

WOMEN AND MASS MOBILIZATION IN NATIONALIST POLITICS IN
COLONIAL ZAMBIA 1951-1964: THE CASE OF LUSAKA

By

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APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT.

This study is concerned with an examination of the role of women in mass mobilization in Zambian nationalist politics during the period 1951 to 1964. Concentration has been on Lusaka as the case study.

The study begins with an analysis of the historical background to the status of Zambian women. It is argued that the subordinate status accorded to women in Zambia is a social and cultural phenomenon. This can be traced back to the pre-colonial period when women were exposed to social orientation and education which was different from that for men. The subordinate status of women was further exacerbated during the colonial period when women were denied equal access to most spheres of life including education and employment.

The second chapter concentrates on the emergence and development of the nationalist movement by focusing on the activities of the African National Congress in its campaign against the imposed Federation. It is argued that women played a significant role in this campaign. They helped in the mobilization of the masses and in the raising of funds. They were also later mobilized for participation in boycotts and demonstrations which were aimed at helping to improve the welfare of Africans.

The third chapter involves an examination of the role which women played in nationalist politics after 1958. It is argued that they played influential and instrumental roles, especially in the formation and

development of new parties, which helped in bringing together various small parties to form the United National Independence Party. This co-existed with the African National Congress. After 1960 women were mobilized for participation in political boycotts and demonstrations which helped influence the decisions of the colonial administrators who visited the country. They were also involved in less conspicuous activities which helped to ensure the success of the political parties.

Chapter four examines the aftermath of the independence struggle. An analysis of the status of women after independence is made. It is argued that women did not make headway in Zambian politics and there was little improvement in their status. This was because those women who had been involved in the nationalist movement, and who continued their involvement after independence, tended to be conservative. They did not advocate for women's rights.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION.

DEFINITION OF POLITICS.

Politics, as any other area of study, is defined differently by different scholars. These include Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, John S. Mills and Max Weber.¹ These scholars defined politics from different perspectives depending among other things on their personal and ideological convictions. Ollawa has observed that most contemporary definitions of politics are influenced by some aspects of the work of the German sociologist, Max Weber, who defined politics as:

That set of activities or efforts directed towards participating in ruling ... or towards influencing the distribution of power ... either between states or among different groups within the same state.²

Weber's definition ties in closely with the kind of politics which prevailed in Zambia³ during the colonial period, and with which this study is concerned. Politics here will be loosely defined as those activities which prepared the Zambians to recapture political power from the colonial rulers and those which enabled them to consolidate and maintain their power. This involved various kinds of activities, which had either direct or indirect influence on the distribution of power. This included the mobilization of the masses for the emergent political parties, participating in boycotts and demonstrations against various pieces of legislation and colonial officials, as well as the holding of political rallies. Other activities included the dissemination of

information, the preparation of food, the provision of shelter and meeting places for political activities. Taken together these essentially made up the politics of liberation in Zambia.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND BACKGROUND TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN ZAMBIA

In Zambia, both men and women participated in the politics of recapturing power from the colonial rulers. Women worked side by side with the men in various political activities which eventually brought independence to the country. To date most of the literature on Zambian politics has overlooked women's role in the nationalist struggle. Men have been given precedence as the main political actors while women's participation has frequently been ignored. This has led to an under-estimation of the importance of women's participation. Very little is known of the part women played in nationalist politics which included the mobilization of the masses for the emergent nationalist parties.

Such a state of affairs has arisen because of several reasons. One of these is the fact that women in Zambia have been accorded a subordinate status as compared to men. This is something which has been accepted by most women not only in Zambia but also in other countries, and has been strongly supported by the institutions of law. For instance, in Zambian society, under customary law, women are treated as perpetual

dependents of either their male relatives before marriage or their husbands after marriage.⁴ In addition, there has been a gender-role division of activities. This has led to a situation whereby certain fields are regarded as men's domain so that women's involvement in these fields has been awarded secondary attention.

Several theories have been expounded on this gender-role division of activities. One theory is that which is biologically oriented. This has traced the division of activities and, consequently, the subordinate status of women to the biological differences between men and women. For this theory, significance has been given to the physical characteristics among humans and to a gender division of labour that assigns men to "public" and women to "private" activities.⁵ Women's existence has thus been deemed subordinate to their indispensable function of child-bearing. This is believed by some to have left women with very little room for involvement in other activities, even where they had the abilities.

This point of view, however, has been criticised by another which has questioned the emphasis on the essentially biological difference. They have, instead, emphasized the social aspect of women and have attempted to construct explanations for the subordination of women and the gender-role division of activities in what Bozzoli refers to as 'materialist and historical terms'.⁶ For them the emphasis is laid on division of labour as a function of culture, while gender is seen as a social phenomenon; as something which is determined by

social factors rather than biological ones. As such, the subordinate status of women is thus seen as a socially determined aspect.

To cite one writer who falls in this group, Barbara Rogers explains that 'the work roles that men and women perform in society are learnt rather than biologically determined and the values, attributes and norms of society enter into the process of learning these roles.'⁷ She further explains that, in this way, the gender roles become permeated with cultural prescriptions so that although every society has its own division of labour, the allocation of tasks will vary from one socio-cultural situation to the next. Barbara Rogers sees pregnancy and child-birth as the only biologically fixed roles. It is around these roles, she observes, that the division of labour revolves. To shore up this division, there are usually societal beliefs that are propagated about women's very special and natural child-bearing capacities and men's inability to fulfil this delicate and sensitive function.⁸ It is the instilling of such ideas which distinguish women from men and this should not be seen as something which is instinctive or biologically determined. For instance, if boys are given toy cars while girls are given dolls, this will determine what people will think on the status and roles of a particular gender in a given society.

A similar analysis fits well for Zambian society. The according of a subordinate status to women in Zambia 'should be seen as a social and cultural phenomenon. It

is a result of the evolution of ideas and beliefs that women should perform different tasks from those of men. This can be traced back to the pre-colonial period when the orientation and education of women was different from that of men. John Mwanakatwe, who has written on pre-colonial African education in Zambia, has shown how girls were exposed to different practical experiences which were mainly for preparing them for their expanded future roles as wives and mothers.⁹ From early childhood girls were told to behave in an expected manner, which was different from that expected from boys. For instance it was 'ungirlish' for a girl to be climbing trees. Similarly boys were not expected to be seen hanging around the kitchen. Boys were exposed to wider crafts such as hunting, fishing, building and fighting. They were also given an opportunity of sitting at public meetings where village matters were discussed. This opportunity enabled the boys to gain knowledge pertaining to public issues and to keep abreast with current affairs. Girls were rarely given this opportunity and as such were left in the dark. Instead they were expected to be always at home and not be found in the midst of men. This observation was also made in one of the early Northern Rhodesian newspapers:

In villages themselves answers are not far to find ... tribal customs leave women out of every major discussion. Tribal meetings are not attended by women. They do not eat together with men, not even when there are visitors. They are in every sense junior partners.¹⁰

Very few ethnic groups in present day Zambia involved women in politics. Among those which did were the Luvale of North Western province and the Namwanga in Northern Province. These had women as rulers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹¹ But even among these groups, major political decisions were left in the hands of men. Even in matrilineal societies, for instance among the Bemba, where it was the sisters of kings who produced the heirs to the throne, it was the men who ruled and it was very rare that women were given territory to rule.¹² In general politics remained a man's domain.

The struggle for independence, however, did not only involve men. Women also became involved in spite of the traditional exclusion of women from politics. Their involvement was mainly because of socio-economic and political pressures brought about as a result of the establishment of colonial rule.

The advent of colonialism in Northern Rhodesia further exacerbated the subordinate status of women. While the status of men was elevated as a result of the preferential entry accorded to them to most spheres of life, very little was offered to women to enable them to improve their status. This included educational and employment opportunities. These were some of the social tools which would have helped women in elevating their status. Several studies have addressed themselves to the issue of the education of women in Zambia. Janet Nyeko who did a stimulating study on this subject argued that

the education which was offered to women during both the pre-colonial and colonial periods was that which mainly prepared them for their expected future roles as wives and mothers.¹³ Mabel Shaw, one of the early founders of mission schools in Northern Rhodesia, gave the picture of the kind of education which the missionaries hoped to offer to girls:

The aim of the school is not to produce girls who have reached a certain standard ... it is to enrich life in every way possible ... fitting girls for the life they are going to live as wives and mothers amongst their people.¹⁴

Apparently the missionaries' aims were in conformity with the beliefs among the Africans on the education of girls. Daughters were expected to get married as early as possible. It was the education of boys which was valued more than that of girls. A comment to this effect was made in the report of the standing committee of the Advisory Board on Native Education in 1936:

... Parents expect their daughters to get married, education appears to them, not only a waste, but a means of delaying the ultimate receipt of the bride price.¹⁵

One informant, Mrs Mporokoso, lamented over how she was unable to go to school because of her parents' negative attitude towards formal education. She further amusingly narrated how her parents hid her under the bed when missionaries went to her village to enrol girls for school.¹⁶

Even after 1925 when the colonial administration developed an educational policy towards girls, the education which was offered aimed at preparing them for

their expected future roles as wives and mothers. Girls were offered subjects such as cookery, laundry and needlework in addition to the basic subjects.¹⁷ Little was done to improve their educational opportunities. For instance, in 1948 Native Authorities' bursaries on the Copperbelt were given only to boys.¹⁸ Secondary education was only made available to girls in 1946, seven years after the opening of Munali.

Women were further denied equal employment opportunities with men. In most employment avenues, women were discriminated against. This included the mining industry which was the largest formal employer, and even in domestic service, an avenue which in other countries had been liberalized to include women. Several studies on North-Western Europe and North America have established that, in these countries, domestic service had become the women's main source of revenue. This also includes South Africa. Here, after 1917, it suited the interests of the white population to have black female servants.¹⁹

In Zambia, the story was different. Here domestic service has remained a prerogative for men even to day. Hansen has argued that employers in Northern Rhodesia, far from taking women servants for granted, avoided them. According to Hansen, this was because of the fact that the employers worried that the black women would take over their husbands.²⁰ While this could have been one possible reason, it may also have been because of the fact that since most men had migrated to the towns in

search of wage employment, women were needed to continue with the agricultural production of food, required not only in the villages, but for sustaining the mining areas. In addition, there were not many job opportunities in Northern Rhodesia as was the case in the industrialized countries. This made it inevitable that even the lowest level of employment was dominated by men. The denial of employment opportunities thus put women at a disadvantage and exacerbated their subordinate status.

LITERATURE REVIEW.

All over the world, women have been involved in political struggles. These took various forms in different countries. In some countries like Britain and North America women were basically involved in the struggle for the suffrage. Here women were involved in movements in which they had to fight intensely for the right to vote for decades, and many of their leaders were imprisoned.²¹ However, for our study we cannot learn much by looking at such literature because of the fact that the nature of the political struggle which took place in countries which were once under colonial rule was different. Here, women did not necessarily have to fight for the vote since it was assumed that this right would come automatically once independence was achieved. Women, in fact, suppressed this concern with fighting for equal rights. This was not a priority. What became the prime issue was the fight for independence.

Literature on India, Latin America and most countries in Africa which were once under colonial rule reveals how women were involved in the liberation struggles in their respective countries. For instance, literature on the Indian political scene shows how women at the turn of the twentieth century became active in the Swadeshi movement which sought to encourage and promote the use of locally made goods over foreign products.²² They also participated in anti-colonial protest marches.²³ In Nigeria women staged massive uprisings against the threat of female taxation and were also very instrumental in a general strike against the economic and political policies of the British.²⁴ In Algeria, women acted as carriers of weapons, money and messages. They also became actual combatants.²⁵

In Egypt, Iran and the Ottoman Empire women are said to have worked with men in organizations promoting independence from European imperialism by participating in street demonstrations, public speaking and writing.²⁶ In Zimbabwe and Mozambique, women also participated in the armed struggle.²⁷

In these countries, except for those which were engaged in armed struggle, women participated in resistance strategies which often did not threaten the traditional roles. For instance, women in India were successful in their Swadeshi movement as this was within their domain of domestic influence. It was the women who were in control of consumption in the domestic sphere.

Similarly, in most African counties, including Zambia, women became involved in resistance strategies in areas which affected them. In Nigeria, the market women staged a strike against the economic policies of the British because these threatened their survival. In Zambia women were initially mobilized to participate in economic boycotts and demonstrations against the business premises which practised racial discrimination. They were later mobilized for participation in more clearly political boycotts and demonstrations which were aimed at influencing the decisions of the colonial rulers.

An important observation to make on the nature of these liberation struggles is that despite all the efforts of the women, and the promises which were made by the leadership of the nationalist movements, in Zambia and elsewhere, to improve the status of women once independence had been achieved, women did not become the political and economic equals of men there and then. This was because what changed was the control of the government. People's attitudes and beliefs remained the same. What the nationalist movements, once they had attained political power did was to subordinate the women more than ever before.

Similar phenomena occurred in other countries. The growth of nationalism and patriotism in Japan, for instance, tended to subjugate women, requiring that they should be good wives and mothers as their first 'patriotic' duty.²⁸ In China, despite the initial institution of reforms which served to empower women,

what prevailed after that was the repression of a developing feminist movement which had actually supported the rise to power of the Kuomintang nationalist movement.²⁹ In Egypt, women were constitutionally denied the right to vote and were barred from the opening of Parliament, despite the active role they had played in the nationalist movement.³⁰ In Nigeria, although women had been courted and counted as strong supporters of the independence struggle, they remained generally excluded from political power after the independence was won, especially when the country came under military rule.³¹

In Zambia the political position of women after independence was not as bad as in some other countries. Here, women were theoretically granted equal rights simultaneously with the vote. However, a critical analysis of this granting of equal rights reveals that it was more of a rhetorical gesture which in reality left much to be desired. Women remained subordinate after the attainment of independence because people's attitudes had not changed. As a result, politics continued to be dominated by men. Women failed to make headway in the country's politics as this was still regarded as a man's domain. Even where women were interested and were capable, they could not make much headway because they were denied opportunities of fully participating in the decision-making bodies. At one time in the early 1970s women were told to 'leave politics to (male) politicians and go home to look after their children.'³²

An examination of the Zambian literature reveals that, to date, while a notable number of works have addressed themselves to the roles of women in agriculture, the urban informal sector and education,³³ very little has been written on the role of women in Zambian politics.

A few writers have tried to explain the lack of prominent women in Zambian politics. The leading among these are Schuster and Nyeko. Schuster examined the participation of women in the nationalist struggle. She contends that this was limited because of a deliberate policy of exclusion by men.³⁴ Nyeko blamed the pre-colonial and colonial educational systems for not having oriented women for wider participation in politics. This is why she maintained that it was the 'uneducated' women who participated in the country's nationalist politics.³⁵ However, this contention is questionable as a careful scrutiny of the women who participated in nationalist politics reveals that many 'educated' women of the day did participate in various ways. Education was not the only determinant of one's political participation. It was the level of one's political consciousness which mattered.

Harries-Jones and Epstein made a break-through by examining the participation of women in the country's nationalist politics. Harries-Jones, through an extended interview with Foster Mubanga showed how women were mobilized for participating in beer-hall boycotts and in the mobilization of the masses for the United National

Independence Party. Harries-Jones, through this interview also showed the complexities and contradictions which women faced once they became involved in nationalist politics.³⁶ Epstein hints at women's involvement in the boycott of butcheries which were selling meat to Africans in a discriminatory way.³⁷ However, he did not clearly bring to light the actual participation of women in the boycotts. In both Harries-Jones' and Epstein's works there is a lack of analysis of the significance of the political activities in which women were involved. These works have further not examined the factors which precipitated the participation of women in nationalist politics. This study will therefore attempt to fill this gap.

RATIONALE.

This study is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is a contribution to women's studies, a theme which has become important in current African historiography. Secondly, to date no comprehensive historical study exists dealing especially with the role of women in Zambian politics. Therefore this study is an attempt to fill this gap. Thirdly, following the United Nations' declaration of the year 1975 as the women's year,³⁸ efforts have been made worldwide to integrate women fully in development.

It has been realised that women are an integral part of any strategy for socio-economic development, more especially in the developing countries where women occupy

an important role in the process of national development, for example, in food production. In view of this recognition, the need has arisen to study the current and historical roles of women in the socio-economic and political development of their societies. By examining and analyzing the role of women in mass mobilization in nationalist politics in Zambia, this study hopes to throw light on how the status of women in Zambia has evolved over time. It will also bring to light certain factors which have impinged on their status. Focus will be on the individual and collective roles of women in the mobilization of the masses for the nationalist movement.

The period on which this study will concentrate is that between 1951 and 1964. This was the time when nationalist politics took on a strong hold and culminated in an intense struggle for independence. Lusaka has been chosen as the case study, as this was the capital city of Zambia and so, in a way, was the centre of political activity.

The second chapter will concentrate on the emergence and development of the nationalist movement by focusing on the activities of the African National Congress party in its campaign against the imposed federation. It will be shown that women relatively played a significant role in this campaign. They helped in the mobilization of the masses for the party and in the raising of funds for its running. Later they were mobilized for participation in boycotts and demonstrations which were aimed at putting an end to the discriminatory practices in most business

premises. At this time the nature of nationalist politics was that it was mainly concerned with an improvement of the welfare of the Africans.

The third chapter involves an examination of the role which women played in nationalist politics following a split in the African National Congress. It will be shown that they played an influential and instrumental role in the formation and development of the new parties, the Zambia African National Congress (ZANC), which, after its ban early in 1959, was succeeded by the United National Independence Party (UNIP). In both these parties, women helped in the mobilization of the masses and in the raising of funds for registration of the parties and for other uses, including the hiring of lawyers for the detained leaders of ZANC. They were also instrumental in bringing together the small parties which had emerged after 1959, to form UNIP. They also participated in more clearly political boycotts and demonstrations which helped to influence the decisions of the colonial administrators who visited the country. Women were also involved in less conspicuous activities which helped to ensure the success of the political parties. These included the sheltering of nationalist leaders at times of crisis. Women also formed part of the rank and file which in 1962 voted to usher in a coalition government formed by ANC and UNIP. When the universal adult franchise was introduced in 1963, women were among the voters who gave UNIP a decisive majority.

The fourth chapter, which is the conclusion, will examine the aftermath of the independence struggle. An analysis of the status of women after independence will be made. It will be argued that women did not make headway in Zambian politics and did not fight for an improvement in the status of women. This was because those women who had been involved in the nationalist movement, and who continued their involvement after independence, tended to be conservative. They did not advocate for women's rights.

METHODOLOGY

The research for this study was conducted in the following stages. The first part involved a review and analysis of the relevant books, articles, government reports, unpublished theses and dissertations, and papers in the University of Zambia library. From these sources data from a cross-section of views was obtained. This data was important in establishing a general picture of the problems under investigation, as well as for comparison with data obtained from other sources which this study has utilized, namely archival and oral sources.

The second part of the research was conducted in the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ), the Freedom House Archives, the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), the Times of Zambia (Ndola) and the Zambia Daily Mail libraries. From these sources relevant literature on Zambia's political activities during the colonial

period were obtained. Government documents, some ANC and UNIP files, newspapers and magazines revealed information on the official colonial policies towards women, as well as relevant data on some activities in which women were involved. The information obtained also reminded us of particular women who left a mark on the Zambian political scene.

The third part of the research involved field work. Here, personal interviews were carried out with people from various walks of life. These included politicians, both male and female, as well as other ordinary people who were involved in the nationalist struggle or witnessed it. An informal questionnaire was used. This was done in order to get a better response from the informants, most of whom tended to distrust the use of a formal questionnaire. At the time that research for this study was carried out, most people tended to regard politics as a sensitive subject. The interviews were carried out in different areas of Lusaka which were chosen for the case study. Several interviews were also carried out on the Copperbelt with people who were in Lusaka during the time of the liberation struggle and who had vital information on some incidents and activities in which women in Lusaka were particularly involved.

The methodology used has been a combination of written and oral sources. These have been used partly to complement each other and partly as a counter-check on one method by the other.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

One can not expect to have achieved all the objectives of the study because of a number of problems which were faced. When the research for this study was carried out, politics was a subject which was regarded by many people as a very sensitive one. As a result not many people were willing to talk freely on the issue of politics, and feared to be identified as having belonged to any other party apart from the one that was in power. This, therefore, made it very difficult for the researcher to gather concrete information on the activities of other political parties in question, apart from UNIP. Almost everyone claimed and pretended to belong to UNIP. One cannot blame them since by then it was a one party state.

Secondly, many records which were used by earlier researchers such as David Mulford in his book, Zambia: The Politics of Independence, are no longer available. Files which he consulted in the National Archives are no longer to be found there. Other files which he read in government departments shortly before independence are unavailable and were probably destroyed. These included Monthly Intelligence reports from each district and personal files on political activists. In addition, many files which have survived at Freedom House, the UNIP Headquarters, for instance the ANC files, were unhelpful. They seem to have been weeded. Most files on UNIP activists were still regarded by Freedom House as 'classified documents'. The Women's League also

confessed that they lacked historical records on the development and activities of the organization.

In view of these problems, most of the data on the activities of women during the struggle for independence was therefore derived from oral information. Most of the informants were also vague on the names of women who held leadership positions in the ANC Women's Brigade as well as during the formation of ZANC and UNIP. The establishment of the actual dates for some of the activities was almost impossible. However, an attempt was made to supplement these sources by analyzing some newspapers, government documents, as well as books on the country's nationalist politics.

NOTES.

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2. Cited in Ollawa, Participatory Democracy, p. 28.
3. The country known as Zambia was called Northern Rhodesia during the colonial period. However, in this dissertation the name Zambia will be used throughout to conform with the current usage.
4. NAZ ZA 1/9/4 Native Marriages, 1919-1926.
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7. Cited in Jennifer Tyobeka, 'Women in Rural Development Programmes in Swaziland: A Focus on the Influence of Time and Access to Labour Saving Technology on Women's Participation,' (M. A. Dissertation, University of Zambia, Lusaka, 1987), p. 9.
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37. A. L. Epstein, Politics in an Urban African Community, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1958), pp. 171-9.
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CHAPTER TWO.

WOMEN UNDER COLONIAL CONSTRAINTS: THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS' CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE FEDERATION 1951-58.

In this chapter we intend to examine the role which women played in Zambia's nationalist politics during the period 1951 to 1958. During this period nationalist politics were mainly concerned with improving the welfare of Africans. The main bone of contention was the Federation which, according to the Africans, had been imposed on them, and which seemed to cement a lot of colonial injustices. We therefore intend to examine factors which precipitated women's political participation. We also hope to bring to light the activities in which women were involved in the campaign against the imposed Federation. For this chapter, concentration will be on the activities of the African National Congress, which by then, was the main African Political Party.

After 1951 there was an intensification of talks on the imposition of the Federation of the two Rhodesians and Nyasaland. This eventually culminated in its imposition in 1953. While the establishment of the Federation promised more political control for the white population in Northern Rhodesia, it posed a threat to the interests of the Africans. The response of the Africans was a rejection of the Federation scheme and a massive campaign against it was launched by the African National Congress.

The involvement of women in the nationalist movement was emulated from other countries where the liberation struggles had started earlier than in Zambia. These included India, Ghana and Tanganyika. As noted by Hatch, nationalist movements in West Africa and Tanganyika realised the importance of involving women in the liberation struggles. They recognised that unless they did so, half of the adult population would remain inactive during the struggles ahead. They also realised that women had their contribution to make which included the stiffening of their husband's resistance and the guiding of the children into national consciousness.¹ Jean O'Barr also noted how, for instance, the organisation of market women in Nigeria enabled the political parties to have mass support during the elections.² In Ghana, women had been organised under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, and they proved to be a formidable and valuable force in the liberation struggle. Nkrumah had realised that the success of his party depended on the potential of the different segments of society. This included women. He, in fact, acknowledged the positive contribution made by women when he wrote that:

Much of the success of the Convention People's Party, had been due to the efforts of women. From the very beginning women have been the chief field organisers.³

Although the nature of the liberation struggles differed from one country to another, the national leaders realised that the mobilisation of women was vital

in bringing about the expulsion of the colonial authorities.

After 1951, the African National Congress, therefore, established as one of its wings, the Women's Brigade. This was given as its major role the mobilization of the masses, especially the women. Mr. Kapasa Makasa one of the early nationalist leaders commented on the important role that women played in the mobilization of the masses:

We needed to mobilize the masses in order to carry out an effective campaign against the Federation. Women occupy a central role in any society. They are between the children on one hand and the father on the other. We, the leaders knew that the women were good organisers and tacticians. We used them to recruit new members for the party.⁴

Mama Julia Chikamoneka also commented on the important role which women played as 'go betweens':

First and foremost we are mothers. Mind you this is a very important position because although we may not have the power or authority, we have the influence. When for example, we approached someone that he or she join the party, they had to oblige or they risked being ostracized. See! This is where the power of the women lies. We recruited new members for ANC, ZANC and UNIP....⁵

The women who became involved in nationalist politics came from various walks of life and from various backgrounds. There were married women as well as unmarried or single women. These included the educated and the uneducated. Some were Christians while some were not in the sense that they did not belong to any Christian denomination. Marriage, education or their religious affiliation were not factors which determined their involvement in nationalist politics. Women became

involved not as a separate group but as part of the African masses which wanted to see an improvement in their social welfare. It can be argued that the uneducated women were not the only ones who involved themselves in nationalist politics, but were the majority of those who participated. This was because until well after independence, there were very few women who had attained some education. This, however, does not mean that the educated women of the day completely shunned politics. These educated women did, also, participate, at different levels, depending on their personal convictions and the levels of their political consciousness. There were women like Mrs. Christine Mbewe, (who had attained a form two level of education), Mrs. Susan Mwananshiku (Form two) Mrs. Namaya Mbikusita Lewanika (Form two), Ms. Mela Chibumba (Standard six), and Princess Mukwae Nakatindi (Form three). These women were among those who had by then attained the highest levels of education in the country. A scrutiny of the educational levels of the male nationalist leaders shows that, in fact, very few men had attained the levels of education of these women.

WHY WOMEN BECAME INVOLVED IN NATIONALIST POLITICS

Until the early 1950's politics in Zambia were generally regarded as a field for men. Women's involvement was seen as something out of the ordinary. This was why for quite some time women had excluded themselves and also been excluded from the politics of

the country. During the formative years of nationalist politics, when Welfare Societies were formed, women played a relatively insignificant role. Women were not members of these societies. It was only in the late 1940's that the Welfare Societies included women. As stated in the minutes of a meeting of one of the Welfare Societies held in 1948:

It was suggested and recommended that the Female Welfare office be asked to organise African Women's meetings and that, after a certain period of training, they should join the men.⁶

Women became incorporated when nationalist politics became more controversial. It was realised that if the nationalist movement was to succeed, there was great need to include women.

There were several factors which precipitated women's involvement in nationalist politics. African women in both the rural and urban areas were exposed to colonial injustices which took various forms of discrimination. From the early times of colonial rule, women were subjected to various discriminatory pieces of legislation, laws and rules which infringed upon their social and economic interests.

With the penetration of capital in Northern Rhodesia, women were initially barred from migrating to towns on search of wage employment. Migrant labour was only for men. It was only after the mining companies saw the need to minimise costs of production that they saw the importance of allowing the women to accompany their spouses to the towns. This meant that it was only

married women who were allowed to move to the towns. The unmarried or single ones could not. In order to ensure that it was only the married women who migrated, these had to produce letters of authority from their respective Native Authorities as well as marriage certificates.⁷ Chauncey has shown how the Native Authorities connived with the colonial government to restrict women's movements. To this effect a pass system was introduced in 1939.⁸ Thorough checks were also carried out at strategic points. A member of the African Representative Council described how, in 1951, he passed through a checking depot at Chembe (in Luapula Province) where the Native Authority had stationed two 'capitaos' there who were constantly checking on the women leaving the rural areas for urban areas.⁹ Another check-point was set up at the Luangwa Bridge for women who tried to migrate from the Eastern Province to Lusaka and the Copperbelt.¹⁰ Often, those that failed to produce either marriage certificates or letters of authority from the Native Authorities were arrested. The Native Authorities even went to the extent of travelling to the urban areas to apprehend those women who they thought were in the towns illegally. Jane Parpart has described how urban african courts were set up to enforce the traditional norms.¹¹ This was done to control urban African domestic affairs, which included the curtailing of the movement of women. Those caught were fined up to £10 or six months imprisonment.¹²

Although the restrictions also applied to men who

were also not supposed to be in the towns unless they were engaged in formal employment, the restrictions were more harsh on women as they could only be in town if they were married. This did not apply to men.

However, the pass system did not deter women from migrating to the towns where the economic prospects seemed brighter. Marriage certificates were forged, drivers of trucks were bribed and road-blocks and check-points were evaded. The comic strip cartoons of Jim Mampala and Jane Kapenta which appeared in the African Mail,¹³ show some of the techniques which were used by women to evade the colonial and Native Authorities.

In the urban areas women were further exposed to more forms of discrimination. First, they were denied equal employment opportunities to men. By the legislation which was enacted in 1930 women were virtually excluded from many forms of employment. In practice they were largely excluded even from domestic service.¹⁴ The denial of equal employment opportunities to women left the women with very limited income-earning options. Most of them therefore had to resort to the informal sector. They sold various food stuffs such as wild fruits and vegetables, caterpillars, flying ants as well as other raw and cooked food stuffs. Some women engaged themselves in the sale of charcoal while others resorted to beer-brewing and selling. All this was done in efforts to find means of survival. This also included the married women who had to supplement the meagre salaries of their husbands. Mrs Chama

rationalised women's involvement in the informal sector when she pointed out that:

Most of us had large families and kept many dependants. You know in our African society we have the extended family system.... Our husbands wages were not just enough to take us to the end of the month and even to pay taxes, buy uniforms for our children and contribute something to our churches. It was usually the woman in the home who had to find an alternative source so as to make ends meet.¹⁵

Those that were involved in these informal economic activities were subjected to high taxes in the markets. They were also subjected to many restrictions and bans on the carrying out of these activities. The restrictions and fees made the economic survival of women in towns very difficult, more especially the unmarried women who solely depended on those economic activities for survival.

Women were also discriminated against in the allocation of accommodation. Unlike the mining towns where the mining companies had the responsibility of providing accommodation to their employees, Lusaka had a different situation. Having been established mainly as a centre of administration, commerce and transport, its economic potential was therefore limited. This meant that there were many employers who were not well established as was the case with the mining companies. This made it difficult where the provision of housing was concerned. As stated by Hansen, 'none of the many employers accepted the full responsibility of housing the town's rapidly growing population.'¹⁶

This led to the springing up of unauthorised compounds which later on fell under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Council. In addition, the council administered the allocation of plots, which were commonly known as 'MAPOLOPOTO' to Africans to build houses. Preferences in the allocation of these plots was given to the married people. Marriage certificates had to be produced before a married couple could be allocated a plot.¹⁷ This put the unmarried women in a precarious position. In Lusaka, it was not easy for one to enter a marriage by 'pick-up' as was the case on the Copperbelt.¹⁸ This was a kind of marriage whereby a woman became married to a man in the town as a result of offering services to him. It may have been easier for women on the Copperbelt to enter such marriages because the mining companies in fact encouraged its employees to enter into marriages so as to become more stable workers. Prior to 1953, women in Lusaka could only register their marriages after producing the consent to marriage from their respective Native Authorities.¹⁹ The denial of such opportunities such as easy entry into a marriage relationship therefore made it difficult for the unmarried women to get plots. This meant that most of them had to squat with those that had been given plots. For this they had to pay through their noses. In addition, even those who had been allocated plots had to pay exorbitant rates.

Women were further exposed to a lot of discriminatory practices in their everyday encounters.

As Africans, they were discriminated against in most public places. These included shops, butcheries, post-offices, as well as other public places. Although men were also discriminated against, it was the women who suffered more because they were the ones who carried out the day-to-day purchasing of commodities for their families, while their husbands were at work. Women were often abused and had to do their shopping under unpleasant conditions. Grace Keith, who has written extensively on these unfavourable conditions, has noted that although the policy of the Northern Rhodesian government before Federation had been one of 'paramountcy of Africa interests,' Northern Rhodesia in some ways, at that time, practised a more rigid form of colour bar than did either of its neighbours, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.²⁰ She has further noted that for instance Northern Rhodesia had a unique system of 'hatch' or 'Hole-in-the-wall' shopping. Here Africans were not allowed into the shops or butcheries. There were also certain shops in which Africans never dared to show their faces.²¹ Africans had to wait and stand in long queues outside, by the hatches, before they could be served. According to Mrs. Joyce Kateule what angered Africans most was that the whites were not subjected to the same treatment.

A white woman could freely walk into the butchery or shop, and take her time choosing what she wanted. This was not the case with us. In fact once a white customer came, we Africans had to wait until she had finished her shopping. This really annoyed us because we used to pay the same money. Was it because we were black that we were being mistreated?²²

In butcheries, the Africans were served with already packed parcels, which usually proved to contain poor quality meat.

When Dauti Yamba, one of the African representatives in the Federal Assembly, tried to raise the issue of this discrimination and suggested that equal treatment be legally accorded immediately to all races in public places,²³ the proposal was met with a lot of sarcasm and resistance from the whites. In answer to this, Lord Malvern is reported to have stated clearly the view of the whites on the issue when he declared that 'white women could not be expected to stand in queues with African mothers bearing dirty babies.'²⁴

The African women could not tolerate the discriminatory practices for long. As noted by Mrs. Chula:

Most of us realised that we were suffering because we were Africans. We saw the need to join the nationalist movement which seemed to promise an improvement to our welfare.²⁵

Mrs. Kankasa narrated an incident which showed how women were discriminated against more than men.

As I walked into the butchery with my husband, the white lady who was selling meat came straight to me and said, 'Get Out!' When I asked her why, she answered 'don't you know that you stink? Get Out!' I was shocked!²⁶

We, therefore, see that it was mainly a result of the colonial injustices which women were subjected to, which precipitated their involvement in nationalist politics. They hoped the African National Congress would help them alleviate some of their problems and improve their social welfare.

THE ROLE OF THE ANC WOMEN'S BRIGADE IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE FEDERATION.

After 1951, the Women's Brigade was established as one of the wings of the African National Congress. It was set up as a forum for women's political participation. The reconstruction of the history of the ANC Women's Brigade presents a lot of problems which arise from the fact that no proper records were kept which would have given us the relevant information. For this section, therefore, most of the information has come from oral testimonies.

The Women's Brigade became the forum through which women were mobilized to carry out various political activities planned by ANC, in its campaign against the Federation. In these activities, women did not necessarily become the leaders but formed the rank and file. There were quite a number for which women were mobilized. These included (as stated earlier), the mobilization of the masses for the party, and the raising of funds, as well as participation in boycotts and demonstrations.

In 1951, the congress held a conference at which it resolved to send a delegation to England, to express African opposition to the Federation scheme, which according to the congress leaders would betray the Africans' national aspirations and rob them of their legitimate claims to ownership of the land.²⁷ Initially, the congress had appealed to the colonial government to finance an African delegation, but this had been turned down. It was then resolved that the needed

funds to send this delegation be raised by the Africans themselves. Women were instrumental in the raising of these funds. Mr. Mataka, who by then was a member and leader in the congress, acknowledged that, in fact, three quarters of the money which was raised in Lusaka came from the women:

Women were the ones who usually handled the money in our homes. They also usually had money because they were more careful with it as compared to us, the men. This made them better sources of money (contributions) than men.²⁸

The non-availability of proper records to show how much money was raised makes it difficult for us to establish this fact. As stated by Dr. K. D. Kaunda who by then was in the congress, thousands of pounds were raised.²⁹ It was also later reported in the ANC annual report that £4,500 was collected within two weeks.³⁰ According to Mr. Mataka, a door to door campaign had been launched in Lusaka in the raising of these funds. All members of the congress were asked (and expected) to donate something, either in cash or kind. These contributions included money, or various kinds of food stuffs, including beer. These were then sold to realise money.³¹

The raising of funds, not only for the delegation, but also for other ANC purposes, was also carried out through a system of communal work.³² By this system congress members would come together to carry out particular tasks either for individuals or companies. The group was then paid for its services. This was a method of labour mobilization which was found in most societies in Zambia. Audrey Richards has noted how, for instance,

among the Bemba in the Northern Province, the system provided labour even to those who did not have any one to help them carry out certain tasks such as building, cutting of trees or ploughing the fields.³³ In Lusaka, the system was used to promote unity and co-operation among the congress members. It also helped the congress to quickly raise funds as tasks were completed within short periods. Women were also involved in these tasks and were the ones who usually provided refreshments for those at work.

In its bid to campaign against the Federation and in order to improve the welfare of Africans, the congress embarked on a policy of non-co-operation on all matters which seemed detrimental to the interests of Africans.³⁴ This policy addressed different aspects in the rural and urban areas. For the rural areas, this policy aimed at completely withdrawing African labour from the European farms.³⁵ In the towns the emphasis lay in the carrying out of organised campaigns to break down the notorious colour bar in hotels, restaurants, public lavatories, churches, post offices, butcheries and shops.³⁶ For our study, we are more concerned with this policy of non-co-operation in the towns. To this effect, the congress therefore organised boycotts and demonstrations, which were basically aimed at breaking down the colour bar. Throughout 1953 and 1954 the congress organised these boycotts and demonstrations. These started sometime in June 1953 and are said to have lasted almost ten weeks.³⁷ The boycotts and

demonstrations were mainly staged in order to force the shopkeepers and butchery owners, banks and other public places to start allowing Africans to enter their premises freely. The African Eagle reported on the demonstration:

Following a large meeting held at Mapolopoto in Lusaka at which the congress decided to stage demonstrations against the colour-bar, Africans were reported to demand service in shops, banks, post-offices and a bar, at counters where Europeans were normally served. The demonstrators started at a grocery and butcher's shop where Africans were usually served from side windows and at the post-office which has a separate entrance for Africans. Other Africans joined the demonstrators in small groups, entered the bank and a few shops. They entered a bar and asked for cold beer but were refused service and left quietly.³⁸

Women were mobilized to effect this boycott and demonstration by asking them to refrain from buying from the specified butcheries and shops which practised racial discrimination. They were also mobilized to stand as pickets at the chosen entrances of butcheries and shops. Mrs. Chama, who by then was a member of the ANC Women's Brigade, recalled the incident:

We woke up early in the morning, as we had been instructed, and went and stood at strategic points where we could see those going into the butcheries and shops. We turned away the Africans who tried to go to those premises and even confiscated goods from those that tried to be difficult.³⁹

When asked why women agreed to participate in the demonstration and boycott, Mrs. Chama said:

We were the ones who were mostly subjected to the mistreatment in the butcheries and shops. We therefore knew that if we became involved, it would help in making the owners of the shops and butcheries realise their mistakes. We wanted to be accorded the same treatment as our white counterparts.⁴⁰

During these boycott and demonstrations, women did not necessarily become leaders. They were just ordinary participants in the demonstrations. Without their involvement, the success of the activities would not have been ensured. In addition, it was these ordinary women who stood as the majority of the participants.

The consequences of the boycott on the butcheries and shops forced owners to initiate talks between the African National Congress and the Lusaka Chamber of Commerce to discuss the alleged discriminatory practices. One of the results was that the Chamber of Commerce undertook to persuade those Europeans and Asians who were still practising discrimination against the Africans to start allowing the latter into their premises.⁴¹ Despite these efforts and resolution to try to end the discriminatory practices in the shops and butcheries, there were some premises which continued discriminating against Africans. This led to more demonstrations and boycotts in January 1954.⁴² Throughout that month the congress conducted a protracted boycott of the European butcheries in Lusaka in protest against the continued unfair treatment accorded to the African customers. Here again, women were mobilized to boycott and to stand as pickets. These boycotts and demonstrations in fact largely consisted of women because, as stated by Mr. David Yumba:

Women were easier to mobilize as they were usually at home or in the market places. The men were at work most of the day and came home late in the evening, by which time it would not have been possible to effect the boycott.⁴³

Although the boycotts and demonstrations conducted by the congress in 1953 and 1954 were reported to have been unsuccessful, as not every shop and butchery began treating Africans in the same way as the whites, they had some effect in raising popular consciousness.

In 1954 women had further staged a number of demonstrations against the colonial government's discriminatory policy over the sale of beer. This followed the policy which had been passed as early as 1930 to effect municipal control over the production and sale of grain beer in the towns.⁴⁴ Among the economic ventures which women relied on for income was the brewing and sale of beer. By enacting this policy of municipal control over the production and sale of grain beer, the colonial government frustrated women's efforts at raising income. In 1954 therefore, a group of women in Lusaka, gathered themselves at the District Commissioner's Office with a view of asking the colonial government to allow Africans to brew beer and run their own pubs. The African National Congress had hoped that such a move would boost African economic advancement.⁴⁵ The appeal and demonstration, however, was met with a hostile and negative response from the colonial government. The District Commissioner is reported to have panicked and rang the police for assistance. They also, without getting proper evidence dispersed the women by the use of tear gas.⁴⁶ This experience raised the consciousness of the women.

In 1956 more boycotts and demonstrations were staged in Lusaka against the colonial government's discriminatory policy over the brewing and sale of grain beer, as well as over the continued practice of racial discrimination in shops. According to the report of the committee appointed by the government to investigate this issue in 1956, there were quite a number of bakeries, shops and butcheries which had separate entrances, counters and still served the Africans through windows and hatches.⁴⁷

Women were mobilized for participation in these boycotts and demonstrations. They were organised to stand as pickets at the entrances of the beer halls so that they could stop the Africans who tried to enter the beer-halls to drink beer. Mr. Mataka noted that:

We mostly used the women to stand as pickets because the colonial government tended to be more lenient with them than with men. Women usually got away with less harsh verdicts.⁴⁸

The boycott was intended to make the beer-halls and shops run at a loss, and so to pressurize the colonial government to relax its policies. Women joined the boycott because they were the ones who were mostly engaged in beer brewing. It was an economic venture on which many of them relied for income. Women who were found in possession of beer were arrested and in most cases had to pay heavy fines and at times, were even sent to prison. One woman was fined £20 for having brewed illicitly 2½ forty-four gallon drums of beer.⁴⁹ There was a need to end such kind of treatment.

The boycott and demonstrations were reported to have won sympathy from large sections of the general public. They also led to a marked improvement in the treatment of Africans in many butcheries.⁵⁰ There were, however, still some businesses which continued serving their African customers with pre-wrapped parcels and used hatches to serve them.⁵¹

These boycotts and demonstrations were important in that they were part of the nationalist movement's strategy for the mobilization of the masses. Women played an important part in the organisation and carrying out of these boycotts and demonstrations. In this way they also became involved in the wider nationalist movement and gained experience which was to be useful later in the organisation of more clearly political demonstrations on constitutional issues and against visiting colonial officials.

NOTES

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CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR INDEPENDENCE, 1958-1964.

This chapter will be concerned with an examination of the role of women in nationalist politics from 1958 to 1964. During this period nationalist politics took on a new dimension and was now aimed at recapturing political power from the colonial rulers. In the new political situation women were mobilized by the two African political parties to participate in various political activities which were aimed at influencing the decision of the colonial rulers so that independence could be achieved.

WOMEN AND THE FORMATION OF ZANC AND UNIP.

After 1958, a split occurred in the only African political party, the African National Congress. The split was a result of the differences between the party leaders over a number of issues. These included the Benson Constitution, which Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, the ANC president, was willing to accept, and his style of leadership. The more radical leaders within the Congress thought the constitution was inadequate,¹ and strongly disapproved of Nkumbula's style of leadership. The split therefore led to the formation of another party, the Zambia African National Congress. This party was short-lived but was succeeded in 1959 by the United National Independence Party.

Women were instrumental in the formation of these new parties. Quite a number of those women who had belonged to ANC left to join the newly formed ZANC. Many women who changed parties had done so because they felt ANC had become conservative:

We left the Congress when we realized that nothing much was being done to improve our welfare. As Africans, we were still subjected to a lot of colonial injustices. We wanted a party which would help us liberate ourselves. ZANC seemed to promise us a better future.²

The lack of proper historical records on the establishment of the UNIP Women's Brigade, as well as the non-availability of some UNIP files which would have helped us establish concrete information on who these women who left the ANC to join ZANC were, has compelled us to rely on oral information.

According to these sources many of the women who had been influential in the ANC left it after 1958 to join the newly formed ZANC. This proved to be an advantage to the new party. These women's influential positions helped in mobilizing new members for the newly formed party. Among the early members of ZANC were Mrs. Julia Mulenga Chikamoneka, Mrs. Emelia Saidi, Mrs. Esnart Sakala, Mrs Lister Chula, Mrs. Sophie Mulenshi, Mrs Mirias Mulenga, Mrs Esther Siame, Mrs Margaret Mumba, Mrs Veronika Mutale and Mrs Betty Kaunda.³

On the other hand, there were also those women who chose to remain in the African National Congress. These included Mrs Elina Lungu, Mrs Luse Mwila, Mrs Legina Zulu, Mrs Estelle Lungu, Mrs Mary Mwale, Mrs Elita Phiri, Mrs Blas Mwale, Miss Selita Njomva, Mrs Ala Mwanza and Ms

Dorika Undaunda.⁴ These women remained in ANC out of loyalty and because they did not trust the newly formed party. This was stated in the address made by the ANC Women's Brigade President General:

What I have to tell you is that whatever may happen now or in future in the African National Congress you should not go backward. Our motto should always be to go forward.... We shall not choose to follow those people who go on telling other people about the badness of our National President. We are the only people remaining supporting him and we should fight hard that we win the confidence of the people on our side. With me as mother of all women in ANC, I shall never at any time branch away from Mr Nkumbula's leadership.⁵

With the formation of ZANC, those women who left ANC made individual and collective efforts to help establish the newly formed party. This included the raising of funds for the registration of ZANC as a political party as well as for its running. Mrs. Julia Mulenga Chikamoneka has left a mark in history for the role she played in the formation and establishment of ZANC and later UNIP. It was her valuable efforts and contribution which earned her the name of 'Mama UNIP'. She organized other women to raise the required money for the registration of the new party. According to Mrs Lister Chula, most of this money was raised through cash contributions. Those with no ready cash donated items and foodstuffs which were sold to realise money.⁶ The women also embarked on the recruitment of new members. According to Mrs. Chikamoneka, women of Mapolopoto and Matero compounds organized a membership recruitment drive for the new party led by the man they referred to as 'the teacher'. This was Kenneth Kaunda. Mrs G. Muna recalled

that those women whose husbands were still members of ANC were told to go home and pressurise their husbands to join the new party:

Some of us received a lot of beating from our husbands for joining the new party, but we did not give up. We worked hard to persuade and convince our husbands to join the new party.⁷

However, the Zambia African National Congress did not live long enough. Following the unfounded rumours that the Nyasaland African Congress was about to launch a murder plot against Europeans,⁸ there was also fear by the colonial rulers in Northern Rhodesia that a similar plot would be made by ZANC, the party which seemed more militant as compared to ANC. As a result, ZANC was banned in March 1959 and its leaders were detained in remote areas away from their homes.⁹

With the arrest of the ZANC leaders, money had to be raised to pay their lawyers as well as to help sustain their families. Women were in the fore-front in raising this money. Mrs. Julia Chikamoneka organized her fellow women, including the wife of the 'teacher', Betty Kaunda, to go round to homes of the members of the banned ZANC to get donations.¹⁰ This was not an easy task because most people feared being associated with ZANC as this would lead to them being victimized by the colonial police. In spite of this set-back, women still plucked up courage and raised quite a considerable amount of money, and other donations such as food and charcoal.

While the leaders of the banned ZANC were in prison, an underground movement was organized. It became known as the 'Panshi' movement. Its sole purpose was to

organize a party which would succeed the banned ZANC. Women were among those who initiated the movement. They helped in the mobilization of members. They also took as their responsibility the preparation of places where secret meetings were to be held and also had to inform the members of the venue. Mr. Mataka recalled that the meetings of this underground movement were usually held in the homes of single women:

We usually held our meetings in the homes of women because the police rarely suspected them or searched their homes. It was the homes of us men which were closely searched.¹¹

At times, women were organized to brew beer so as to provide an occasion and venue for the meetings. Ms. Elina Musonda recalled that the brewing of beer by the women helped the movement a lot:

You see, it was very rare that the police suspected beer drinking groups to be discussing anything serious. We also helped in attracting more members for the movement. There were times when we gave those that came to attend the meeting free beer.... The money raised from the sale of this beer was used for promoting the movement.¹²

As the 'Panshi' movement developed, other small parties, some of which had also split from the African National Congress, were coopted. These included the African National Freedom Movement, a party which was formed on the Copperbelt by Rupia Banda and Dauti Yamba, and the United National Congress formed by Dixon Konkola.¹³ These two parties had initially merged to form the United Freedom Party, which was then coopted into the 'Panshi' movement. The African National Independence Party, under Paul Kalichini and Frank

Chitambala also split from ANC and merged with 'Panshi' movement. Mama Julia Chikamoneka played a significant role in bringing these parties together:

I got in touch with Paul Kalichini in Kabwe, and we held meetings at night in my little house in Chilenje. This was very risky because the government had a lot of spies. We discussed the need to launch a new political party in accordance with the instructions by the teacher. When Mainza Chona split with Nkumbula later in 1960, we coopted him into our underground movement.¹⁴

These parties merged to form the United National Independence Party in August 1959.¹⁵

In January 1960, when the leaders of the banned ZANC were released, new leaders were chosen for the new party. But as noted by Richard Hall, those who were chosen were in fact the same people who had held leadership positions in the banned party.¹⁶ Kenneth Kaunda was elected President, M. Sipalo as General Secretary and S. Kapwepwe was chosen as Treasurer. The post of Deputy President went to Paul Kalichini while W. K. Sikalumbi became the Deputy General Secretary and R. C. Kamanga became the Deputy Treasurer.¹⁷ All these were men. Women were not given any leadership position in spite of the instrumental role they had played in the formation of this new party. This was because leadership was still reserved for men, who also continued monopolizing the decision making body of the party. Women were left out because they were still regarded as subordinate to men. This state of affairs was accepted even by the women themselves. As noted by Mrs Chula:

Even in our villages, it is men who led. We were not interested in becoming leaders. All

we wanted was to help the men so that they become our leaders. Our immediate desire was independence. Other things were secondary.¹⁸

Women were expected to operate in their own sphere, the Women's Brigade. But even here, the appointments to leadership positions were to a large extent manipulated by the men. Mrs Chula confirmed this when she said:

The names of those that were to become leaders in the Women's Brigade had to be submitted to, and approved by the men. If one did not have a lot of support from these men, then chances of her being chosen were almost nil.¹⁹

ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE UNIP WOMEN'S BRIGADE 1959-64.

After the inception of the United National Independence Party in 1959, it set about to establish itself as the militant and dominant party. This was done by embarking on a campaign to mobilize the masses. The party set out to strengthen party membership through three wings: the main wing, the women's wing and the youth wing. According Mr. Simfukwe, the youth and women's wings were regarded as the 'soldiers' of the party. It was these two wings which were mainly involved in the mobilization of the masses and also ensured the success of the party.²⁰

Prior to 1962 there was no central organization of the women and the youth. These groups operated at district levels. In addition, as noted by Mulford, UNIP as a party avoided registering all its women's and youth wings.²¹ This was a deliberate policy because the UNIP leadership feared that the party could be banned, and they wanted to avoid giving the names and addresses of

all their leaders to the state. The organization of the party was therefore kept relatively loose so that in the event of the main branch being banned, the women's and youth wings would continue operating and the government would not easily know who its leaders were. This may have been one reason why no proper records of the first leaders of the UNIP Women's Brigade were kept.

Each district had its own leaders for the Women's Brigade. These women were chosen in their capacity as organizers. Their main task was to mobilize other women for participation in various political activities. For Lusaka the following were chosen: Mrs Veronica Mumba, Mrs Sophie Mulenshi, Mrs Mirias Mulenga, Ms Luisa Kalindi, Ms Elizabeth Mulenga, Mrs Eunike Phiri, Mrs Albina Chileshe, Mrs Esnart Mwangala, Mrs Lister Chula, Mrs Christine Mbewe and Mrs. Julia Mulenga Chikamoneka.²²

As organizers, these women had to do a lot of travelling. This was a task which involved a lot of sacrifice and could only be done by those who were strong-willed and independent-minded. Most of these women were mothers who had to leave their families for lengthy periods. They were also subjected to a lot of rebuke and criticism from husbands, relatives and friends. As noted by Mrs Nankolongo:

They called us all sorts of names: 'Amahule' [meaning prostitutes], marriage breakers and so forth, but we did not care. We knew that we were working for the benefit of everyone.²³

These women were subjected to a lot of criticism because they usually went out in the company of men organizers. This was not an accepted kind of behaviour by many

people. This was why most of those who took up these leadership positions were financially independent and did not have husbands. Being a voluntary job, these women were not paid anything and had to find their own means of earning income.

While in the field, organizing other women, they were also expected to take second place to male organizers. Mrs Nankolongo recalled how for instance whenever they went into the villages to hold meetings, she was told to speak only after the men had spoken.²⁴ This is clear evidence that even in nationalist politics women were still regarded as subordinate to men. They had to work within the framework of male domination.

In spite of this, women on several occasions showed themselves as independent-minded people. They organized themselves for demonstrations which had an impact on the decisions of the colonial rulers. One such demonstration was when women demonstrated at Lusaka airport. At the end of March 1960, the then British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Ian Macleod, visited Northern Rhodesia. The African Eagle carried the story:

Prominent leaders of the UNIP Women's Brigade Julia Chikamoneka and Mrs Emeliya Saidi dressed only about their loins and ropes around their necks came forward to meet Mr Macleod and Sir Evelyn Hone with placards reading 'UNIP says Kaunda knows democracy and Hone means Nazism. Support Kaunda with one man one vote'.²⁵

The women were followed by a crowd of 3,000 demonstrators mainly UNIP and ANC who chanted the slogan of 'Kwacha, Kwacha Kwachera' (Dawn, it is day time), and

carried placards reading 'Freedom Now ... Freedom before October 1960.'²⁶

According to a later account the women led by Mama Chikamoneka made a dramatic demonstration which left a deep impression on Macleod:

As Macleod was being introduced, Mama 'UNIP' Julia Chikamoneka broke through the cordon, ran so fast that the police failed to get hold of her (sic) and her followers in pursuit. As she came near him, she undressed and harangued him to concede to immediate majority rule. In no time, a blushing Macleod was surrounded by a group of weeping naked women.²⁷

These demonstrations occurred at the time when UNIP was beginning to establish itself as a party in Lusaka in competition with ANC. The militancy of Mama Chikamoneka and other UNIP Women's Brigade members not only impressed the colonial authorities, but also helped to confirm UNIP as the more radical and popular party.

Following the government's proposals of 1961 by which the whites seemed to be favoured more than the blacks, UNIP came up with a master plan to force the colonial administration to consider making changes. It was proposed that the party should totally reject the June proposals and wage a practical non-violent war against the Federation, with the ultimate aim of achieving independence.²⁸ Although the UNIP leadership insisted on non-violent tactics, the interpretation of the plan by other party cadres was different. It became a plan aimed at paralysing the colonial government's apparatus.²⁹ What followed was widespread disorder throughout the country, especially between July and October 1961.³⁰

The campaign was commonly referred to as the 'Cha Cha Cha' campaign. Literarily, 'Cha Cha Cha' meant 'face the music'. The name was derived from a dance popular in the Luapula Province, which people used to dance throughout the night.³¹ In the context of nationalist politics, it was an appeal to all Africans to face the colonialists. As noted by David Yumba, this was aimed at giving the colonial rulers a tough time so that they would be forced to leave.³² In almost all provinces of Zambia, with the exception of Barotseland, the disorders occurred in varying degrees. Although the acts of sabotage were reported to have been more serious in the Northern and Luapula Provinces, there were also incidents on the Copperbelt and in Lusaka.

It was later noted in a government report on the disturbances that, in Central Province, which included Lusaka, the disorders consisted largely of arson and damage by explosives to unattended buildings and property. Sporadic attacks were also made upon police and passing motorists were stoned.³³ Mrs Christine Mbewe recalled how during this period of the Cha Cha Cha campaign, a train passing through Chingwere in Lusaka was derailed as a result of the objects they had put on the railway line.³⁴ Many Africans, who included both men and women, were rounded up and sent to prison. Mrs Mirias Mulenga was one of those who were imprisoned for these acts of sabotage. Together with four other ladies whose names she could not recall, Mrs Mulenga stayed in Chimbokaila prison for about six months. They were only

released when the elections were about to be held in 1962.³⁵

At the same time UNIP in Lusaka initiated a 'keep sober' campaign and attempted to launch a mass boycott of local beer-halls. Women played a vital role in this campaign. According to the government report on the disturbances:

On 17th July, members of the Women's League (sic) of UNIP spread the word at Lusaka that drinking beer should cease and pickets appeared near the beer-halls the following day.³⁶

The boycott brought a lot of friction not only with the colonial administration, but also with members of the other African political party, ANC which after 1958 had withdrawn from politics of confrontation with the colonial administration and had instead directed its fire more at UNIP. To this effect, ANC rejected the campaign instigated by UNIP and embarked on a contrary one. Its members were urged to embark on a 'drink beer' campaign.³⁷ According to ANC members, beer had nothing to do with the constitution.³⁸

This, however, is an example of the fight for domination which prevailed between the two African political parties. There were a number of incidents which showed the conflicts between the two parties. For instance, it was reported that a fierce battle broke out in Chibolya, which ANC claimed was their stronghold, when UNIP members were there to campaign.³⁹ The rivalry was extended even to the markets. Mrs. Mary Chileshe recalled how as marketeers, members of one party rarely mixed with those of the other party. Even ordinary

housewives felt obliged to show loyalty to their parties by buying from marketeers belonging to their own party.⁴⁰ The beer boycott was reported to have been generally effective. Quite a number of people were arrested as a result of the destruction to property such as beer shelters.

The 'Cha Cha Cha' campaign stopped only when Kaunda returned to the country from London where he had held talks with Macleod, after which the British government announced its willingness to consider further representations on the proposed constitution, provided that the disturbances ceased immediately. Kaunda returned to Northern Rhodesia in September 1961 and appealed for an end to the violence.⁴¹

In December, 1961 Reginald Maudling, Macleod's successor as Colonial Secretary, visited Northern Rhodesia to assess the political situation and to try and bring about a settlement in the constitutional crisis. Women were mobilized to demonstrate against him at the airport when he arrived, and at Government House. At Lusaka city airport, ready to welcome him, was Mama Chikamoneka's team:

We went to the city airport to welcome Mondingi (sic). No one suspected that such an innocent looking group of African women would pull a fast one on the security men. When the plane carrying Mondingi arrived one of us pretended to have been attacked by fits and she fell down. The noise she made attracted one policeman who rushed where we were. Attention of the other policemen was disturbed. It was then that we broke through the cordon and rushed to where Mondingi was. 'Half naked' we handed him a petition that we wanted independence.⁴²

There has been a lot of debate on the rationale of stripping in public as these women did. Mrs. Mporokoso elaborated on the significance of stripping in African societies:

According to our African culture, if a woman moves bare-breasted it means she is intensely dissatisfied about something or is in deep sorrow. For instance, if a mother stripped in front of her child it was seen as a curse. We undressed before the colonial rulers because we wanted to show them that we were not happy with the way we were being ruled. We wanted independence.⁴³

While Maudling was in the country more demonstrations were carried out in Lusaka and on the Copperbelt when he went there. The African Mail reported on the demonstrations in Lusaka:

There was an emotional moment outside Government House this morning where about 100 UNIP supporters demonstrated while the delegation talked to Mr Maudling. A woman organiser, Mrs Julia Chikamoneka, threw a packet of spent cartridges on the ground and broke down wailing loudly about people killed in the recent disturbances.⁴⁴

The demonstrations are likely to have influenced the decisions of the colonial rulers. The African Mail later reported that when Reginald Maudling left the country, it was plain that he hoped to make enough changes in the constitution to enable all parties to take part in the elections which were to be held the following year (1962). He also planned to hold urgent talks in London primarily with Duncan Sandys who was then Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.⁴⁵

The outcome of all this was that the constitution was revised and accepted by all parties in Northern Rhodesia. It became a massive task for all the parties

concerned to mobilise the masses for participation in the elections. In order to do this both ANC and UNIP set about the re-organisation of their parties. In the case of UNIP this aimed at bringing the women's and youth wings, which had initially been more or less autonomous, under more direct party control.⁴⁶ Members of the two wings were now required also to join the main body of the party. Initially they could only join the brigades. This change was made to assert more control over the brigades.

The Women's Brigade from 1962, therefore, was re-organised for more effective control. The organisation was to be headed by a Director-General, who was assisted by an Under-Secretary. These were the main two office bearers at national level. The first woman who was appointed to the post of Director-General was Princess Mukwae Nakatindi. Her dedication to the nationalist movement and, in particular to UNIP, won her the confidence of the party. She proved to be a person who was strong-willed and independent-minded. Despite the fact that she belonged to the Lozi royal family, she still went ahead and became one of the first prominent people in the Western Province to support UNIP. This was amidst a lot of family disapproval:

My family disapproved strongly, not only was I going against royal traditions, but some believed that I was selling them to the UNIP people.⁴⁷

At this time UNIP was quite unpopular in the Western Province. As noted by Kashimani:

The traditional rulers of the area headed by the Litunga viewed the efforts of UNIP leadership to make the province an integral part of Zambia with profound suspicion, interpreting the moves as diabolical, aimed at destroying the area's autonomy and privileged position.⁴⁸

In the light of this antagonism, the political stance taken by Princess Nakatindi was very important to the nationalist movement. She became instrumental in the mobilization of the masses in the Western Province. By being a member of the royal family she enabled UNIP to have more supporters. Princess Nakatindi held the post of Director-General of the Women's Brigade until 1967.

The Director-General was assisted by an Under-Secretary. Mrs. Esther Banda was the first to be appointed to this post. She was another woman who had excelled in her participation in the nationalist movement, through hardwork and vigilance. She had done a lot in mobilising the masses in Ndola for UNIP.⁴⁹ As national leaders, the holders of the above two posts were involved in organising and supervising the activities of the Women's Brigade at national level.

Under the two national leaders were regional secretaries who organised other women in their various regions. In Lusaka the following were among those appointed: Mama Julia Chikamoneka, Mama Emelia Saidi, Mrs Albina Chileshe, Mrs Lister Chula, Mrs Eunike Phiri, Mrs Lousia Kalindi, Mrs Christine Chiwila and Mrs Maria Nankolongo.⁵⁰ Here again the non-availability of proper records makes it difficult to establish all those who took up this post in Lusaka. However, these women,

commonly known as 'Ba Mama Region', had to see to it that as many women as possible joined UNIP and also participated in various activities. The regional secretaries were assisted by ward chairladies and secretaries who also had the responsibility of organising the women in their respective wards. This organisation made it easier for the Women's Brigade and the party as a whole to reach the common people. It ensured effective organisation and mobilization of the masses.

After 1961, the African National Congress had also re-organised itself. As noted by Mulford, 'in 1961, when Katilungu took over the ANC leadership from Nkumbula, who had gone to prison for a serious driving offence, he set about improving the congress' feeble organisation and launched ANC campaigns throughout the country.'⁵¹ The ANC Women's Brigade was given as its major role the mobilisation of other women and even men. According to ANC records, 'women were regarded as propagandists with the duty of carrying out door-to-door campaigns.'⁵² The organisation of the brigade however, remained the same as in the previous years. It continued being headed by a President-General, assisted by a Treasurer-General. Other parts of the country were divided up into divisions each of which was headed by a divisional president.⁵³

During the 1962 elections, not many Africans, and especially few women, were eligible to vote. This was because the 1962 constitution introduced a complicated qualification system.⁵⁴ The nature of the qualifications relating to education, employment and

income made it particularly difficult for most women to qualify as voters.

In 1963 the Federation came to an end, and the constitution was revised. A new franchise system based on universal adult suffrage was introduced.⁵⁵ All men and women at and above the age of 21 were now entitled to the right to vote. During the elections of 1964, women formed an equal part of the electorate which gave UNIP a decisive majority.

This chapter has been concerned with an examination of the role of women in nationalist politics during the period 1958 to 1964. Following a split in the African National Congress, a new party, the Zambia African National Congress was formed. It has been shown and argued that women played an important part in the formation of this new party. They helped to raise the required funds for its registration. They also did a lot in mobilizing new members for the party. After the banning of ZANC early in 1959, women worked tirelessly in raising money to pay the lawyers of the detained leaders, and also to help sustain their families. Women also played a major role in organising an underground movement known as 'Panshi' which prepared ground for the emergence of the United National Independence Party. It has also been shown that there were other women who remained loyal to ANC and continued participating in nationalist politics through the ANC Women's Brigade.

After 1960 women were involved in more clearly political demonstrations and boycotts which were

important in establishing UNIP as the more militant party against ANC in Lusaka and also influenced the decisions of the colonial administrators. It has been argued that women were the majority of the demonstrators, because they were easier to mobilise and were accessible. While men were usually in places of work, the women were at home or could be found in market places.

The first President of the Republic of Zambia, Dr. K. D. Kaunda, rightly acknowledged women's contribution when he said:

Those of us in this country, who recall the times of our struggle will remember that the attainment of independence might have been delayed without the active part played by our mothers.⁵⁶

Had women not played their part it is open to question whether the men alone would have achieved independence in 1964.

NOTES

1. Andrew Roberts, A History of Zambia, (London, Heinemann, 1976), p. 220.
2. Interview, Mrs Lister Chula, Financial Secretary, UNIP Women's League, Lusaka, 21st February, 1989.
3. Interview, Mrs Lister Chula, Mrs Esnart Mwangala, Mrs E. Sakala, Mrs Mirias Mulenga, Freedom House, Lusaka, 21st February, 1989. These are some of the old guard of the nationalist movement. They were members of ANC and later on of UNIP.
4. ANC 1/8 'Reports; Complaints, Cases and Queries, Women's League, 1957-1961.'
5. ANC 2/27 'Minutes of the District Women's League Executive Meeting, 29th September, 1959.'
6. Interview, Mrs Lister Chula, Lusaka.
7. Interview, Mrs G. Muna, Housewife, Chilenje South, Lusaka, 20th February, 1989.
8. Roberts, A History of Zambia, p. 220.
9. David Mulford, Zambia: The Politics of Independence 1957-1964, (London, Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 76.
10. Cited in Sauti Ntinda, 'An Assessment of the Role of Women in the Nationalist Movement in Zambia 1953-63,' (Under-graduate Research Paper, University of Zambia, 1986), p. 40.
11. Interview, Mr. A. B. Mataka, Contractor, Chilenje South, Lusaka, 20th January, 1989.
12. Interview, Ms Elina Musonda, Marketeer, Matero, Lusaka, 24th March, 1989.
13. Beatwell Chisala, Lt. Luchembe Coup Attempt, (Lusaka, Multi-Media Publications, 1991), p. 7.
14. Cited in Ntinda, 'An Assessment of the Role of Women,' p. 42.
15. Richard Hall, Zambia, (London, Pall Mall, 1965), p. 135; 'Background to Independence: A Brief Outline of Zambia's Struggle for Independence,' (Lusaka, Freedom House, 1984), p. 7.
16. Hall, Zambia, p. 190.

17. David Mulford, Zambia: The Politics of Independence, p. 76.
18. Interview, Mrs Lister Chula, Lusaka.
19. Interview, Mrs Lister Chula, Lusaka.
20. Interviews, Mrs Lister Chula, Mrs Esnart Mwangala, Mrs E. Sakala, Ms Mirias Mulenga, Freedom House, Lusaka, 21st February, 1989.
21. Mulford, Zambia: The Politics of Independence, p. 102.
22. Interview, Mrs Lister Chula, Mrs Esnart Mwangala, Mrs E. Sakala, Mrs Mirias Mulenga, Freedom House, Lusaka, 21st February, 1989.
23. Interview, Mrs Maria Nankolongo, Ex-Director-General of the UNIP Women's Brigade, (1967-69), Matero, Lusaka, 24th March 1989.
24. Interview, Ms Maria Nankolongo, Lusaka.
25. African Eagle, Tuesday 29th March 1960.
26. African Eagle, 29th March 1960.
27. Times of Zambia, 21st June 1986.
28. B. S. Krishnamurthy, 'Zambia's Struggle for Independence' (Research Material), Freedom House Archives.
29. Krishnamurthy, 'Zambia's Struggle for Independence.'
30. Northern Rhodesia Government: An Account of the Disturbances In Northern Rhodesia July to October 1961, (Lusaka, Government Printer, 1961), p. 1.
31. Interview, Mr. A. B. Mataka, Contractor, Chilenje South, Lusaka, 20th January 1989.
32. Interview, Mr. David Yumba, Broadcaster, Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation, Lusaka, 10th February 1989.
33. Northern Rhodesia Government: An Account of the Disturbances, p. 1.
34. Interview, Mrs Christine Mbewe, Business Woman, Mikomfwa, Luanshya, 11th February 1989.
35. Interview, Mrs Mirias Mulenga, Matero, Lusaka, 3rd March 1989.
36. Northern Rhodesia Government: An Account of the Disturbances, p. 23.

37. African Eagle, 8th August 1961.
38. African Eagle, 8th August 1961.
39. African Mail, 16th August, 1961.
40. Interview, Mrs Mary Chileshe, Marketeer, Chilenje South, Lusaka, 20th January 1989.
41. Mulford, Zambia: The Politics of Independence, p. 200.
42. Cited in Sauti Ntinda, 'An Assessment of the Role of Women,' p. 50. Quoting an interview with Mama Julia Chikamoneka.
43. Interview, Mrs M. Mporokoso, Ward Chairperson, UNIP Women's League, Luanshya, 6th January, 1989.
44. African Mail, 5th December, 1961.
45. African Mail, 12th December, 1961.
46. Mulford, Zambia: The Politics of Independence, p. 234.
47. Cited in Ilsa Schuster, 'Constraints and Opportunities in Political Participation: The Case of Zambian Women,' Genève Afrique, 21, 2 (1983), p. 21.
48. Mabilia E. Kashimani, 'National Integration Versus the Legacy of Mistrust: The Uneasy Political Relationship Between the Government of UNIP and Lozi Traditionalists in Western Province 1964-1986,' (History Staff Seminar, University of Zambia, Lusaka, 1988), p. 3.
49. Interview, Mrs Esther Banda, UNIP Provincial Political Secretary, Ndola, 26th June 1989; Northern News, 11th June 1964.
50. Interview, Mrs Lister Chula, Mrs Mirias Mulenga, Mrs Esnart Mwangala, Freedom House, Lusaka, 21st February, 1989.
51. Mulford, Zambia: The Politics of Independence, p. 241.
52. ANC 7/5 'Constitution of the Northern Rhodesia Council of Women 1962-64.'
53. ANC 7/5 'Constitution of the Northern Rhodesia Council of Women 1962-64.'
54. Mulford, Zambia: The Politics of Independence, p. 247.
55. Roberts, A History of Zambia, p. 221.

56. Zambia's Economic Revolution. Address by His Excellency the President Dr. K. D. Kaunda at Mulungushi, 19th April 1968, (Lusaka, Zambia Information Services, 1968), p. 23.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

On 24th October 1964, Zambia became an independent nation. This independence was a result of the involvement of Zambians in the country's nationalist struggle. This was characterised by two phases. The first phase, which was from 1951 to 1958, basically involved a campaign against the imposed Federation and against racial discrimination. Women were mainly involved in boycotts and demonstrations which were aimed at putting an end to the racial discrimination to which Africans were subjected.

After 1958 nationalist politics became concerned with recapturing power from the colonial rulers. Women were mobilised for participation in various boycotts and demonstrations which were intended to create pressure for fundamental political change. These were important in influencing the decisions of the colonial government to end Federation and grant Zambia independence. They were also important in demonstrating the militancy of the political parties, and as propaganda.

However, there is a kind of problem with the outcome of the struggle for independence in regard to the status of women. We have seen that during this struggle women were politically active with a view to ending colonial rule and achieving political independence. They were not really mobilised on issues which were related to the subordination of women by men. In fact, the nature and demand of the nationalist movements in the struggle for

independence was such that the differences between the oppressed groups were minimised and not emphasised. The conflicts between men and women were played down. Doing the contrary would have brought a division in the masses. There was a great need for unity.

This trend prevailed not only in Zambia, but also in most African countries where there were non-violent nationalist movements. In these countries it was taken for granted that women did not have to fight for the right to vote. This had been fought for and won elsewhere. It was therefore assumed that the attainment of other women's rights such as equal access to education, employment and economic opportunities would automatically come with independence.

Hence, even though there were quite independent and courageous women who emerged in the nationalist movement, their objective in the struggle was limited to the gaining of independence. They never made claims for the improvement of the status of women. They accepted to work within the frame work of male domination. In fact, even before the attainment of independence, there was a tendency in the respective African nationalist parties, to have the women's organisations subordinated to the male organisations. Prior to 1962 the Women's Brigade of UNIP was only loosely controlled by the main body. But after 1962, a re-organisation in the party brought the Women's Brigade under more direct control by the main body. This trend continued after independence and was, in fact, worsened when, after the establishment of a one

party state in 1973, the holder of the highest post in the Women's Brigade (which thereafter became known as the Women's League), was directly appointed by the president. This was done to ensure total loyalty from the Brigade. The reduction in the autonomy of the Women's Brigade was emphasised in an editorial of the Zambia Daily Mail newspaper in 1974:

The Women's Brigade of the party had been in the main an all men affair. The men planned the Women's Brigade, they decided how often they were to meet. They also decided when and where to meet and what to discuss. They even decided how many women were to man their organisation and for that matter who was to hold this or that position.¹

We therefore see that the women who emerged in the nationalist movement and who continued to be particularly active after independence were fundamentally conservative. They did very little to ensure that women were accorded the promised equal rights. If anything these women preached against these equal rights. Mrs B. C. Kankasa, one of the veteran women in the nationalist movement on the Copperbelt, who held various leadership positions after independence, had this to say on women's rights:

There is no need for special commissions, national or regional, to view or survey discrimination against women in Zambia. The question of measures taken to promote the abolition of customary and all other practices based on the idea of the inferiority of women raises a far wider problem: that of the culture of the people. Outsiders, applying an objective test, may conclude that a certain customary practice is based on the idea that women are inferior, yet the people themselves, applying a subjective test, may conclude that the practice in question is not merely 'an idea' but part of the culture of the people in that women should do or not do certain things not because they are inferior to men but

because that is how that community has developed.²

Although some women achieved leadership positions in the Women's Brigade and in the party after independence, these were actively opposed to issues concerning women's rights. They actually preached the subordination of women. For instance, even at the Women's Rights conference which was held in 1970 to look into this issue, what came out in its resolutions was contrary to what it was supposed to address. Here men were given the assurance that no overthrow of traditional male authority was intended.³ In its recommendations, it was also stressed that there was 'the need to safeguard the position of the wife and mother who serves the husband and thus the nation.'⁴

Opposition to women's liberation also came from the men, most of whom could not accept competition from women, let alone having them as their leaders. This state of affairs prevailed in most sectors, including the parliament. Here the few women members were subjected to a lot of sarcasm whenever they spoke, especially when they tried to bring up issues concerning women's rights. The following debate which took place on 9th August 1966 in parliament, shows how men, even in the highest political organs in the country felt on the issue of women's rights:

Miss Chilila: What is disgusting, Mr. Speaker, is the attitude of the individual men to women.

Interruptions

Miss Chilila: Most men think that they are superior to women.

Hon. Government Members: Yes, they are.

Miss Chilila: This is shown in the way they talk and in their actions where women are concerned. If this superiority feeling men have originates from our traditions, then it is clear that this evil practice should be discontinued.⁵

It was only when there were more educated women in Zambia that the demand for women's rights made some headway. Even then these women met a lot of hostility and criticism, especially from the men. Any group which tried to campaign for women's rights tended to become unpopular. In Zambia there has generally been a lot of hostility and opposition towards assertive women fighting for women's rights. It is because of these reasons, therefore, that there was no great improvement in the status of women after independence. Women who had fought hard for this independence did not demand women's rights. It may have been a condition for remaining in leadership positions that these women did not question and threaten men's leadership. They may have also known that if they did so, they would be removed from office.

There were some women whose good educational background enabled them to make headway as professionals. These include women like Ms. Gwendoline Konie, Ms. Lombe Chibesakunda, Mrs. J. Mapoma and Mrs. Petronella Chisanga. However, hardly any women have really made it

in Zambian politics. This is because men have been favoured more than women. The most conspicuous leaders of the Women's Brigade were not promoted to any leadership position outside the brigade after independence. The excuse given was that most of them lacked education. However, this did not seem to be a disqualification for men. The highest leadership posts which any woman has held so far is that of Member of the UNIP Central Committee. This post was first held by Mrs Kankasa. Even then she was in politics as a leader and representative of the women's organisation. She also proved to be conservative and was always against women's liberation. Only one woman has so far attained the rank of Cabinet Minister.⁶ This was Dr Mutumba M. Bull, who served as Minister of Health, and later as Minister of Commerce and Industry, during the early 1970s. Even in the new cabinet of President Chiluba, no woman was appointed to the post of full minister. Women were important politically during the struggle for independence but not afterwards.

Generally speaking the inequality of women in most spheres of life, including their access to education, which prevailed during the colonial period continued even after independence. As noted by Achola, who compared statistics for the years 1964 and 1980, 'despite the tremendous increase in primary school enrolments, the relative enrolment rates between boys and girls did not alter after independence.'⁷ There was also a wide disparity at higher levels of education. For instance

statistics for enrolment at the University of Zambia showed that only 328 female students were enrolled against 2007 male students in 1971.⁸

Women's issues have generally been ignored. Even in the last elections held in October 1991 these were not addressed. This may have been one reason for the decline in women's interest in politics. The situation which has prevailed since independence is one where politics have been monopolised by men. Mrs Petronella Chisanga rightly observed that:

If women want to achieve what they aspire to, they must stand for elections and be elected as members of parliament, because if they foolishly choose to elect men to represent them, they will be disappointed. The men in parliament are unlikely to bring up their problems or aspirations in a serious manner. It is sad to note that resourceful women get side-stepped while many men who have messed up things have managed to remain in their positions regardless.⁹

And as noted by Ms Lombe Chibesakunda:

Authorities must be seen to utilise women as a resource for development and not simply give lip service to what they can achieve.¹⁰

As long as this continues to be the case women's issues will be neglected.

NOTES

1. Zambia Daily Mail, 30th September 1974. p. 4.
2. B. C. Kankasa, Report on the Development of the Status of Zambian Women, (Lusaka, Freedom House, 1974), p. 8.
3. Gisela Geisler, 'Sisters Under the Skin: Women and the Women's League in Zambia,' Journal of Modern African Studies, 25, 1 (1987), p. 43.
4. Geisler, 'Sisters Under the Skin,' p. 43.
5. Zambia National Assembly Hansard, No. 7. 'Official Verbatim Report of the Debates of the Third Session of the First National Assembly,' 20th July-23rd September 1966, (Lusaka, Government Printer, 1966), p. 494, Date of Speech, 9th August 1966.
6. See, for example, Monica L. Munachonga, 'Women and the State: Zambia's Development Policies and their Impact on Women,' in Jane L. Parpart and Kathleen A. Staudt (eds), Women and the State in Africa, (Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), p. 139.
7. P. P. W. Achola, 'Where Have the Women Gone?': Education, Gender and Inequality in Zambia,' (Unpublished Seminar Paper, Lusaka, 1983), cited in Monica L. Munachonga, 'The Place of Women in National Development: The Role of the University of Zambia,' Zambia Educational Review, 7, 1 and 2 (December 1987), p. 71.
8. Cited in Munachonga, 'The Place of Women in National Development,' p. 72.
9. 'Woman of the Month,' Woman's Exclusive Magazine, 2 (1989), p. 5.
10. 'Woman of the Year 1988,' Woman's Exclusive Magazine, 1 (1988), p. 14.

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