

# Zambia at the Crossroads

By PETER BURNELL

From its position in Central-Southern Africa and with borders that are shared with eight other states, the butterfly-shaped country of Zambia lies at a geographical crossroads. A large country of over 750,000 square kilometers, and relatively lightly populated with around eight-and-a-half million people, Zambia has frontiers with Angola to the northwest and, proceeding clockwise, with Zaire, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Botswana and, to the southwest, Namibia.

In the mid-1990s, Zambia is also approaching a political crossroads, both in terms of the kind of political system being established there and in terms of the ideology of political economy that the government is trying to put into effect. Nowhere more than in Zambia have the 1990s witnessed an extraordinary wind of change, in which the people first struggled for, and then won, a new liberation. This time the release was not from colonial rule but from the home-produced authoritarianism that had characterized many of the years since Zambia gained constitutional independence in 1964.

In December 1990, an amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of Zambia legalized political pluralism for the first time since 1972. Zambia was proclaimed a one-party state in December 1972, which led to the Second Republic in the following year. In August 1991, a new constitution set the seal on the end of the Second Republic and the start of the Third Republic. The multi-party elections that were held for the National Assembly and presidency two months later were judged to be free and fair by a plethora of international observers who gathered to monitor the campaign and the events on

polling day. They included representatives from the United States National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and Carter Center (Jimmy Carter played an especially valuable role in advising his old friend President Kaunda to keep to the rules of the democratic game, and counselled moderation in the tone of the political debate), as well as the London-based Commonwealth Secretariat and the Organization of African Unity.

Following the elections, the government changed hands peacefully. The United National Independence Party (UNIP), the only ruling party Zambia had known since independence, was left with only twenty-five of the one-hundred-and-fifty elected seats in the assembly. Frederick Chiluba, of the victorious Movement for Multi-Party Democracy Party (MMD), defeated former President Kaunda, capturing over 75 percent of the vote for the highest office in the land. Zambia was feted as a role model for other African countries to follow, and was projected around the world as a bellwether, generating optimism for much of the rest of black Africa.

By late 1993, however, Western observers and analysts were beginning to question the sustainability of the democratization trend in sub-Saharan Africa, and to point to evidence of a slowing down, even reversal in some countries.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, some local commentators on Zambia's Third Republic have started to show signs of a change in mood. Barely two years into the life of the new government, opposition politicians and elements of the press are severely criticizing the political and economic performance of the government.

Furthermore, they note that informed opinion in the United States, which is keen to point to a model example of a properly functioning democratic state in the region,

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has shifted its attention away from Zambia and to the much younger sovereign state of Namibia. What has gone wrong in Zambia, and why so soon? Are there any lessons for other democratizing countries in Africa and elsewhere? Indeed, has anything seriously gone wrong in the Third Republic, or is it too early to judge? Before addressing these questions, a brief excursion into the political history of Zambia will help to explain the origins of the present situation and put into context the current expressions of concern.

### FROM POLITICAL PLURALISM TO POLITICAL PLURALISM VIA THE ONE-PARTY STATE

UNIP and its leader, Kenneth Kaunda, took office in 1964 after a two-year transition period to independence during which political power was shared with the opposition party, the African National Congress (ANC). In the years of nationalist struggle prior to then, the two parties had competed for popular support, along with at least one white settler-dominated party. With the gaining of self-government, Kaunda hoped that the ANC would wither away and the UNIP would sweep all before it at the ballot box. When that failed to happen and UNIP started to fragment, producing a splinter party in the shape of the United Progressive Party (UPP) led by the popular Bemba spokesman, Simon Kapwepe, in 1971, the writing was on the wall. It seemed as though a combination of UPP and ANC might come to pose a significant challenge, especially on the Copperbelt—the industrial and urban heartland of the country—and not just in the Southern and Western Provinces where the ANC enjoyed most of its support.

The government's response was to ban the UPP, which it alleged fomented violent political conflict, and to legislate the introduction of a one-party state. This step was contested unsuccessfully by the ANC, although some politicians welcomed it as a unifying measure that would put an end to internal divisions in the country. The National Commission on the Establishment of a One-Party Participatory Democracy in Zambia, which was supposed to make recommendations concerning how to make the change, uncovered a considerable amount of public unease and opposition to the change itself. Key recommendations of the commission that might have tempered the

trend toward a concentration of presidential power were ignored, and the presidency (which combines head of state and head of government) became even more dominant in the new constitution. Kenneth Kaunda built upon this and extended it in the years of personalized rule that followed. The regime, which called itself "the party and its government," proceeded to rule without having to face competition from outside UNIP. President Kaunda, together with a few close advisors, determined policy and took all the important decisions, although not possessing sufficient de facto power and the administrative resources to guarantee that all his wishes would be put into practice and the sought-for results achieved.

The Second Republic was a period of almost continuous economic decline for Zambia. Part of the problem was the decline in the world price of copper from the early 1970s onwards. Zambia depended and still depends on copper for around 90 percent of its foreign exchange earnings. Another part was the cost to Zambia (estimated by President Kaunda in 1978 at over U.S. \$6 billion) of maintaining sanctions against, and resisting, Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence under white minority rule, which lasted until the birth of Zimbabwe in 1980.

But just as significant was the economic mismanagement that followed from the regime's pursuit of *Humanism* through socialism—*Humanism* being President Kaunda's own home-spun philosophy, advanced in opposition to capitalism. In lieu of gaining legitimacy in other ways, the ruling party and its government relied on purchasing public quiescence by making spending commitments the country could ill-afford. The state sector dominated the formal economy. This led to the usual shortcomings of overmanning and inefficiency in the enterprises; and agriculture suffered from price controls designed to favor the urban consumer, especially in the case of the staple diet of mealie, which is derived from maize. The government borrowed heavily from international sources, leading to an increasing reliance on the good offices of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. By 1990, Zambia owed over U.S.\$7 billion and was probably the world's most heavily indebted country on a per capita basis, the average annual debt servicing figure being over twice the average annual income.

The participatory element of *Humanism*,

which was supposed to be one of its most attractive features, never progressed far beyond the level of rhetoric, and in the 1980s the government became more heavy-handed in its attempts to deal with the rising social discontent. This was manifested in strikes and demonstrations, and articulated most prominently by the leaders of organized labor, in particular the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and its chairman and secretary, Frederick Chiluba and Newstead Zimba respectively. Ironically, the ZCTU had originally been created for the purpose of controlling the labor movement, and had been directed to carry out an extensive program of workers' education to shape a hard-working labor force dedicated to serving the national goals as defined by the state. The intention backfired. Following Chiluba's election to the chairmanship in 1974, the ZCTU began to assert its autonomy and by 1981 was widely recognized as filling the role of political opposition to the government, most notably in its stance against the 1980 local government reforms.<sup>2</sup> The reforms sought to confine the local franchise to UNIP members and effectively vested power in the party's officials at central headquarters.

The "soft" or weak state of Zambia, led by a man who never practiced the brutal excesses of power found in some other African countries such as Idi Amin's Uganda (alleged coup plotters against Kaunda in 1980, 1988, and June 1990 were incarcerated but not executed), meant that the Zambian people were relatively well placed to take advantage of a window of opportunity for change, which opened with the collapse of communism and single-partyism in Eastern Europe in 1989. As the ZCTU chairman argued in December of that year, what good reason could there be for Africa to retain a system that was being abandoned by its original inventors? President Kaunda clearly miscalculated the full extent of the popular demand for change, as is to be expected of a governing system where the chief executive insulated himself from political challenge. In contrast, the rainbow coalition of opposition forces that joined to form the MMD appreciated the sense in holding together long enough to defeat UNIP at the polls. Kaunda abandoned his initial idea, which was to have a referendum on multipartyism, and proceeded to call elections before his, and the ruling party's, term of office was due to expire.

## THE POLITICAL BALANCE SHEET OF THE THIRD REPUBLIC

The MMD's sweeping victory at the polls in October 1991 meant that it furnished the presidency and dominated the legislature to a degree comparable with UNIP's dominance in the First Republic. Thus, its behavior as a party and as the government is crucial to the political development of the Third Republic. Even so, the party's performance in office and the record of the newly redemocratized polity are two different things. If the former was not now being subjected to public criticism, then there might indeed be cause for concern about the prospects for the latter. Nevertheless, there are at least two major uncertainties presently clouding the political horizon—the constitution and the political parties.

### Constitutional Matters

First, the constitutional revisions that were made in 1991 were understood by many at the time to be a half-way house, representing the maximum concessions then-President Kaunda was prepared to make. Not much was done to reduce the concentration of power in the hands of the president. He may dissolve the assembly at any time; and he is empowered to act in his own judgment and should not be obliged to follow the advice tendered by any other person or authority in executing the functions confirmed upon him (Article 44 of the constitution). In the Second Republic these and other features drew disapproving remarks from local critics and foreign academics alike.<sup>3</sup> Unlike the United States, Zambia lacks the checks inherent in a federal state with a bicameral legislature. The executive should be able to count on getting its proposals passed into law, as long as the president's party enjoys a parliamentary majority and the members of Parliament vote in a disciplined way.

These two conditions look likely to be satisfied, for the time being at least. General elections for the assembly and presidency take place together, and in a society where around one-third of the adult population is illiterate, the mass of the electorate is probably not sufficiently sophisticated to conceive a ticket-splitting strategy as a means to divide power between the branches of government. However, it is possible that a small parliamentary majority for the party of the president could

be eroded between general elections owing to by-election defeats. By-elections become necessary when MPs defect to another party, as happened with the formation of the National Party by eleven MMD MPs in mid-1993. What is more, a High Court judgment subsequently ruled that MPs who resign from their party but do not declare for another party may retain their seat until the next general election.

Thus, a situation could emerge, sought and intended by no one, that compares with the one the government of France has had to grapple with twice in recent years and that is known as *cohabitation*. It cannot be said with confidence that the Zambian political elite possess the maturity to cope with what would potentially be an immobilizing situation for government. The uneasy alliance that existed between UNIP and ANC during the 1962–64 transition period, motivated by a shared desire to exclude the white settler party from power, was not a happy precedent and does not give grounds for optimism in the working of a coalition government. The likely outcome would be a political crisis and the president dissolving the assembly, thereby instigating fresh elections for both the assembly and the presidency.

For the time being, the MMD is seeking to build a culture of party discipline, in part by threatening to expel MPs who vote against the government's bills. Five MPs were expelled in August 1993, even though the issue was possibly an issue of political conscience or high principle for at least one of them, namely the white MP Guy Scott who, along with over thirty others, voted against the Criminal Procedures (Amendment) Code at the end of July. The bill proposed to rule out the possibility of bail being granted to suspects in cases of murder, aggravated robbery, and treason. In consequence, if the MMD successfully develops the sort of party discipline associated with, say, the British parliamentary tradition, then dissenters within the ruling party will be doomed to lose the vote even if they are still allowed to voice their own opinions in party meetings and in parliamentary debates. However, if the resignations and the loss of MPs to the National Party represent the start of a trend toward greater factionalism and a growing disintegration of the MMD, then the business of political management of the country will become increasingly difficult, at least until the

emergence of a successor party capable of taking over the reins. The alternative, perhaps too dispiriting for liberal democrats to contemplate, would be for the MMD to follow the example set by UNIP when it faced a somewhat similar situation in 1971 and move against the political opposition.

The MMD government has seemed unsure about how, and how far, to extend the process of constitutional renewal, and until mid-1993 gave the impression that it was no longer interested in seeing further change. A decision was then made to inaugurate a constitutional review commission and call in foreign expert legal advice. This delayed move was greeted with scepticism in some quarters where it was portrayed as being mainly a gesture to appease the international donors and foreign diplomatic community. However, it just as likely came as a response to growing voter disenchantment with the government and rising criticism that the leadership was tending to behave in a high-handed fashion, disregarding the promises of openness and transparency made during the 1991 election campaign. In other words, the step was an attempt to recapture the political initiative at home. What is more, there is merit in the government's argument that it would have been precipitate to redraft the constitution immediately on taking office, for constitutional deliberations require careful thought and an extended opportunity for many interested groups and individuals, including politicians of all parties and prominent non-governmental organizations, to take part.

Ideally, consensus on constitutional change would be desirable; and the next general election, in 1996, might be the most convenient moment to put major proposals to the test of public approval. After all, the third section of the constitution, titled "Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Individual," cannot be altered by Parliament unless it first gains the approval of not less than half of all registered voters in a referendum. The other parts require only a two-thirds approval on second and third readings in the legislature.

While it is too early to say what, if anything, will emerge from the constitutional review process, President Chiluba has given no indication that he would be keen to propose any significant reduction in the powers of the executive. He is known to believe that a

country with Zambia's pressing development needs cannot afford the sort of delays and barriers to action that a very elaborate system of checks and balances could entail. He also looks forward to the possibility of securing a second term of office, which would be the maximum allowed to any one person under the present constitution.

### The Political Parties

The second obscure facet of the developing political landscape is the way in which the party system will eventually evolve. At present, Zambia has one predominant party. Following the October 1991 landslide, the MMD proceeded to dominate the local government elections held in November 1992 and August 1993. However, voter apathy has increased dramatically, and the election turn-outs (on an out-of-date electoral roll) in local elections and parliamentary by-elections have been but a small fraction of the figure of 45 percent of registered voters that was reached in 1991, and that itself was rather disappointing. In consequence, support for the MMD and its lead both appear to have shrunk. For instance, in the parliamentary by-election in Mwanabombwe in September, the winning candidate held the seat for MMD on a 20 percent turnout of voters but, in the first-past-the-post electoral contest, he polled fewer votes than the combined votes of the other parties. Two months later, the MMD could win only three of the eight seats contested in by-elections instigated by the defection of several MPs from the MMD to a new National Party. A great deal of publicity preceded this November test for the government, and so once again the turnouts, which ranged from a low of 13 percent in Kalabo to a high of 37 percent in Chasefu (where MMD ran second to UNIP), must be reckoned a disappointment.

The apparent disinterest of much of the electorate can be put down to several factors: MPs have not by and large tried hard to cultivate close links with their constituents and are thought to spend too much time in Lusaka and elsewhere pursuing their business interests, or in some cases attending to their ministerial portfolio; many ordinary Zambians are preoccupied with the daily struggle against poverty, and some believe that political contestation is too costly a distraction anyway, and government should be left free to tackle the serious economic problems of

the country, leaving its day of reckoning until the time of the next general election in 1996.

UNIP remains in existence, but its vote-gathering abilities seem confined to Eastern Province, and it faces several obstacles in trying to reestablish itself as a major political force. First, the party will not easily distance itself from the reputation for economic mismanagement, political intolerance, and corruption that it acquired during its long years in power, and that clearly was fixed in the

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voters' minds at the time of the multi-party elections in 1991. To some extent, this works even against the MMD. For, just as in Russia where Boris Yeltsin is distrusted by some because of his Communist origins, so in Zambia the image of the MMD is tinged by having in its senior ranks, especially in the cabinet, politicians who were formerly part of UNIP and its government.

Second, almost any party would have difficulty in regaining its credibility after being dealt such a heavy blow at the polls—in this regard the Conservative Party in Canada will be an interesting case to watch.

Third, although in the past UNIP benefitted politically from having been the leading party in the nationalist struggle for independence, this contribution matters little to Zambians today, a majority of whom were not participants in, or witnesses to, the anti-colonial struggle. Half of the Zambian population has yet to reach voting age.

Fourth, the out-of-power UNIP has been stripped of some of its income-generating assets and access to public resources, which previously were used to fund the organization and reward the party cadres. Any return to the 1960s campaign slogan "it pays to belong to UNIP" would be unwise, although it became clear in the November 1993 parliamentary by-elections that the MMD is prepared to draw attention to its power over offering and denying publicly-funded development projects to sway the voters when fighting its cor-

ner in the constituencies. However, if a government is subsequently seen to not keep its promises to make funds available, then the politics of patronage can quickly turn sour. In this regard, the government's failure to construct a road promised for Southern Province in 1991 can be cited as an example.

Fifth, UNIP lost many of its experienced political figures to MMD once MMD started to organize and acquire legal standing. Some of these have since moved on, and in 1993 helped form the National Party (including such "heavyweights" as Emmanuel Kasonde, Humphrey Mulemba, and Arthur Wina who had parted company with UNIP much earlier), but in many parts of the country UNIP remains bereft of figures with a traditional standing and strong local following. As is often the case with personal rulers, Kenneth Kaunda failed to prepare the way for leadership succession of his party, and now that he has gone his successor, Kebby Musokotwane (Kaunda's choice), seems to lack the full and united support of the party's national executive.

Finally, party renewal for UNIP could depend on it coming up with some new and attractive personalities and a new and distinctive programmatic identity with which to tackle the economic and social problems facing the country. The *Humanism* of Kaunda went out with the man and, whatever it stood for, it was never adopted enthusiastically or practiced widely in the party anyway. The necessity of restructuring the country's economy along free enterprise lines is almost universally accepted in Zambia today, and so there is little scope here for other parties to differentiate themselves from the MMD, which has occupied this ground from its very beginning. There is a Labour Party among the thirty-three other registered parties, but its claims to be representative of the working class are derided by trade union leaders. Few of the other parties rise above being one-man bands, or are very small groups with self-appointed chiefs and "interim" presidents.

Now that the United Democratic Party has been dissolved, the principal exception is the National Party, which some people are now looking to as the seeds of effective opposition to MMD even though it seems to have little new to offer.<sup>4</sup> It is too early to say whether support for the National Party will start to snowball following the election to Parliament in November of four of its most prominent fig-

ures in Southern and Western Provinces. The fact that Kasonde failed to win in the north, where the MMD retained the seat of Malole, makes it more difficult for the National Party to claim nationwide appeal, although it should also make it easier for the party to sort out its internal leadership rankings.

The most that the National Party, UNIP, and the others seem able to do for the time being is to draw attention to the adverse social effects of the way in which the structural adjustment program (SAP) for the economy is being implemented and to claim that the exercise should be carried out more gradually and with larger safety nets for the poor. One further ingredient is to reassert old and familiar nationalist claims, namely that Zambian enterprise needs to be protected against international competition (depicted as being unfairly subsidized by foreign governments), and that the government is selling out the country's birthright to foreign investors, especially South African "cheque book farmers," at the behest of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Western aid donors.

However, given the country's indebtedness (debt service payments absorb around 60 percent of export earnings), the present state of the economy and the government's dependence on overseas funding for two-thirds of its spending, it is very debatable whether there is much scope for significant alterations to policy, whatever the political complexion of the government. Moreover, nobody is very confident that the politicians who are most vocal in criticizing the government on social welfare grounds are being anything more than opportunist. They do not have any great affinities with the many impoverished Zambians, particularly the rural poor, who have experienced exceptional declines in their quality of life.<sup>5</sup> The same point may not be true of the religious groups, particularly the Catholic church, and some other organs of civil society that are vocal on behalf of the poor. But they are not seeking to form the next government, even though their activities in trying to influence public policy are an important manifestation of pluralist democracy in Zambia.<sup>6</sup>

Multi-party competition requires that there be at least two, and some would say more than two, parties. In an age when the scope for differences in terms of their ideology of political economy seems to have narrowed, if not disappeared entirely, the all too obvious

temptation for ambitious politicians is to attempt to capitalize on other grievances and play on non-class issues that are potentially very harmful to national unity. In some states in Central and Eastern Europe, this means ethno-nationalism and religion. In Zambia, it means "tribalism" and provincialism. Although the First and Second Republics may be credited with having consolidated the idea of "one nation, one Zambia" (something that was much touted by UNIP in its political propaganda through the years), there still remain latent suspicions about the way in which public resources and, especially, the most sought-after positions in government are allocated.

In one sense, the executive faces a no-win situation. If, on one hand, the observance of meritocratic criteria dictates that politicians from certain areas and certain linguistic groups come to dominate senior appointments in the administration, then challengers who claim to speak for the excluded or underrepresented groups may allege tribal or provincial bias. However, if, on the other hand, President Chiluba seeks to emulate his predecessor, who is regarded as having been adept at maintaining an acceptable balance in ministerial appointments, especially at cabinet level, then this too can be portrayed as putting tribal-type considerations to the fore, at the expense of maximizing competence and capability in government.

As it is, the MMD government is portrayed by some of its critics as being Bemba-dominated.<sup>7</sup> Against this, senior figures in the National Party who hail from Southern Province and from Western Province (known as Barotseland prior to Zambian independence, and that enjoyed a special legal relationship with Britain enshrined in the 1964 Barotse Agreement) have advanced the claims of the Tonga and Lozi peoples, respectively. In the case of the latter, at least one prominent political figure in the National Party, Akashambatwa Mbikusita-Lewanika, is seen to have some political affinity with the position of the Barotse royal establishment, whose opposition to the full authority of the central government based in Lusaka has given rise to some (probably exaggerated) talk of secessionist aims.

### THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Zambia's attempt under the MMD to liberalize the economy is instructive for other

countries in a similar position of close involvement with the international financial institutions. The experience is made more interesting by the government's undoubted commitment to economic liberalization, in spite of the fact that the process is damaging some interests in the business community—a community that furnishes a substantial proportion of senior government figures, and that most politicians aspire to become members of through the exercise of political influence and privileged access to various forms of government help. The Zambia Confederation of Industries and Chambers of Commerce lends support to the structural adjustment program begun in February 1992. In Zambia today, unlike so many other countries past and present, the international financial institutions seem to a considerable extent to be pushing against an open door.

The government's withdrawal of subsidies on maize, fertilizer, and fuel, its inclination to let interest rates rise and the currency (the *kwacha*) to change value in line with market forces, and its determination in 1993 to operate a cash budget for public sector spending, which has meant severe constraints on the money supply, have all had some predictable consequences. In 1991–92, price inflation rose to an annual rate of well over 200 percent, and the *kwacha* depreciated by over 400 percent, until the two trends were stabilized and reversed to a modest extent in the second half of 1993. The manufacturing industry has come under pressure from a combination of its own historically high cost base, the prohibitive cost of funds for local investment, the increase in competition due to import liberalization and, in late 1993, the appreciation of the *kwacha*. For example, over 70 percent of installed capacity in the clothing sector ceased production in the twelve months following January 1992. Imports of secondhand garments (known as *salaula*) and merchandise brought in from Zimbabwe and South Africa have captured the local market.

The government is caught between, on one side, pursuing adjustment measures consistently and with full rigor, watching the unfortunate consequences and their negative social effects, and trying to weather the ensuing unpopularity, and, on the other side, practicing political pragmatism. The MMD's election manifesto in 1991 boldly stated that, in order to make a fresh start, taking "painful measures" would be unavoidable, and that

any economic recovery measures “will necessarily cause yet more severe hardships.” Party leaders still profess that these measures will eventually benefit all society, not just the privileged few. But in the democratic cycle of competitive elections held at periodic intervals, pragmatism offers some attractions. Thus, for instance, the government has continued to interfere in the marketing of maize, which even now is commonly referred to as a political crop. The story of maize in 1993 is,

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for many, symptomatic of a wider malaise in the government.

Maize illustrates how the transition from a regulated and controlled economy to a market-based system can be fraught with administrative difficulties and beset by problems, including ones created by a conflict between different policy objectives and policy instruments of the government. In 1992, the maize harvest was very poor because of drought. Zambia received foreign food aid and nobody starved. In 1993, the rains were ample and commercial farmers and peasant farmers (the latter contributing over 60 percent of the total maize harvest) responded positively to the promise of a more liberal marketing regime, in which they would be allowed to sell to anyone and not just to the state.

However, in contrast to a completely free market, the authorities set a floor price for maize purchases by middlemen from the farmers, and at a level so low that the farmers were urged by their union to ignore offers. There is also a set maximum price chargeable at the mill. Private buyers failed to materialize in sufficient force to purchase the crop, partly because of the lack of affordable credit from the commercial banks, which, in turn, was caused by the government’s tight money policy. The millers were slow to pay middlemen for the deliveries, and thereby delayed the recycling of funds with which to buy more maize from the farmers. Money

made available by the government for maize purchases by its own newly appointed agents was redirected into lucrative treasury bills, allegedly to the private gain of some senior government figures who have a proprietary interest in the very same agencies. By November, the government, still short of liquidity, was offering farmers promissory notes instead of cash, mindful that it would not be long before the rains came and ruined the uncollected maize.

Financial considerations aside, the availability of stocks of imported maize still left over from the 1992 drought relief operation, the lamentable state of the country’s rural roads and haulage constraints, and inadequate on-farm storage facilities, all mean that a portion of the total crop will not generate income for the farmers, especially the peasants in the more remote areas. Delays in granting export licences frustrated the commercial farmers, who successfully located willing buyers in neighboring countries. Some have vowed never to grow maize again. All in all, the 1993 marketing season was probably set back by three months, and the president of the farmers union, Ben Kapita, said he could not recall such a fiasco in all his ten years experience. No one knows precisely what will be the consequences for this crucial part of Zambia’s agricultural economy—for farmers who are already facing high interest charges and capital repayments due to debts contracted in previous years, including the failed year of 1992, and who need ready money with which to purchase seed and fertilizer for the next season.

What is clear, however, is that Zambia’s population, which is growing at 3.6 percent per annum, and half of which now lives in urban areas, will need to feed itself and to expand into diversified agricultural export earnings if it is to adjust to a dramatic fall in the country’s copper export revenues. That is something most industry analysts predict will happen in the first few years of the twenty-first century, as the country’s mines deplete their remaining reserves and the costs of production become increasingly uncompetitive with other suppliers to the world.

#### **WHITHER ZAMBIA?**

Zambia now is experiencing probably more political freedom and a greater plurality of political groupings than at any time in its history. The state of emergency that the



government reintroduced in March 1993, in a somewhat hasty response to a "zero option plot" intended by a few UNIP malcontents to destabilize law and order, did not infringe legitimate political competition.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, it was withdrawn before its three-month term expired. Worthy, if rather unexciting, programs in civic education are regularly featured in the television schedules. Although there seemed to be government manipulation of the main daily newspapers during the November by-elections, some elements of the press, most notably the *Weekly Post*, have been relentless in publishing allegations of corruption and drugs-trafficking involving members of the cabinet. They have drawn attention to self-enrichment by ministers, in addition to highlighting public policy mistakes.

While these ills are undesirable, the accompanying exposure and public debate are surely a sign of health in the body politic. Of more concern in the longer term would be a failure to develop a constitutional framework that enjoys a widespread consensus, political parties with long-term viability and a stable party system that offers real scope for choice, and an appropriate level of public participation. These are issues that face not only Zambia but also many newly democratizing and redemocratizing states, in Africa and elsewhere.

Also like many other countries today, Zambia is trying to consolidate the parameters of a Western style liberal democracy at a time when the social and economic circumstances are unpropitious, not least because of the traumas involved in moving from statism to a market-based economic regime. In 1994, Zambia is far more urban than in 1964, and there are many more well-educated and propertied citizens (although considerable numbers of trained and qualified Zambians have left the country for greener pastures, and AIDS is taking its toll on the rest).

But, in many respects, the indications look much less favorable for democratization. If political scientists ranging from Seymour Martin Lipset to Samuel Huntington are right to regard advancing levels of economic development and an absence of great material inequality as important conditions, or preconditions, for successful democratization, then the outlook for Zambia is unpromising.<sup>9</sup> In that case, the vital question becomes one that has application far beyond Zambia, namely, how well does a society learn, espe-

cially when the learning experience comprises its own past mistakes.

Before 1964, the people of Zambia were denied the opportunity to practice self-government. On moving out of the First Republic and into the Second Republic, it might be said that they lacked a meaningful standard by which to make an informed comparison between different types of regime. Now, even though a stable multi-party system has yet to unfold, Zambians know what a one-party state can mean in their own country. They have tasted that alternative. Time will tell whether the memory will be sufficient to prevent history repeating itself. But, in a poor country that carries the legacy of years of underdevelopment and faces very uncertain economic prospects, the people's patience will not be inexhaustible. Democratization will be judged in terms of whether it brings practical benefits in the form of improving living conditions, as well as greater civil and political liberties and promises to respect the more basic human rights.

#### NOTES

1. See, for example, Peter Woodward, "Democracy and Economy in Africa: the Optimists and the Pessimists," *Democratization*, 1:1 (1994 forthcoming), and Samuel Decalo, "The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa," *African Affairs*, 91 (1992): 7-35, especially 35, where he cites Larry Diamond: "If progress is made toward developing democratic government, it is likely to be gradual, messy, fitful and slow, with many imperfections along the way."

2. Subsequent to the events of 1990-91 and his becoming president, Chiluba was awarded the George Meany medal by the AFL-CIO.

3. See, for example, Kenneth Good, "Debt and the One-Party State in Zambia," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 27:2 (1989): 297-313, and Marcia M. Burdette, *Zambia Between Two Worlds* (Boulder Co.: Westview Press, and London: Avebury, 1988).

4. As the *Weekly Standard* (16-22 August 1993) put it, the common denominator of all the major sponsors of the newly announced National Party "is that they were either sacked from government or denied ministerial positions of their choice, hardly compelling reasons to attract mass support."

5. Such indicators as infant mortality, maternal mortality, and primary and secondary school enrollment, as well as average incomes, have all been moving in the wrong direction for several years. An average of over 40 percent of children under five years of age are nutritionally stunted, compared with half that figure in 1982. Ten percent of infants fail to reach the age of twelve months,

and 20 percent of children do not live beyond five years. Figures suggest that around two-thirds of the total population spend less on food consumption than the sum required to meet the poverty datum line.

6. A particularly prominent contribution to the debate was "Hear the Cry of the Poor—A Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops on the Current Suffering of the People of Zambia." Occupying a full page in the newspapers, at the end of July 1993, the letter accused government policies of leading towards "economic apartheid." Some newspaper columnists dub the MMD the Movement for Moneyed Democrats.

7. While there are seventy-three different ethnic

groups in Zambia, Bemba speakers make up around one-third of the total population, and are associated with the Copperbelt in particular.

8. The termination in November 1991 of the state of emergency that President Kaunda had kept in place throughout his time in office was seen as one of the signal achievements of Zambia's return to multi-party politics.

9. See Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review*, 53:1 (1959): 69-105, and Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

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