism”. But on the eve of plans to expand the Israeli-led cooperative programme throughout Zambia, Kaunda suddenly reversed course and severed ties with Israel, sending the technical experts home and bringing an abrupt end to the *moshav* programme.

It could be argued that Kaunda was simply following a directive of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) that mandated member states to sever ties with Israel in the wake of the 1973 October War. But Kaunda’s decision to follow suit with the OAU order must be understood within the specific geopolitical context that characterized the history of Zambia in the first decade of independence. Kaunda’s willingness to abandon a programme that he embraced as the flagship of his humanist agenda was rooted in a broader range of political and economic calculations. Thus, the history of the establishment, expansion and demise of the Israeli-led schemes teaches us that socialist agendas were often only one part of a complex web of policies and priorities facing postcolonial leadership in Africa. This article will trace the history of the rise and fall of the Copperbelt cooperatives in the first decade of Zambian independence. This case study provides poignant testimony of how postcolonial negotiations between ideology and politics often resulted in the abandonment of imaginaries that could not be realized autonomously from regional and international relations.

1. Kenneth Kaunda’s Humanism

The processes of decolonization and nation-building in postcolonial Africa were primarily shaped by leaders and their cohorts who assumed control following the departure of colonial powers. As Crawford Young wrote, “From the earliest postcolonial moments the central role of the political leader became apparent.”⁴ Robert Rotberg also emphasized the pivotal role played by leadership in determining the course of history for postcolonial states, claiming “leaders matter as much as do many external influences, internal

structures, and institution constraints.”⁵ Postcolonial leaders viewed their obligations in broad terms, and embraced a set of responsibilities that included not just formulating policies but also conveying “a vision” for postcolonial society. In most cases, leaders saw it their duty to promote an ideological platform as the foundation to their political and economic agenda. Young described these efforts as leaders’ response to “the legitimization imperative” that weighed on upon them.⁶ To broaden and solidify their appeal among the masses, political leaders offered an inspirational set of ideas that enabled an epistemological liberation from colonial rule, a process defined by Ndlovu-Gatsheni as the “decolonial epistemic.” The decolonial epistemic encouraged the masses to imagine and then construct a different future by embracing “alternative ways of knowing.”⁷ According to Rotberg, the most effective leaders were able to articulate and convey their ideologies in accessible terms, even in the absence of a practical strategy for realizing them. As he wrote,

*they have a grand but simple plan. They deal in destinies, dreams, and ultimate purposes, not necessarily in pedestrian and practical goals. They know what they want to achieve in large sweeps and yet often without exact specifics, for their nations and peoples. They also purport to know what their citizens want and value, incorporating those never-before-appreciated wants and values into a new vision.*⁸

Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia was indeed one of the postcolonial leaders who embraced his role as a moral visionary. Kaunda developed a vision for postcolonial Zambia through a philosophy that he called “humanism.” The main tenets of humanism were outlined in Kaunda’s book, *A Humanist in Africa* (1966), and the philosophy was promoted as a set of guiding principles for nation-building after independence.⁹ According the Meebelo, humanism was both future-oriented and rooted in the values and norms of precolonial societies.¹⁰ As Kaunda wrote in 1968,

*Zambian Humanism is something that evolved from what you might call the normal way of life of a man in a traditional society. At the same time that it takes into consideration the very changed environment in which he lives.*¹¹

5 R.I. Rotberg, *Transformative Political Leadership: Making a Difference in the Developing World*, Chicago 2012, p. 6.

6 Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, p. 131.

7 S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Decolonial Epistemic Perspective and Pan-African Unity in the 21st Century*, in: M. Muchie/ P. Lukhele-Olorunju/O.B. Akpor (eds.), *The African Union Ten Years After: Solving African Problems with Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance*, Pretoria 2013, pp. 385–409, at pp. 396–397.

8 Rotberg, *Transformative Political Leadership*, p. 21.

9 K.L. Stevinson, *Humanism as Political Ideology: A Study Of Its Role In The Evolution Of The Leadership Of Kenneth Kaunda Of Zambia*, MA thesis, Haverford College 1985 (<<http://hdl.handle.net/10066/6162>>), p. 2; and A. Sekwat, *Beyond African Humanism: Economic Reform in Post-Independent Zambia*, in: *International Journal of Organisation Theory and Behaviour* 3 (2000), pp. 521–546, at p. 523. See also K. Kaunda, *Zambia Shall be Free: An Autobiography*, London 1962.

10 H.S. Meebelo, *Main Currents of Zambian Humanist Thought*, Lusaka 1973, p. 1.

11 *Zambian Mail*, 5 January 1968, quoted in Meebelo, *Main Currents of Zambian Humanist Thought*, p. 1.

Kaunda merged socialist, Christian, and traditional African values into set of ideas that celebrated social harmony and tolerance.¹² A modern articulation of a heritage deeply rooted in traditional societies, humanism emphasized communalism, egalitarianism, and mutual-aid. At the centre of Kaunda's ideas was the notion of a society that recognized "the high value of man and respect for human dignity" and an "intense belief in the possibilities of Man."¹³ As he said in his address to the UN General Assembly in December 1964:

*Our African personality contains elements of simplicity, of service, of community which all the world needs. ... This is the African substitute for the capitalism, socialism, and communism of the East and West. We offer it as our contribution to the world sum of experience.*¹⁴

Tordoff and Molten claimed that the humanist philosophy was the foundation Kaunda's most important political achievements, as it initiated a process for redefining the dominant values of society in the postcolonial era. They claimed that humanism's emphasis on individual welfare became both a collective goal and a blueprint for government policy. As they wrote,

*The state is obliged, as are political leaders and other institutions, to serve the interest of ordinary workers and villagers. The economic system must exist to benefit primarily the citizens of the country and, within the country, the State must limit exploitation. The Humanist's assertion of the importance of every man leads on to a belief in non-racialism and non-violence, and a desire to avoid sectional and class conflict. This absence of conflict in turn enables stress to be placed on communal cooperation for economic development, social betterment, and national security.*¹⁵

Tordoff and Molten applauded Kaunda for engendering a process that inspired Zambian citizens to reflect upon what kind of society they wanted to create.¹⁶ Likewise, Mkandawire has credited humanism as a key to the evolution of a national identity in postcolonial Zambia.

Some scholars have been less enthusiastic about the significance of humanism in shaping postcolonial policy of the Zambian state. Kaunda's critics claim that humanism was an inconsistent blending of many ideas, resulting in a philosophy that was largely abstract and hollow. Kaunda relied on romanticised portrayals of traditional African values and modes of living. As he wrote,

12 I.A. Kanu, Kenneth Kaunda and the Quest for An African Humanist Philosophy, in: International Journal of Scientific Research 3 (2014) 8, pp. 375–377, at p. 376.

13 J.M. Mwanakatwe, End of Kaunda Era, Lusaka 1994, p. 50; Kaunda, A Humanist in Africa, p. 21.

14 C. Legum (ed.), Zambia: From Independence to Beyond: The Speeches of Kenneth Kaunda, London 1966, p. 195.

15 T. Mkandawire, African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development, London 2005, p. 197.

16 R. Molten/W. Tordoff, Independent Zambia: achievements and prospects, in: W. Tordoff (ed.), Politics in Zambia, Manchester 1974, pp. 370–371.

*Africans are great optimists; they have a sunny outlook and hate gloom and pessimism. This is why a humanist outlook accords well with our temperament whilst grim Marxism and the narrow Christianity which preaches endlessly about the deprivation of Man do not.*¹⁷

Many have criticized the elusiveness of humanism as a set of ideas. Kaunda's sweeping claims included vague statements such as, "Africa may be the last place where Man can still be Man."¹⁸ Likewise, Kaunda's pronouncements of a "man-centred society," were non-specific:

*We in Zambia intend to do everything in our power to keep our society Man-centred. For it is in that what might be described as African civilisation is embodied and indeed if modern Africa has anything to contribute to this troubled world, it is in this direction that it should be.*¹⁹

Both Kaunda's contemporaries as well as scholars of later generations have engaged with humanism by merely echoing some of its ambiguity, such as Mwanakatwe's description: "It puts man at the centre of all activity."²⁰ Pronouncements such as these led Martin to conclude,

*The weakness of humanism, and it is a serious one, is that [it is] extremely vague and lacking in determinate application to concrete situations. The humanist umbrella is so wide as to leave very few specific policy alternatives out in the rain.*²¹

Despite the ambiguities, Kaunda went to great lengths to promote humanism. In a variety of mediums including books, speeches, newspaper articles, and interviews, he passionately espoused the tenets of humanism as the national ideology.²² It was mandated that humanism be built into the curriculum of schools and universities. Civil servants were required to demonstrate their knowledge of the philosophy in order to be promoted, and the media was required to popularize the ideas. The Ministry of National Guidance was also created to educate the public on humanism through the organization of seminars and conferences.²³ According to Chan, Kaunda had to rely on a handful of foreigners to elaborate on the philosophy in order to give humanism some "intellectual flesh."²⁴ But the doctrine remained largely abstract, and according to Chan, few Zambian scholars had any expertise or interest in humanism. Discontent with the relentless promotion of

17 Kaunda, *A Humanist in Africa*, p. 36.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

19 J. Hatch, *Two African Statesmen*, Chicago IL 1976, p. 214.

20 Mwanakatwe, *End of the Kaunda Era*, p. 49.

21 A. Martin, *Minding Their Own Business: Zambia*, New York 1975, p. 107.

22 S. Chan, *Kaunda and Southern Africa: Image and Reality in Foreign Policy*, London 1992, p. 18.

23 Mwanakatwe, *End of the Kaunda Era*, p. 50.

24 Chan, *Kaunda and Southern Africa*, p. 20.

the ideology could be seen in 1982, when Zambian students protested the requirement to study the philosophy that they denounced as “an unscientific sham.”²⁵

For Kaunda, the very articulation of his own philosophy had political and symbolic importance. In promoting humanism, Kaunda nurtured his image as a postcolonial leader of great stature, similarly to Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah.²⁶ At the same time, according to Hatch, Kaunda hoped that his philosophy would help to distinguish him from the other leaders, particularly Nyerere. Thus, while Nyerere’s socialism was centred on institutions that would foster social harmony, Kaunda emphasized individual responsibility, and “a personal conversion to spiritual principles.”²⁷ Kaunda acknowledged the echoes of more general streams of African socialism that were apparent in his philosophy:

*One cannot be a Humanist without being a socialist. It is virtually impossible. This is so because socialism, to a Humanist, is the stage of Human development attained just before that of the final one which is Humanism. On the other hand, one can be a socialist without being a Humanist.*²⁸

Despite these similarities with African socialism, Kaunda insisted that his humanism was a homegrown philosophy deeply rooted in local traditions, and the central tenets of humanism – communalism, inclusiveness, egalitarianism, and mutual-aid – were in fact features of precolonial societies.²⁹ As he said in his address to the UN General Assembly following independence:

*Our economic life has always been based on what I should like to describe as traditional cooperative way of living. This the African substitute for the capitalism, socialism and communism of the East and West. We offer it as our contribution to the world sum of experience.*³⁰

Kaunda’s claims that humanism was based on communalism and egalitarianism enabled an easy embrace of cooperatives as the building blocks for economic development. Similarly to socialist regimes elsewhere, Kaunda’s party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), upheld cooperatives as the key instrument for massive investments in economic and social structures in post-independence Zambia. At independence, Kaunda’s government was confronted with increasing numbers of youths migrating to cities in search of work, leading to unemployment and food shortages. Hoping to encourage young men back to return to rural areas and agricultural work, Kaunda announced the Chifubu Appeal in 1965.³¹ This programme offered citizens incentives to establishment

25 Ibid., p. 21.

26 Ibid., p. 18.

27 Hatch, *Two African Statesmen*, p. 247.

28 Ibid., p. 245.

29 Meebelo, *Main Currents of Zambian Humanist Thought*, pp. 1–5.

30 Legum, *Zambia: From Independence to Beyond*, p. 195.

31 F. Albinson, *Cooperative Education in Zambia*, in: F. Albinson / J. Norbeck / R. Sundén (eds.), *Folk Development Education and Democracy in a Development Perspective*, Stockholm 2002, pp. 13–29, at p. 23.

government-sponsored cooperatives, and Kaunda appealed to directly to Zambians to take part in the initiative:

I want [a] kind of cooperative society ... to produce vegetables only, on the Copperbelt. I am ready to go forward and those who are interested may come forward. Vegetable growers on the Copperbelt must join with those interested in growing fruit around the Copperbelt. These people must come together. The money is there and the know-how is there. We have lined up these things. We are waiting for the response from the country. The money is there for those who are prepared to work hard. To work hard with their hands, their brains, their minds, their hearts. It is a challenge to you, not to me. I am giving you the money. Come forward. I want to see you ... For the vegetables and fruit cooperatives, I want the first twenty-four volunteers next week. For egg producing societies – I want the first volunteers – twenty-four – next week. We shall enlarge on numbers as times goes on. There is no time to be lost. What are you doing in town – loafing? There is a farm waiting for you.³²

In the framework of the Chifubu Appeal, the government provided a range of grants and subsidies for establishing producer cooperatives, and thousands of Zambians mobilized to take advantage of these resources. By 1968, there were 609 farming cooperatives registered, with a membership of 11,500 farmers.³³ Newly founded cooperatives were offered generous subsidies for each acre of land that underwent stumping, and this led thousands of farmers to clear land for agriculture. However, these lands were never actually cultivated, as peasants had merely sought to take advantage of the £15 offered by the Department of Cooperatives for every acre that had been cleared. It was soon apparent that huge sums had been wasted on the initiative aimed at increasing cultivation. Most of the cooperatives that had been established under the Appeal were non-operational, as peasants had no knowledge or training with regard to cooperative farming.³⁴ René Dumont, a French agronomist who conducted a survey of agricultural development in Zambia at this time, summed up his estimation of the initiative: “The Zambian peasants have gone in for co-operative farming not because of their African tradition of mutual help, but because they realised it was the best way to get money out of the government.” He estimated that the average peasant was able to £6,000 in subsidies through the loans and grants offered by the government.³⁵ Beyond material assistance, the Department of Cooperatives did not offer any instruction or support for cooperative farming.³⁶ As Dumont wrote, “It would be rash to say that the African peasants want to move towards socialism, because first they have to have a clearer idea of what it is.”³⁷

32 Legum, *Zambia: From Independence to Beyond*, p. 212.

33 S.C. Lombard, *The Growth of Cooperatives in Zambia, 1914–1971*, Lusaka 1971, p. 18.

34 S.A. Quick, *Humanism or Technocracy? Zambia's Farming Cooperatives, 1965–1972*, Lusaka 1978, pp. 50–51.

35 R. Dumont/M. Mazoyer, *Socialisms and Development*, London 1973, p. 128.

36 Quick, *Humanism or Technocracy?*, p. 56.

37 Dumont/Mazoyer, *Socialisms and Development*, p. 135.

Kaunda's critics have charged that the failures of policies such as the Chifubu Appeal were linked to the more general gaps between rhetoric and policy that largely characterized his leadership. Scholars have highlighted the ambiguous links between Kaunda's promotions of humanist ideology in principle, alongside his wavering commitment to successfully turning these lofty ideas into practical solutions for Zambian development. Mwanakatwe has claimed that this inconsistency was Kaunda's greatest weakness, and he failed to follow through on a clear policy agenda for addressing Zambia's economic problems.³⁸ With regard to initiatives such as the Chifubu Appeal subsidies, both Macola and Bowman have argued that Kaunda and his party, the UNIP, were in fact more motivated by their desire to broaden their political base and appease supporters than actually succeed in a policy initiative.³⁹

Others have been more sympathetic to Kaunda, claiming that Kaunda did not in fact have the autonomy to implement Zambian humanism to its fullest potential. Shaw, for example, argued that Kaunda's authority and control were highly limited by Zambia's economic and political dependence upon international and regional markets and politics. Shaw holds that Zambia's dependence meant that Kaunda was limited in both his choices and his power to influence, and as a result, Humanism was never to become "either a revolution or a reality."⁴⁰ The following examination of Kaunda's efforts to promote his domestic agenda for development based on the Israeli *moshav* model demonstrates these broader dynamics. It will be seen that Kaunda's commitment to his own socialist agenda was curtailed by priorities and concerns that were located beyond Zambia's borders. By the end of the first decade of independence, it was clear that domestic issues in postcolonial Zambia were inherently tied to political and economic struggles far beyond Kaunda's influence.

2. Israeli Aid to Zambia

Months before Zambian independence, Israeli representatives arrived in Lusaka to extend an offer of technical assistance in anticipation of the formal departure of the British. The Israelis proposed programmes in education, communications, and security. These overtures to Zambia were part of a broader, massive outreach that Israel was making in Africa in the 1960s. Through its international aid agency, MASHAV, established in 1958, Israel sought to nurture ties with newly-independent African states. Between 1958 and 1973, thousands of Africans attended seminars and courses sponsored by MASHAV in Israel and Africa, and thousands of Israeli technical experts worked in local communi-

38 Mwanakatwe, *End of the Kaunda Era*, p. 61.

39 G. Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa: A Biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula*, New York 2010; A. Bowman, *Mass Production or Production by the Masses? Tractors, Cooperatives, and the Politics of Rural Development in Post-independence Zambia*, in: *The Journal of African History* 52 (2011) 2, pp. 201–221.

40 T.M. Shaw, *The Foreign Policy of Zambia: ideology and interests*, in: *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 14 (1976) 1, pp. 79–105, at pp. 79–80.

ties in every region of the continent.⁴¹ Israel hoped that these new relationships would produce diplomatic revenues, and off-set international critiques of Israeli policies within the framework of the Arab-Israeli conflict. One of MASHAV's flagship aid programmes involved assistance in regional planning for the establishment and running of cooperative agricultural schemes. These schemes were based on the Israeli *moshav*-cooperative agricultural settlements based on small-holder farmers. As Israel was aware of Kaunda's enthusiasm for cooperative farming, it offered Zambia assistance with the faltering Chifubu Appeal.⁴²

For Zambian politicians, relations to Israel were always conducted under the shadow of the Middle East conflict, and some were concerned about the diplomatic fallout of establishing strong ties to Israel after independence. Kaunda had asserted that Zambia's humanist foreign policy would nurture good relations with all nations and be strictly non-aligned. As he wrote on the eve of Independence:

*Zambia's policy of positive nonalignment, entered around our philosophy of the inherent worth and dignity of man as man ... is an affirmation that Africa's way must be neither for East nor West, but initially directed towards the emancipation of the continent and her people. In this task of fostering the African revolution, the morality of an action counts more than its form or conditions.*⁴³

Despite Kaunda's proclamations, within the Zambian Foreign Ministry, there were some reluctance to accept Israeli offers of aid. A fear of appearing to take sides in the Middle East conflict loomed in the early relations between the two countries, as reflected in a circular from the Foreign Ministry:

*The President said that Zambia's policy was complete non-alignment and that aid would be accepted from anyone provided it was useful and provided there were no strings attached. However, the sense of recent Cabinet minutes indicates that there is still a reluctance to accept aid from Israel.*⁴⁴

One official recommended rejecting Israeli aid because it could "spoil our name."⁴⁵ Ultimately, Kaunda's secretary of Home Affairs, Aaron Milner, swayed official policy by asserting that Zambia would adhere to Kaunda's policy of "aid from anywhere" and accept Israel's offer for assistance.⁴⁶ For some officials, this final determination was welcomed, as the Israelis were seen as an opportune alternative to the British.

41 A. Oded, *Africa Ve'Israel, Yehudiut Vetahapuhot Be'Yehase Hutz shel Israel* [Africa and Israel. A Unique case of Radical Changes in Foreign Policy], Jerusalem 2013.

42 M. Schwartz/A.P. Hare, *Foreign Experts and Unsustainable Development: Transferring Israeli Technology to Zambia, Nigeria and Nepal*, London 2000, p. 18.

43 D.G. Anglin/T.M. Shaw, *Zambia's Foreign Policy: Studies in Diplomacy and Dependence*, Boulder 1979, p. 27.

44 Zambia National Archives (hereafter ZNA) ZNA NCDP 2/3/2 Aid Israel Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, 23 December 1964.

45 ZNA NCDP 2/3/2 Aid Israel, 30 April 1965.

46 ZNA NCDP 2/3/2 Aid Israel.

In the area of cooperatives, Israel had earned a reputation for overcoming tremendous challenges in order to achieve food security in a relatively short period of time. Some Zambians officials were eager to learn from Israel's experience, as the success of the *kibbutz* and *moshav* models were internationally known.⁴⁷ Zambia, along with many other newly independent countries in Africa, was hoping that these Israeli models would enable local farmers to achieve the same kinds of successes. Thus, it was decided in June 1966 that Israeli technical experts would try to salvage a few of the failing cooperatives that had been established under the Chifubu Appeal. Israeli advisors arrived to take control over two cooperatives near Lusaka, *Tubalanga* and *Zambia Independence*, and a refugee settlement in Mkushi. In addition to these smaller projects, the Israelis were asked to send experts to the Kafubu Block, a group of cooperative settlements established outside of Luanshya in the Copperbelt that was being abandoned by disillusioned settlers. The Department of Mines and Cooperatives also asked Israel to implement a new large-scale cooperative farming scheme in an area south of Kafubu known as Kafulafuta.⁴⁸

3. Israeli Cooperative Models Implemented in Zambia

The farming cooperatives that had been established under the Chifubu Appeal prior to the arrival of the Israelis had been built along a communal model, with settlers contributing their labour to communal lands and dividing revenues among them. The Israeli technical experts who arrived in 1966 recommended that the settlements under their supervision be converted to the *moshav* model – cooperative settlements based on individual small-holder farms. The Israelis argued that this shift would boost individual motivation, which had been missing in the communal system. At first, Zambian officials resisted these changes as straying from Kaunda's humanist ideals. Israelis convinced them to experiment with the small-holder model at one settlement, *Zambia Independence*, where Kaunda himself was a member. These changes were immediately effective, and within one growing season, production had significantly improved. This paved the way to the implementation of the Israeli model in all the settlements under their control.⁴⁹ The Copperbelt settlements became the centrepiece of Israeli technical assistance to Zambian cooperatives. For Kaunda, this region was of pivotal importance, as growing unemployment and food shortages that resulted from the unstopped flow of migrants to the towns were increasingly threatening to become a source of destabilization.⁵⁰ The magnitude of the problems gave birth to grandiose plans for addressing them. Thus, the Department of Cooperatives asked the Israelis to plan and implement a new, large settlement block in Kafulafuta, 40 miles south of the city of Luanshya. In addition, the

47 ZNA NCDP 2/3/2 Aid Israel memorandum of Vice President, n.d.

48 For an overview see D. Yadin, *Three Years of Israeli Agricultural Aid in Zambia*. Report submitted to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, n.p. 1969.

49 Yadin, *Three Years of Israeli Agricultural Aid in Zambia*, p. 29.

50 W. Tordoff (ed.), *Politics in Zambia*, Manchester 1974, p. 376.

Israelis were to take control over the already-established Kafubu block, which was on the brink of collapse.⁵¹

The Kafubu settlement was hastily established by the government in 1966 with insufficient planning and oversight. Although the close proximity to Luanshya made this an attractive option for relocating migrants to the Copperbelt, the area was not optimal for cultivation, and only 5,000 of the 12,000 acres were suitable to farming. Tree roots were hard to remove and the water supply was inadequate. Those settled in the area lacked knowledge and resources needed to run a cooperative, and the government never fulfilled promises to provide training.⁵² By the time the Israelis arrived, many of the first settlers had already abandoned the area and the project was near collapse.⁵³ The settlers who remained were not initially enthusiastic about the Israeli intervention. According to the Israeli team leader, Dan Yadin, settlers had become used to living off government grants, and resented Israeli efforts to take control over the finances and administration of the settlement.⁵⁴

These early hostilities soon abated when the Israeli methods proved to be successful. The settlement underwent a total reorganization, and Israelis began close oversight over production, land allocation, housing, capital, and equipment. Although the first growing season did not produce results, the changes introduced began to bear fruit in the second year. Despite early resistance, the model based on the production of family units enabled the majority of farmers to generate a surplus of crops. The Israelis recommended moving away from maize and introduced a larger crop variety, including several kinds of fruits and vegetables. In 1967–1968, a total of 650 acres were sown with good results, while in 1968–1969 there were evening higher yields on 1,000 acres, and by 1969, 3,000 acres were yielding crops.⁵⁵ Families began marketing their vegetables in town and earning income from the surpluses.

The poultry sector was particularly successful, with 1,500 broilers and 3,750 layers introduced in June 1967. According to Yitzhak Abt, a project manager from MASHAV, Israel often promoted poultry programmes because they were reliable generators of income.⁵⁶ This strategy worked in Kafubu, where within four months, chickens were laying eggs at the same yield level that had been achieved in Israel. Families involved in the poultry sector soon became a source of envy, as they invested their earnings in brick houses, and Yadin reported on new social tensions that surrounded this great success.⁵⁷ Despite these frictions, the poultry branch became the showcase project of the entire Kafubu block. Production was so great that it generated an unprecedented surplus of six million eggs. Yitzhak Abt appealed to Kaunda to find consumers for the overflowing storage houses,

51 Yadin, *Three Years of Israeli Agricultural Aid in Zambia*, p. 4.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

53 M. Schwartz et al. (ed.), *Israeli Settlement Assistance to Zambia, Nigeria and Nepal*, Amsterdam 2002, pp. 80–81.

54 Yadin, *Three Years of Israeli Agricultural Aid in Zambia*, p. 37.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

56 Interview with Yitzhak Abt, Kiryat Gat, Israel, 19 March 2019.

57 Yadin, *Three Years of Israeli Agricultural Aid in Zambia*, pp. 40–41.

and Kaunda immediately took to the airwaves, directing Zambians to eat more eggs. This was an especially significant achievement for Kaunda, who had made a campaign promise to provide Zambians with an egg a day.⁵⁸

The Kafulafuta project did not experience the same tensions as Kafubu, as Israelis planned the settlement in close coordination with local leadership who allocated land for the scheme. Settlers worked with Israelis to clear large trees and prepare 3000 acres for cultivation.⁵⁹ Pig farming was introduced in Kafulafuta and became a profitable sector, along with poultry and vegetable cultivation. From 1970 until 1973, production gradually increased at both the Copperbelt settlements, and farmers' gross income per capita reached 130 kwacha per annum, which was five times higher than the average rural income elsewhere in Zambia.⁶⁰

These results were celebrated by Kaunda, whose own cooperative initiative had failed, and he bestowed great praise on the Israelis. In a 1971 *Observer* article entitled "African Kibbutz," Kaunda described the Israeli schemes as "the pride of our nation."⁶¹ In another interview, he proclaimed: "This is an achievement which deserves the admiration of the country as a whole ... here we maybe be pretty close to the answer to grassroots development for which we have been searching since independence."⁶² Kaunda acknowledge the role Israel had played in advancing his domestic agenda to the incoming Israeli ambassador in 1971:

*One of our cornerstones in the country is the construction through the cooperative effort and we do realise that in this respect you are one of the few who specialise, and indeed we have learned from our experience here, that those areas where our Israeli friends have worked alongside with their Zambian brothers we have succeeded in creating a successful cooperative effort in the Republic. We appreciate this very much indeed.*⁶³

Israeli technical advisors and experts at the settlements were more measured in their assessments of the schemes, and believed that the fate of the programme would only be tested when the experts finished their work and the programme would have stand on its own. As Shimon Amir wrote,

*We do not want to perpetuate our presence anywhere, because really we do not know whether a project has been successful or not, until the experts have left. Then it will show whether they paid enough attention to train Zambians. So on the one hand we must phase out, on the other hand we must continue and expand a successful scheme. This is our dilemma.*⁶⁴

58 Schwartz, *Israeli Settlement Assistance to Zambia, Nigeria and Nepal*, p. 94.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

61 *The Observer*, 15 December 1971.

62 *Zambian Farmer*, 17 August 1971, quoted in S. Amir, *Israel's Development Cooperation with Africa, Asia and Latin America*, New York 1974, p. 32.

63 INA 4581/39 Report of the ceremony of the arrival of the new Israeli ambassador, 14 October 1971.

64 ZNA NCDP/213/11 External Aid Policy Israel Minutes of a meeting, 29 July 1969.

Much to their surprise, the Israelis would discover in 1973 just how unsustainable their investment in Zambians cooperatives was. Following the October War, Kaunda followed a directive of the OAU and cut ties with Israel, sending the entire delegation home. Within a few weeks, the Israelis departed with their capital resources and expertise, and within less than a year, the projects began to fail. Farmers struggled with debts and lack of access to more loans, and equipment was sold, stolen, or repossessed by banks. By the end of 1976, both Kafubu and Kafulafuta cooperatives had collapsed completely.

4. Between Ideology and Policy in the Years of Decolonization

Following the October War of 1973, nearly every country in Africa fell in line with the directive of the OAU to cut ties to Israel. According to Levey, there were many motivating factors, including a desire to maintain unity on the continent, and a fear of rising oil prices.⁶⁵ In writing the history of the rise and fall of Israel-Africa relations in the first decade of independence, some historians have avoided generalized analyses, and suggest instead that we focus on specific factors and circumstances motivating individual states in the decision to cut ties.⁶⁶ The case of Zambia provides a poignant example of the benefits of taking a bottom-up approach to unpack this history. Kaunda's decision to sever relations with Israel came at the cost of a domestic cooperative scheme that had become a centrepiece of his efforts to implement his humanist ideology. This decision thus requires interrogation. Was this another aspect of what Richard Hall labelled "High Price of Principles" that shaped Kaunda's rule?⁶⁷

Kaunda's government used Zambian policies and positions regarding the Middle East conflict as an opportunity to advocate for positions that could be leveraged in contexts closer to home. As many scholars have noted, Kaunda's main foreign policy concern was the situation in southern Africa. At the time of independence, land-locked Zambia shared a border with four white-minority regimes: Rhodesia, Mozambique, Namibia, and Angola. This situation posed political and ideological challenges, but in 1965, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Rhodesia created a full-blown crisis and serious threat to Zambia's economic survival. Struggles against colonialism in Southern Africa threatened Zambia's stability, with eruptions of violence that spilled over into Zambia over time, leading to heightened tensions and economic shortages. As Mwanakatwe summarized it, "no other independent country in the southern Africa sub-region experienced as much loss and suffering from liberation wars than Zambia."⁶⁸ From the beginning of the UDI, Kaunda attempted to rally international support for intervention and assistance in opposing the colonial regimes and minority rule on his borders. Kaunda's strategies were focused on international organizations and forums,

65 Z. Levey, *Israel in Africa: 1956–1976*, Dordrecht 2012, pp. 157–158.

66 See, for example, J. Peters, *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship*, London 1992.

67 R.S. Hall, *The High Price of Principles: Kaunda and the White South*, London 1969.

68 Mwanakatwe, *End of the Kaunda Era*, p. 66.

where he continually worked to build support for liberation movements.⁶⁹ While sympathetic to Kaunda's mission, some Zambians believed that his relentless appeals to the United Nations and the Organization of Africa Unity to rally support for the liberation of southern Africa ultimately drew his energies away from Zambia's domestic interests.⁷⁰ An examination of Zambia's positions regarding the Middle East conflict, and relations with Israel, reflected Kaunda's party's anxieties about the minority-rule regimes that surrounded Zambia. The watershed was the June War of 1967, which resulted in the Israeli invasion and occupation of Arab lands. For Israel and Zambia, this was the point at which the scales began to tip from relations of cooperation and affinity to relations fraught with tensions and critique. From this time, some Zambian politicians, such as United Nations Ambassador Banda, condemned Zionism as a form of settler colonialism, and rejected the Zionist movement's historic-religious claim over the Jewish homeland. The belief that the land of Israel had been promised to Abraham in biblical times was, according to Banda, "as ridiculous as it is absurd". Banda was highly sympathetic to Arabs who had been living in Palestine for thousands of years, and were now victims of Zionism's "monstrous crimes against humanity". He argued that Africans had to stand up against the expulsion of Arabs from Palestine, as similar actions were being taken against Africans in Africa. As he wrote,

*Very soon Zambia will be told to accept that whites must rule Rhodesia. Africa will be asked after a few more years to accept the fait accompli of white South Africa. We must reject superficial power-based righteousness.*⁷¹

The Middle East conflict was a sobering lesson for Zambian politicians, and they feared the repercussions of letting violations of human rights go unchecked,

*The Middle East situation, if it is to serve any purpose, it is to show a young African country very clearly the amount of resources that the United States government is prepared to put into any situation the serves their interest. Of course, we have the old example of Vietnam, but the Middle East, unlike Vietnam, is much more important to everyone and especially Africa because besides being the meeting point of three main continents is the main entry point into our continent.*⁷²

Likewise, in Ambassador Mwenba's address to the Emergency session of the UN General Assembly on 27 June 1967, it is possible to see that Zambia's interest goes beyond the Middle East conflict:

The Middle East has cooperated with my country in its effort to solve economic, social and cultural and other human problems. The government and the people of Zambia have no quarrel with Israel. ... [but] aggression in the eyes of Zambia is inadmissible and worth

69 Shaw, *The Foreign Policy of Zambia*, p. 83.

70 Anglin and Shaw, *Zambia's Foreign Policy*, p. 13.

71 ZNA FA/1/208 Israel-UAR Conflict – Middle East Crisis 30 June 1967 (Banda in Washington DC to Kapwepwe).

72 ZNA FA/1/208 Israel-UAR Conflict – Middle East Crisis, 7 July 1967 (Banda in Washington DC to Kapwepwe).

*nothing but strong condemnation. It should not be said that some states adhere to the United Nations charter only when it suits them. Members of a club must stick to the rules of the club without which the club is dead.*⁷³

The links between Zambia's concerns in southern Africa and its position regarding the Middle East conflict were clear in Mwemba's remarks:

*My delegation is greatly alarmed by the report that Israel [has] appointed governors in certain of the occupied areas. We are even more concerned at press reports that Israel intends on setting up a new regime in pursuance of the imperialist policy of "Divide and Rule." It is this Israeli policy of territorial aggrandisement and expansionism that my delegation strongly deplores and condemns. In the second half of the 20th century, Zambia cannot and will not lend itself to the law of the jungle which can only give comfort to the enemies of self-determination, freedom, and human dignity.*⁷⁴

While the 1967 war was the beginning of a shift in Zambia's position regarding Israel, but it did not lead to the complete souring of relations. Until October 1973, Kaunda believed that he could make his concerns about the political situation in the Middle East known, but still maintain fruitful relations with Israel. As he told the Israeli ambassador:

*... we are more worried than ever before by the situation in the Middle East, just like we are worried about the situation in the southern continent of Africa. ... Israel is putting up obstacles in the way of realising UN resolutions. Other countries in Africa have cut their relations with Israel and other are threatening to do so, but we are among those who think that by maintaining relations with both sides, we can offer the moderate suggestions of a friend.*⁷⁵

These "moderate suggestions" came in the form of increasing vocal criticism in the international sphere, while at home, Kaunda adopted a business-as-usual attitude towards Israeli cooperative assistance. Thus, Zambia continued to foster strong ties with Israel, and even hoped to expand upon Israeli involvement in Zambia's domestic development efforts.

Throughout the period under question, the Israelis were confounded by this rigidity that gave birth to Zambia's harsh critique voiced against Israel in international forums at the same time that the Zambian government made plans for expanding upon Israel technical assistance. Israeli officials in both Lusaka and Jerusalem were continually frustrated by the stark dissonance between their relations with Zambia in the area of development aid on the one hand, and in the position, Zambia consistently took against Israel in the United Nations. Again and again, the Israelis confronted the reality that the extension of aid would not translate into unconditional support in the United Nations and elsewhere. Despite all the success of Israeli interventions in Zambia, and the centrality of the aid

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Israeli National Archives (hereafter INA) 4832/2, 24 September 1973.

programme in helping Kaunda realise his humanist vision for cooperative development, the Zambians played a leading role in international alliances that opposed Israeli policies. The Israeli Foreign Ministry continually urged its ambassadors in Lusaka to register a complaint with local officials. Some Zambian officials responded by minimizing the significance of Zambia's stance in international forums. In one instance, for example, Israeli Ambassador Tahan met Deputy Minister Tembu at a cocktail party, and the Zambian official told him that the Israelis should not give back one inch of the conquered territory. When Tahan wondered how to reconcile these comments with Zambia's voting record at the UN, Tembu remarked, "The UN Is a just club for arguments and nothing that is said there is worth anything!"⁷⁶

These comments revealed that Zambians believed that it was possible to operate on two parallel tracks in their relations with Israel, and the Israelis ultimately had little choice but to accept this duality. From 1964 to 1973, Israeli assistance in domestic aid programmes were gradually expanded, while Zambia's international position toward Israel hardened toward more hostility. Particularly from the June War in 1967, the international condemnations were matched by newly signed agreements for agricultural and industrial schemes. Thus, months after the June War, an agreement was signed for Israel to build a textile factory in Zambia. The Vice President visited the cooperatives at this time and gave an enthusiastic speech praising the projects and the Israeli government. In October 1967, Israeli Ambassador Tahan claimed that in Lusaka, Israelis enjoyed an open door to most government ministries, and he cited his ability to arrange a meeting with the Foreign Minister "within hours". Acknowledging the dualism in Zambia's approach, he advised that Israel had no choice but to live with it.⁷⁷ The Israelis understood that the development programmes in the domestic sphere ultimately did not function in isolation from international politics. Ambassador Elron summed up the dilemma in a 1971 report:

*Israel has two options in her relations with Zambia. She can express her dissatisfaction through a purposeful limiting of our relations, which would include a reduction in our aid activity. Or, we can accept the situation, as it is important for us to maintain good relations with Zambia and Kaunda not because of them per se, but because of their weight and influence in Africa and their influence on the Arab-Asian alliance in the UN.*⁷⁸

Kenneth Kaunda held on to power for the first twenty-five years of Zambian independence, and subsequently, an extensive body of critique has taken shape with regard to his rule and his legacy. Scholars, politicians, and activists have expressed harsh disapproval of Kaunda as an opportunistic and ineffective leader whose ideological positions flip-flopped. This criticism of Kaunda's rule draws upon a long history of leadership that became increasingly authoritarian and corrupt. The importance of this critique not-

76 INA 4025/19, 8 August 1967.

77 INA 4025/16 a report of internal matters in Zambia, 31 October 1967.

78 INA 4025/16 Report on Israel-Zambia relations, 7 June 1971.

withstanding, we can gain a more nuanced perspective by a close investigation of the conflicting interests that plagued Kaunda and his policies of the first decade following decolonization. The history of Israeli cooperative assistance in Zambia from 1964 to 1973 reveals that Kaunda's socialist development agenda was only one part of a broad spectrum of geopolitical concerns facing post-colonial Zambia. Kaunda struggled with conflicting priorities and eventually, achievements in the area of socialist development were side-lined for other urgencies.