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Introduction: Zambia's Postcolonial Historiography

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Zambia's fiftieth independence anniversary is an opportune time to take stock of advances and limitations in the country's postcolonial historiography and, as the contributions to this special issue indicate, to point out themes which still call for scholarly attention. It is common knowledge that at independence from Britain in 1964, Zambia, like most other newly liberated African countries, inherited what some observers have aptly described as a "colonial-minded historiography" (Denoon and Kuper 1970, p. 329; Meebelo 1971). Among the chief architects of this historiography were European anthropologists and historians. European anthropologists led the way in undertaking studies that unravelled and highlighted the nature and organisation of African societies. Collectively, they generated academic knowledge to understand the nature and workings of African societies. This knowledge assisted colonial authorities to develop administrative systems through which they hoped to rule Africans effectively (Schumaker 2001).

If colonial anthropologists produced knowledge essential to the exercise of colonial power, colonial historians no less denied the existence of African history before colonialism than assumed that the history of Zambia and of the African continent in general, was the history of Western imperial entrepreneurship (see, for examples, Gann 1964; Gann and Duignan 1967; Gelfand 1961). Given the denial of African history by the architects of colonial historiography, it is unsurprising that in the immediate aftermath of independence, most political scientists, historians, and other keen observers shared a deep commitment to place Africans back in their history.

Broadly speaking, the drive to document African history, rather than that of European colonisers, spawned a two-pronged academic discourse, which on the one hand, sought to prove that the subjects of empire had their own precolonial and colonial history worth studying (Kimambo and Temu 1969; Meebelo 1971). For many scholars, this could best be accomplished through studying African pre-colonial states (see, for example, Mainga 1973; Langworthy 1964; Roberts 1973) as well as resistance to colonial occupation and misrule. Scholars interested in these topics generated knowledge of the societies they studied and not of ordinary individuals *per se*. These studies were dominated by the search for how kings ruled their communities and not so much how the common people in those kingdoms related and influenced the state of affairs. From a historical perspective, this was the history of the "big men", or history from the top. Unwittingly, these studies proved crucial to understanding the workings of the system of indirect rule, which made traditional authorities part of the colonial administrative system.

On the other hand and, more germane to our review of Zambia's postcolonial historiography, historians poured much ink over nationalist politics out of which modern Zambia and other independent African countries were born. The most important concern of the architects of this discourse was to "place the achievement of [African] independence within its immediate historical context" (Rotberg 1965, pp. vii-viii). Unwittingly, this provided the excuse to study the nationalist struggle and the concomitant political change from the vantage point of the politically conscious African elites, who spearheaded the fight for independence and who often served as the primary source of information on which most early writers on Zambia heavily depended.

To their credit, these academics impressively chronicled the role of the African elites in the creation of nationalist political parties after the Second World War, the structures and mobilisation strategies of such parties, and the constitutional engagements between leading nationalists and their colonial masters that resulted in independence in 1964 (see Mulford 1967; Rotberg 1965. For an early critique of this approach towards studies on Zambia, see Rasmussen 1974).

For all their accomplishments, observers who constructed Zambia's immediate post-independence historiography were "far from dispassionate" (Macola, Gewald and Hinfelaar 2011, p. 7; Macola 2010, p. 2). Influenced by the bitter, protracted struggle against the settler-dominated Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland between 1953 and 1963, these specialists identified themselves closely with the top brass such as Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's founding president and his lieutenants in the United National Independence Party (UNIP), which orchestrated a successful, if not violent, nationalist struggle against British colonial rule (Macola 2010). The close identification of these observers with leading nationalists inevitably yielded an uncritically UNIP-centred narrative that not only eulogised UNIP's role in the drama of the freedom struggle but also portrayed the party as the custodian of the interests of Zambian citizens and embodiment of the new nation (ibid).

The emphasis on top UNIP leaders' role in the struggle for independence had ominous implications for the early postcolonial historiography of Zambia. Narrowly and uncritically conceived, the UNIP-dominated historiography not only glossed over the ethnic and socio-economic forces that informed Zambia's nationalism but also expunged from the country's history the real, lived experiences of ordinary people (Macola 2010). This blurred the important part political actors at grassroots level played in the struggle for political freedom. But, as one scholar has observed, it was these people who felt the full blunt of colonial exploitation and power and, often, fought against foreign domination without any direction from national level leadership (Rasmussen 1974).

Another shortcoming of the UNIP-centred discourse is that it scarcely illuminated political projects that challenged the party's grip on power both before and after the nationalist struggle (Macola 2010). Central among such counter-hegemonic projects was that of Harry Mwanga Nkumbula, the founding president of the African National Congress from which UNIP broke away in the late 1950s and which tenuously continued to contest UNIP power after independence (ibid). In removing

from the historical record anti-UNIP voices, this historiography silenced projects that threatened UNIP political hegemony (ibid). By celebrating UNIP hegemony and obfuscating the fact that nationalism is almost always the consequence of many conflicting visions, the UNIP-dominated historiography impoverished our understanding of the conflicts that marked the freedom struggle in Zambia and politics after independence, conflicts that have now begun to attract growing academic attention (see Larmer 2006 and 2013; Macola 2010, Macola 2006; Gordon 2013).

If specialists writing on postcolonial Zambia in the 1960s trumpeted the achievements of "political liberators" in UNIP, their successors in the 1970s and 1980s were more preoccupied with unravelling the UNIP government's role in the construction of modern Zambia (Tordoff 1974 and 1980), its foreign policy and involvement in liberation wars in southern Africa (Pettiman 1974; Shaw 1976 and 1979; Anglin and Shaw 1979; Anglin 1980), its economic reforms leading to the nationalisation of the economy in the late 1960s (Bratton 1980; Baylies and Szeftel 1982; Burdette 1984) and, lastly, its creation of the one-party state (Gertzel 1984) in 1972-1973. Admittedly, studies that focused on these themes exhibited less nationalist bias. They were also more broadly conceived than earlier works in the sense that these works were concerned with several contemporary social, economic and political concerns largely ignored by earlier writers.

However, whether focusing on Zambia's foreign policy, participation in liberation wars in southern Africa or economic reforms, the new studies were still dominated by what a perceptive scholar has describes as "the viewpoint of the centre" (Bratton 1980, p. 10; see also Macola 2006, p. 44). Consequently, how ordinary Zambian citizens influenced the formulation of these and other postcolonial policies remained as obscure as how the policies themselves impacted on the people. Ironically, the scholarly neglect of the impact of UNIP policies on citizens was in stark contrast to President Kaunda's awareness, for instance, of the devastating effects on the citizenry of his own government's involvement in freedom struggles in southern Africa. Assessing in parliament in early 1980 the high cost Zambians paid for his government's support of the liberation war in nearby Zimbabwe, Kenneth Kaunda, the country's postcolonial chief policy architect, noted that

> *[T]he Zambian people ha[d] made a great contribution on the historic victories of the people of Zimbabwe. The rebellion ha[d] been crushed by the resolute determination of the patriotic forces.... The task of the Zambian people ha[d] been to assist freedom fighters remove a rebellious and fascist regime. .... Our task was to help create conditions on which the people of Zimbabwe could hold elections under a true democratic constitution based on majority rule, under conditions which are genuine, free and fair. [Zambians] ha[d] paid dearly in resources, in human life and property to help bring about [independence] in Zimbabwe (Republic of Zambia 1980).*

3

In spite of President Kenneth Kaunda's admission of the devastating consequences on people of his own southern African foreign policy, few scholars seriously emulated his efforts to analyse such impact. Similarly, not many academics paid sufficient attention to the fractiousness of the ruling class in independent Zambia, erroneously portraying it as a domain of united political leadership with common interests and ideologies (for exceptions, see Burdette 1984 and Baylies and Szeftel 1982). However, as one perceptive scholar noted in 1984, Zambia's new ruling class was far from united or homogenous (Burdette 1984). Made up of disparate interest groups and professionals including lawyers, businessmen, and politicians, it was deeply fractured along ideological, class, ethnic and regional fault lines. Expectedly, the new rulers held conflicting views over a wide range of issues: the country's foreign relations with the outside world especially settler regimes in southern Africa, the nationalisation of the economy in the late 1960s, and the resultant restrictions placed on foreign capital, which entrepreneurs within the governing class, for example, perceived as inimical to their own businesses and the economic welfare of the country as a whole. A comprehensive study of how the inter-class and intra-class tensions which erupted over these issues and how the ruling elites tried to overcome them still largely awaits its historian to this day.

Zambia's return to multiparty politics in the early 1990s carved out an intellectual space in which two categories of keen observers began to carry out researches that shied away from the viewpoint of the centre. The first category consisted of former UNIP leaders who, ironically, played a no minor part in the party's demise and in the rentroduction of liberal politics in the 1990s. Through autobiographies, these writers sought to document their experiences and decisions, particularly stressing their own role in the construction of post-1964 Zambia (Mwanakatwe 2003; Sardanis 2002). Undoubtedly, these memoirs are an invaluable source of information on their authors' lives and decisions that influenced the workings of the postcolonial regime. However, these autobiographies are not merely "ego-documents" which celebrate the achievements of their authors; they are also scarcely "attempts at an objective history" (Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola 2008, p. 7). Indeed, some of them have evidently falsified Zambian history by denying, for example, the use of torture by the Kaunda-dominated regime to silence its opponents (ibid).

The second category of studies stimulated by the rebirth of democratic politics in Zambia address contemporary political and economic concerns. Laudable for exploring such wide-ranging issues as the denationalisation of the economy in the 1990s, the obstacles hindering consolidation of democratisation in Zambia (Ihonvbere 1995 and 1996; Baylies and Szeftel 1997; Larmer 2005), and the persistence of autocratic rule and presidentialism in spite of the liberation of the political space in Zambia (Van Dong 1995), these works have plugged in some of the glaring lacunae in the country's historiography. But these works "are often insufficiently contextualised in Zambian history and political cultures" (Gewald, Hinefelaar and Macola 2008, p. 4).

The process to revise the country's postcolonial historiography commenced in earnest in 2005, when the Network for Historical Research in Zambia (NHRZ)

convened a three-day international conference in Lusaka, Zambia. Drawn from the United States, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Netherlands, Canada, Britain, and Zambia itself, participants at the conference were united in expressing their concern over the continuity and dominance of the nationalist-centred scholarship and in calling for its reinterpretation. Out of the papers presented at the conference subsequently emerged, in 2008, a book entitled One Zambia, Many Histories: Toward a History of Postcolonial Zambia (ibid).

The contributors to this volume rightly insisted that nationalist-based scholarship had failed to illuminate "the complexity of postcolonial Zambian history and the internal lines of conflict and contestation that characterised" the country's social, economic and political landscape (Macola, Gewald and Hinfelaar, 2011, p. 3). To redress this lacuna, the contributors not only "insert[ed] for the first time within the mainstream of Zambian historiography the memory of obscure and subaltern political ideas and actors"; but they also "call[ed] into question the real extent of the hegemony of UNIP and its ability to impose a singular narrative of nation-building upon a fragmented and refractory body politic" (Gewald, Hinfelaar and Macola 20008, p. 10). Informed by this perspective, the contributors to the volume explored Zambia's historical trajectories and themes long ignored or glossed over in earlier studies. They shed fresh light upon, among other themes, the counter-hegemonic projects of the ANC, the Lumpa church, and Simon Kapwepwe's United Peoples Party that threatened UNIP political hegemony in the early 1970s; the debilitating impact on the rural poor of Kaunda's economic reforms of the late 1960s; and, lastly, the rise of charismatic churches together with their anti-UNIP alliance with the Movement for Multiparty Democracy in the 1990s.

Since 2008, new studies have built upon the foundation laid by the publication of One Zambia, Many Histories. Notable among them is an outstanding political biography on Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula. Authored in 2010 by Giacomo Macola, who had also earlier played a sterling role in organising the NHRZ conference, the biography illuminates the shrewd leadership of Nkumbula, showing how the ANC president sustained his opposition to UNIP misrule well up to 1972, when his party withered away with the introduction of the Kaunda-dominated one-party state. In an earlier study also authored in the spirit of revising Zambia's historiography, Macola (2006) astutely showed how people in Luapula Province contested UNIP power because of the party's failure to deliver on the "expectations of independence".

Efforts to bring many other political and social actors obscured in earlier studies into the postcolonial historiography of Zambia have more recently yielded two important collections of papers. The first collection, Living the End of Empire, explores the lives of individuals such as Dixon Konkola (Vickery 2011) and minority social groups, notably Indians, earlier marginalised in the mainstream of the Zambian scholarship (Mufuzi 2011). The second monograph, The Objects of Life in Central Africa, published in 2013, is a collection of papers that investigate, *inter alia*, how African labour migrants under colonial rule reworked their own notions of respectability and social status through the ways they consumed imported goods (Barrett 2013), how they reimagined such goods to subvert European power (Kalusa

2013), and how, more recently, Zambian urban dwellers have moulded their dreams and aspirations through their sartorial preferences and habits (Hansen 2013).

Together, the recent works have undoubtedly enriched Zambian historiography for they have exposed the diversity and complexity of the country's historical experiences. But the process of revising this historiography is far from complete, and a lot more remains to be done. Robert Ross (2008) recently remarked that there is need to write more critical political biographies and to carry out studies on the Kafue Dam, the Tanzania-Zambia Railway, and the collapse of the copper industry after 1970. He also challenged scholars to include Western Zambia in the country's history. We would add that Zambia's postcolonial historiography would be all the more invigorated by carrying out research into many other neglected social, cultural, economic, political and environmental trajectories of the country. Among themes that require such scholarly attention are Zambia's descent into poverty, corruption, and economic mismanagement in the aftermath of the imposition of the one-party state in the 1970s, the inimical impact of the country's involvement in the liberation wars in southern Africa, shifting relations with the donor community, environmental degradation arising from charcoal-burning and mining, trans-border trade which became rampant among Zambian women in the 1980s and 1990s, rising witchcraft accusations as poverty deepened in that period, and HIV/AIDS.

It is in the quest to throw light upon forgotten themes in Zambia's historiography and to invigorate this scholarship that contributions in this special issue have been penned. The paper (in this issue) by Liberty Mweemba, "Climate change in the Zambian mind: Communicating risk perceptions of climate change and variability in Zambia", is most welcome because it discusses an issue that in the recent past has assumed global magnitude both in scholarship and its impact on human livelihoods and development. The author highlights controversies that surround the issue of climate change and suggests that no other global environmental issue has been so controversial. He further argues that the controversies around climate change are not so much the consequence of lack of scientific knowledge as they are a product of human actions that impact on human beings everywhere.

While examining the question of climate change, the paper assesses the perception of Zambians on climate change. This is in an attempt to see whether climate change is considered a significant threat and how it has influenced Zambians' awareness of the degradation of the environment. From this perspective, the paper examines the affective images Zambians have of global warming and the extent to which these images influence individuals' behaviour towards mitigating global warming.

The fundamental claim of this paper, however, is that better environmental information dissemination, more environmental knowledge, or more environmental communication alone will not necessarily lead to desirable social change. The author argues that while better understanding has an important role to play, environmental knowledge that does not act as a barrier to behaviour and social change is unlikely to be effective or sufficient. Mweemba further points out that successful environmental policies that mobilize action on climate change education must take into account the

options that people have for action and their social and cognitive characteristics.

Studies on environmental change are more recent and therefore the paper brings to the fore the need for more studies from the education perspective so that the ordinary citizens are sensitized on the challenges their environment is faced with and what they need to do to mitigate those challenges. This paper is also differently conceptualized as it is approached from an educational perspective. Most studies on environmental issues are done from the natural science background and therefore do not deal with how the people generally respond to the environmental changes that take place.

In the recent past, Zambia has seen a resurfacing of the controversy over the Western Province where some members of that community have been calling for the independence of Barotseland. There have been debates over the Barotseland Agreement signed in May 1964. It is in the context of these recent developments that Mutumba Mainga Bull seeks to highlight the history of the Barotseland Agreement by pointing out the origins of what was known as the Barotse Reserved Area established through the 1900 Concessions between Lewanika (the Litunga of the Lozi people), the British South Africa Company (BSACo.) and the British Government. Bull points out that the concession was extended in 1909. The Barotse Reserved Area (Bulozi) was the central area of the Lozi Kingdom and the Lozi Kingship centred on the Upper Zambezi Flood Plain and westward to the Angolan boundary.

The Barotse Reserved Area was for the exclusive use of the Lozi people under their traditional ruler. One of the major understandings regarding the Barotse Reserved Area was that prospecting for minerals and white settlement were prohibited while land was inalienable. The Barotse Reserved Area later became the Barotse District under the British South Africa Company administration. In 1935, the then Governor of Northern Rhodesia, Hubert Winthrop Young through Proclamation No. 5 of December 1934, divided Northern Rhodesia into five Provinces: Barotse Province, Southern Province, Central Province, Northern Province and Eastern Province.

Mutumba Mainga Bull notes that the Barotse Province comprised six districts, namely Lealui (later Mongu-Lealui), Senanga, Sesheshe, Mankoya, Kalabo and Balovale. She further points out that the 1900 Reserved Area boundaries as extended in 1909, differed slightly from the boundaries of the 1935 Barotse Province in that Machile in the south was transferred to the Southern Province, and Dongwe in the north was transferred to the Central Province. In 1941, Balovale District was removed from Barotse Province or the Reserved Area and joined to the Central Province. During the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Barotse Province became Barotseland Protectorate with a Resident Commissioner instead of a Provincial Commissioner. Consequently, therefore, when the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was dissolved in 1963 and as the Barotseland Agreement was being signed in May 1964, the area that constituted Barotseland was well defined.

Thus according to Mutumba Mainga Bull, Barotseland or whatever of it survived, managed to make the transition into the colonial era mainly due to the Reserved Area and the privileges and rights which the Lewanika Concessions conferred. She further argues that Barotseland developed isolationist tendencies because of the

splendid isolation in the stagnated reserve. It was in view of this that all successive Lozi rulers from Lewanika through to his three son-successors Litunga Yeta III, Litunga Imwiko, and Litunga Mwanawina III petitioned for secession from Northern Rhodesia whenever it came to the crunch. Bull argues that the politics of secession evolved from the separation of the Reserved Area with the rights and privileges that pertained to it.

If Mweemba and Bull illuminate issues pertinent to environment, Friday Mufuzi (this volume) resurrects the question of witchcraft, a topic on which many European anthropologists in colonial Zambia and elsewhere poured much ink (Evans-Pritchard 1937; White 1948; Crawford 1967). But whereas the latter perceived witchcraft as a primitive residue of what the African society inherited from some remote past, Mufuzi's article challenges colonial studies that sought to explain the phenomenon in terms of the primitiveness of the practice and of its practitioners. Mufuzi further suggests that this was probably done to justify colonialism in the area because during this era, the Western world considered itself duty-bound to carry the burden of 'civilizing' Africans through the introduction of European civilization. The "civilizing mission" meant influencing Africans to embrace modern lifestyles and abandon their indigenous culture and belief systems, including witchcraft. The African culture and belief systems were to be replaced with Christianity and modernity (Gann and Duignan 1967).

In his article, Mufuzi points out that colonial studies on witchcraft paid particular attention to African belief in witchcraft, the nature and variance of witchcraft, the reasons for involvement in witchcraft as well as divination (see, for example, White 1969; Reynold 1963) In most of these studies, witchcraft was described as imaginary and the witchdoctors or diviners who worked against it as mere charlatans or fraudsters whose utterances were unreliable. In the same vein, the witches and sorcerers were considered to be mentally sick people obsessed with the belief that they had the power to harm others by simply directing their thoughts against their targets (Evan-Pritchard 1937; Murray n.d.) The reality of witchcraft to Africans was denied and totally disregarded.

Mufuzi's article makes the observation that the devices and material objects which witchcraft practitioners used in their practice to invoke their supposed power or energy to cause harm to their targets, were neither static nor sufficiently studied by scholars. The only exception to this is Reynolds' study on Western Zambia, an area that formed part of what was known as Barotseland Protectorate during the colonial period (Reynolds 1967). While the study was consequential to the colonial government officials' investigations made in October 1956 following a rumour that proved correct that two women had been murdered and reported to the District Commissioner in Kalabo, the witchcraft investigations carried out in all other districts of the Protectorate and other districts outside it revealed numerous witchcraft practices, murder, divination and cannibalism. More importantly, Mufuzi's article shows that modern objects, some of which were donated to the Livingstone Museum, had been incorporated into existing practices of witchcraft. The objects included Kaliloze guns originally made of wood or human limb bones believed

to have been used by the Mawiko people (Mbunda, Luvale, Chokwe and Luchazi) against witches. To operate, they were loaded with powder and some medicine and were fired at the sun. Barotse murderers used a modern type with a metal barrel, which was capable of firing metal pieces, and causing fatal wounds (Anonymous 1957) Thus, Mufuzi contends that modern objects were integrated into witchcraft practices as new paraphernalia in conformity with the rapidly changing material world of their users.

The articles presented in this issue are a testimony to the fact that scholars of Zambia are now increasing turning their attention to themes and topics that were not in the main domain of scholarly debates on Zambia. This is a most welcome, if not belated, move that has stimulated historical research, yielded important conferences, and resulted in path-breaking studies on Zambia (Larmer, Hinfelaar, Phiri, Schumaker and Szeftel 2014). We can only hope that the spirit of reinvigorating the country's postcolonial historiography will continue to possess Zambianists for many years to come.

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