

**SENIOR CHIEF MUKUMBI IBALOLI XV: A BIOGRAPHY OF BESTON
KABANYA MULOTA MUKOMO MULUKA OF SOLWEZI WEST, 1932-2015**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Edina Lungu do hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other university.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of Edina Lungu is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History at the University of Zambia

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the life and career of Beston Muluka Kabanya Mulota, more popularly known as Senior Chief Mukumbi Ibaloli XV of Zambia's Solwezi district. The study investigates his upbringing, education and career. It demonstrates that Senior Chief Mukumbi's upbringing in the Kaonde society in Solwezi inculcated in him an appreciation for local cultural norms, values, beliefs and customs, a situation that his predecessor Chief Mangala Mukumbi Lubinga XIV and parents encouraged. The study shows that Beston Mukumbi's devotion to the Kaonde culture shaped both his beliefs and how he ruled his chiefdom after he became chief in 1962. It also demonstrates that his upbringing was equally influenced by both modern education which laid the solid foundation of his later pursuits as a chief, nationalist, and politician. During his school days at a mission school at Mutanda in Solwezi, the future chief suffered racial discrimination from European teachers. This experience informed his attitude towards colonialism and later contributed to his involvement in the struggle for independence.

This study explores the various roles the chief played after he left school. It highlights his political activism once he settled in Chingola on the Copperbelt in the early 1950s, showing the roles Beston Mukumbi played in various organizations. These included the Chiwempala Housing Area Board, the African National Congress, the General Workers Union and other organs. In serving on these bodies, the future traditional ruler sought to improve the social and political welfare of his fellow Africans. His interest in uplifting African welfare continued even after he relocated to Solwezi in 1957 and ascended the throne in 1962. This study also shows that the Kaonde chief was instrumental in preserving his culture and in the construction of Zambia after independence in 1964. A patriot, Chief Beston Mukumbi used the various positions he occupied in the post-colonial government to contribute towards the birth of the One-party State in the early 1970s and to improve the socio-economic welfare of not only his subject but also and other people in Solwezi and beyond.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother, Bertha M. Banda, a strong-willed woman who taught me to be focused in life. I also owe it to my father Elias, Banda Lungu, who took me to school and inspired me to work hard.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	-	African National Congress
ANIP	-	African National Independence Party
ARC	-	African Representative Council
CHAB	-	Chiwempala Housing Area Board
CPA	-	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
DC	-	District Commissioner
DDC	-	District Development Committee
DESO	-	District Education Standards Officer
EMS	-	Evangelical Missionary Society
GWTU	-	General Workers Trade Union
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
IPC	-	Inter-parliamentary Conference
KNA	-	Kaonde Native Authority
LGO	-	Local Government Ordinance
MCC	-	Member of Central Committee
MMD	-	Movement for Multi-party Democracy
NA	-	National Assembly
NAIS	-	National Agricultural Information Service
NAO	-	Native Authority Ordinance
NAT	-	Native Authority
NAZ	-	National Archives of Zambia
NRC	-	National Registration Card
NTC	-	National Transport Corporation
NWP	-	North-Western Province
PC	-	Provincial Commissioner

PDC	-	Provincial Development Committee
PLWC	-	Provincial Local Works Committee
PTA	-	Parents Teachers Association
PWC	-	Public Works Councillor
PWD	-	Public Works Department
RDA	-	Rural Development Authority
RPC	-	Regional Parliamentary Conference
SIDO	-	Small Industry Development Organisation
SNAC	-	Solwezi Native Authority Council
SSNA	-	Solwezi Superior Native Authority
UNIP	-	United National Independence Party
UNZA	-	University of Zambia
UPP	-	United Progressive Party
WWI	-	First World War
ZANC	-	Zambia African National Congress
ZANIS	-	Zambia National Information Service
ZNBC	-	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation

CONTENTS

	Page
Declaration.....	i
Copyright.....	ii
Approval.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
Acknowledgement.....	vi
List of Abbreviations.....	vii
Table of Contents.....	ix
Figures.....	xi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Background.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Objectives.....	5
Rationale.....	5
Literature Review.....	6
Research Methodology.....	12
Organisation of the Study.....	14

CHAPTERTWO: LIFE HISTORY AND EARLY CAREER OF BESTON MUKUMBI, 1932-1961

Introduction.....	15
Beston Muluka Mukumbi's Upbringing.....	16
Western Education	20
Early Career and Public Service.....	23

Family Life.....	28
Conclusion.....	32

CHAPTER THREE: MUKUMBI AS NATIONALIST AND TRADITIONAL RULER, 1948-1964

Introduction.....	33
The Birth of the Nationalist.....	33
Beston Mukumbi as a Traditional Ruler.....	41
Conclusion.....	47

CHAPTER FOUR: POLITICS AND ECONOMY IN POST-COLONIAL ZAMBIA, 1965-2015

Introduction.....	48
The Chief and Early Post-independence Politics in Zambia.....	48
The Rise of a Parliamentarian	53
Chief Mukumbi's Other Portfolios and Functions.....	61
Chiefly Duties	62
Economic Activities	63
Conclusion.....	66

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Conclusion.....	67
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BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	69
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Figure 1: Senior Chief Mukumbi Ibaloli XV during Kufukwila Ceremony.....	45
Figure 2: Appeasing spirits at the shrine during Kufukwila.....	46

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

From time immemorial, traditional authorities in most African societies were custodians of cultural values and practices who also secured the interests of their subjects. The chiefly office was vested with the custody of ancestral land, culture, customary role and traditional history.¹ As Keshau Sharma observes, a chief was the custodian of tribal land which he allocated to the tribesmen either for ploughing or residential purposes.² During the pre-colonial era, chiefs also exercised judicial and legislative functions over the societies they governed. Their authority and power were restricted to the areas they controlled. However, their reputation began to take a new direction with the emergence of European colonialism in Africa. In his article, 'Traditional leaders', Christiaan Keulder contends that over time 'the chiefly institution went through many changes in its procedures and roles of appointment, in its functions, in its influence and power.'³ He indicates that the changes emanated from either the normal progression of the chiefly institution or its interaction with the external forces of colonialism.⁴ Some traditional leaders lost the grip over their chieftaincies and subjects by yielding to colonial power.

Beston Muluka Mukumbi, the subject of this study was born in the early 1930s when colonial influence was at its height in Northern Rhodesia. Although he was born during the period of colonialism, the heir to the Kaonde throne did not escape traditional instruction. His predecessor ensured that the future chief was mentored to become a custodian of his Kaonde cultural values, beliefs and customs.⁵ As such, Beston's upbringing inculcated into him the cultural values of the Kaonde people who placed emphasis upon their traditional ceremonies, venerated ancestral spirits, upheld initiation ceremonies and helped in resolving tribal conflicts, among other things. He received such guidance from his benefactor as well as from his parents.⁶ These people ensured that the heir to the Mukumbi throne assimilated all the traditional teachings of their land. Like any other royal, Beston came to believe that traditional authorities were the custodians of culture, customary laws and history of their

¹news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/347350/stm, 21 May 2014.

² Keshau C. Sharma, *Role of Traditional Structures in Local Governance for Local Development: The Case of Botswana* (Washington: World Bank Institute, 2007), p. 2.

³ <http://www.onlineresearch.com>, 22 May 2014.

⁴ Onlineresearch.com, 22 May 2014.

⁵ Interview with Chief Mukumbi, Mukumbi Royal Palace, Solwezi, 09 October 2013.

⁶ Eliya Muluka, interview cited, Mukumbi Royal Palace, Solwezi, 09 October 2013.

chiefdoms whose preservation he regarded as indispensable to the continuity of the Kaonde society.⁷

However, as this study further demonstrates, the traditional ruler was also influenced by colonialism, especially its modern education in the 1950s. Without abandoning traditional values, Mukumbi embraced western-style of education and it motivated him to pursue careers in the modern economy and to join the nationalist struggle. At school in the 1950s, as shown in the next chapter, he came in contact with racial discrimination of colonialism which prompted political unrests in many schools of Northern Rhodesia.⁸ It is not surprising therefore that after leaving school, the future traditional ruler joined hands with nationalist leaders who opposed racial discrimination, notably Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, Kenneth Kaunda.

Unlike traditional rulers who transformed themselves into custodians of colonialism, the future Kaonde chief was inspired to join the politics of decolonization because he wanted to contribute to the fight against colonial rule and oppression. He was aware of the fact that some chiefs who embraced colonialism did so at the expense of their people. As Keulder also notes, during colonial era, some African traditionalists lost the support of their subjects due to collaborating with colonial authorities through reinforcing colonial policies.⁹ Keulder argues that such traditional rulers became 'local level law-makers, police commissioners and judges of the colonial order.'¹⁰ But some African chiefs refused to be stooges of colonial rule and were motivated to fight European domination. Beston Mukumbi was one of those chiefs who stood his ground to fight white misrule since he believed that it was the only way African chiefs would retain their authority and power over their subjects.¹¹

Thus in the 1950s, Mukumbi joined the African National Congress (ANC) in Chingola after having completed school.¹² In order to succeed in the struggle for independence, he not only came to occupy influential positions in the party, such as Vice Secretary, but also joined other organisations that sought to uplift the welfare of Africans. Among these bodies were the Chiwempala Housing Area Board (CHAB), the General Workers Trade Union, the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and Chiwempala Municipal Council. While these organisations

⁷ Interview with Eliya Muluka and Chief Mukumbi.

⁸ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁹ <http://www.onlineresearch.com>, 22 May 2014.

¹⁰ <http://www.onlineresearch.com>.

¹¹ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

¹² Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

pursued different agendas to promote Africans interests, Beston Mukumbi used them to recruit new members for the nationalist cause and to stimulate African political awareness. He ensured that Africans were sensitised about the importance of attaining political freedom. To widen this awareness, Church gatherings, funeral houses as well as gravesites were used as venues for holding nationalist meetings.¹³ As a result the future traditional ruler and other influential leaders successfully raised political consciousness in Chingola. By the time he left Chingola for Solwezi in 1957, he had enlisted many Africans in the nationalist struggle. This turned Chingola into a political hotbed, where Africans resorted to riots, demonstrations, boycotts and general political unrest as a way of expressing their grievances against colonial misrule.¹⁴

After Beston returned to Solwezi in 1957, he became a key player in enlisting local support for the ANC, spearheading the nationalist struggle in the district, and especially persuading chiefs to join the struggle. This was particularly after he was appointed as a member of the Kaonde Native Authority (KNA), also known as the Solwezi Native Authority Council (SNAC). There is evidence that Mukumbi saw the latter institution as an avenue through which he could influence other traditional rulers, whose authority and power had been undermined by colonial authorities, to support nationalism.¹⁵ When ANC lost popularity, Mukumbi switched to the new and vibrant party, United National Independence Party (UNIP) in 1961. Through SNAC, he succeeded in wooing some chiefs into supporting the nationalist movement. For instance, in 1963 he won the support of eight out of the ten chiefs who constituted the SNAC to join the movement.¹⁶ These chiefs helped in spreading nationalist tidings to their own subjects and people of Solwezi district.

Two factors helped the traditional rulers to convert a lot of supporters to nationalism in Solwezi. Firstly, in 1962 he ascended to the Mukumbi Royal throne, a development that tremendously increased his local influence. As a chief, he was accorded with much respect by most of his subjects and recruited many people for the nationalist movement, especially those who came to share his political beliefs and opposition to colonialism. Secondly, the new chief switched his support from ANC to UNIP, which had by early 1960s gained much popularity in Solwezi and other parts of North-Western Province due to its energetic and

¹³ Mukumbi, interview cited.

¹⁴ Interview with Peter Matoka, Ibex Hill, Lusaka 25 February 2014.

¹⁵ Peter Matoka, interview cited.

¹⁶ NAT/A/21, Minutes of the Second Solwezi Superior Native Authority Council Meeting, Local Government Ordinance, 01- 02 July 1963.

vibrant leadership. It was therefore, easy for him to persuade his followers to enlist in UNIP and to continue to fight colonial rule until the defeat of the white regime in 1964.

But, as this study also later shows, Mukumbi's political career did not end with the attainment of independence in 1964. Having successfully fought against colonialism, the chief transformed himself into an agent of economic and political development in post-colonial Zambia.¹⁷ He desired to contribute towards building an economically strong society through the various positions he held after independence.¹⁸ As a chief, he joined the House of Chiefs in 1966 and he used it to foster the development of the nation. In so doing, the traditional ruler became one of the post-colonial rulers in Zambia who organised chiefly institutions to stimulate socio-economic development. Chief Mukumbi continued to champion this development even after he was elevated to various positions in the UNIP government, including those of Governor, Minister of State, Member of the Central Committee (MCC) and Member of Parliament (MP). In all these capacities, the traditional leader countered the assertion that chiefs were just custodians of traditional values.

Through his activities in his chieftom, Chief Beston Mukumbi proved that traditional authorities were essential partners in the socio-economic and political development of the nation. Like other chiefs his resiliency, authority and power were important in shaping social, economic and political lives of his subjects long after Zambia's independence.¹⁹ Even though some African chiefs turned their backs against their people to serve the colonial masters or confined themselves to the custody of tradition alone, Mukumbi's involvement in politics and economic issues shows that other chiefs strove to improve the welfare of their people and development of their countries.

Therefore, documenting Beston Mukumbi's life illuminates the role that traditional authorities played towards the political independence and economic development of Zambia. Not only was Chief Mukumbi a nationalist during the independence struggle, he was also a modernist who, since independence championed the economic development of his chieftom through supporting post-colonial policies. Studying the illustrious life and career of Chief Mukumbi hence is important towards appreciating the role traditional rulers played in Zambia and the world over in the liberation and development of their countries.

¹⁷Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

¹⁸ Mukumbi, interview cited.

¹⁹ William Reinart, "Chieftaincy and the Concept of Articulation: South Africa 1900-1980," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 19 No. 1, 1985: 91-98.

Statement of the Problem

Many biographies focus on nationalist elites believed to have played significant roles in the struggle for freedom.²⁰ Yet the role played by most traditional leaders in the politics of decolonisation and in post-colonial economic development has not been seriously studied by historians. This study attempts to bridge this gap by documenting Senior Chief Mukumbi Ibaloli XV's life history both before and after colonial rule. The study highlights his upbringing, involvement in colonial and post-colonial politics and careers to show that chiefs in Zambia have been important players in shaping the country's history. It is for this reason that this study has been carried out.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Document the life and career of Senior Chief Mukumbi Ibaloli XV.
2. Examine the chief's engagement in politics of decolonisation and his role as a traditional ruler.
3. Assess the impact of his contribution to post-independence politics, economic development of his chiefdom and the construction of modern Zambia.

Rationale

Despite chiefs' vital contribution towards the achievement of independence and the creation of new countries in Africa, little has been written about them. This study attempts to fill the gap in the literature through studying the life and career of the Kaonde Chief Beston Mukumbi. This is important to not only broadening the historiography of Zambia but appreciating the important role of traditional rulers in the construction of modern Zambia. It is further hoped that this study will stimulate further research on chiefs.

²⁰Most scholars in Africa focus on documenting biographies of nationalist elites. For example, Giacomo Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa: A Biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), Goodwin Mwangilwa, *Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula: A Biography of the Old Lion of Zambia* (Lusaka: Goodwin Mwangilwa, 1967), 'Dauti Yamba's Contributions to The Rise and Growth of Nationalism in Zambia, 1941-1964,' *African Affairs: Journal of the Royal African Society*, 90, 358 (1977).

Literature Review

As already noted, few studies have investigated the important part that chiefs played in the politics of decolonisation and socio-economic development in post-colonial Zambia. Available studies have concentrated on the life experiences of nationalist politicians who participated in the struggle for independence and growth of post-colonial Zambian politics.²¹ Most of these studies focus mostly on the biographies of important freedom fighters like Nkumbula, Kaunda and other leading figures in the nationalist movements in Zambia and Africa as a whole. As Giacomo Macola argues, 'this is a narrow focus on the winners of the various political contests that played out over much of the continent in the course of decolonisation.'²² Such a focus ignores the roles of many people, including chiefs, whose involvement in the nationalist struggle was indispensable to attaining independence. But as Van Binsbergen observes that the non-documentation of the roles of chiefs masks their contribution to the creation of modern Zambia.²³

Giacomo Macola's work is a biography in which he explores the life of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula. Macola portrays Nkumbula as 'Zambia's nationalism's prime instigator of the nationalist movement during the days of the country's struggle for independence.'²⁴ Important to our study, Macola shows that Nkumbula was not just a nationalist who fought for independence but was also an active leader of parliamentary opposition after Zambia's independence. Macola demonstrates that Nkumbula was a courageous politician who fought against UNIP dictatorship.²⁵ Macola's work, though not dealing with chiefs, is useful to this study because it suggests that some people who fought for freedom also helped in promoting multi-party democracy in post-colonial Zambia.

Like Giacomo Macola, Goodwin Mwangilwa also wrote the biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, a leading nationalist. He explored Nkumbula's life and career, arguing that Nkumbula was one of the most influential figures in the nationalist history of Zambia.²⁶ Mwangilwa, however, demonstrated that Nkumbula failed to put up a spirited challenge

²¹ Mwelwa C. Musambabwe, 'Dauti Yamba's Contribution to The Rise and Growth of Nationalism in Zambia, 1941-1964,' *African Affairs: The Journal of the Royal Africa Society*, 90, 358 (1977), p. 259.

²² Giacomo Macola, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa: A Biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 1.

²³ W. W. J. Van Binsbergen, 'Chiefs and the State in Independent Zambia Exploring the Zambian National Press', *Journal of Legal Pluralism, Special Issue on Chieftainship in Africa*, 9, 22 (1987), p.139.

²⁴ Macola, p. 1.

²⁵ <http://www.palgrave.com>, 18 May 2015.

²⁶ Goodwin Mwangilwa, *Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula: A Biography of the Old lion of Zambia* (Lusaka: Goodwin Mwangilwa, 1967), p. 1.

against colonialism. As a result more radical nationalists led by Kenneth Kaunda and others broke away from ANC and formed the Zambia African National Congress (ZANC) in 1958.²⁷ In spite of this, Mwangilwa concluded that still Nkumbula contributed greatly to the struggle for independence and to the growth of Zambia as a nation. He cited Nkumbula's agreement to form the coalition government as a sign of courage and patriotism. Mwangilwa's work is critical to this study although he, like Macola, does not examine the importance of chiefs in nationalism.

Mwelwa Musambachime has emulated Goodwin Mwangilwa through his short article on Dauti Yamba, a renowned nationalist and politician. In the article, Musambachime investigates the contribution made by Yamba to the development and growth of nationalism in Zambia between 1941 and 1964. He demonstrates that, unlike the politicians and radical nationalists who fought for independence by addressing mass meetings from anthills and by encouraging their followers to use violence, Yamba waged a non-violent struggle against colonialism with the support of chiefs. Musambachime shows how Dauti Yamba tactfully and fearlessly articulated chiefs' grievances to entice traditional rulers to support the ANC.²⁸ Although Musambachime concentrated on Yamba's nationalist activities, his study is useful to our work because he demonstrates the strategies some nationalists deployed to enlist chiefs in the fight against colonialism.

Unlike the preceding works, W. W. J. Van Binsbergen's study is not a biography. However, his article reveals the importance of chiefs in the development of politics in Zambia after independence. Binsbergen argues that Zambian chiefs' involvement in post-colonial politics in such organs as UNIP's Central Committee in the 1980s made the country politically stable.²⁹ However, this study does not explore what role these chiefs played in the struggle against colonial rule. It does not further explain how they contributed towards the political and economic development of post-independence Zambia.

Ben Kakoma recognised the political functions African chiefs played from as far back as the pre-colonial times. Kakoma argues that in pre-colonial society traditional authorities exercised much power over their communities. This power was, however, threatened by the rise of independent African states, whose rulers regarded chiefs as a threat to their

²⁷ Goodwin Mwangilwa, *Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula*, p. 1.

²⁸ Mwelwa C. Musambachime, 'Dauti Yamba', p. 259.

²⁹ Van Binsbergen, 'Chiefs and the States in Independent Zambia', p. 139.

supremacy.³⁰ Kakoma highlights that in spite of that, chiefs in Zambia's North-Western Province supported the UNIP regime in developing the country after independence.³¹ He uses the confrontations of the chiefs in North-Western Province with the UNIP regime over development in the 1980s, as an example of the crucial role traditional leaders played in controlling developmental projects of post-colonial Zambia. He observes that chiefs operated as both a threat to and foundation of post-independence politics.³² The importance of this work to our study is that it sheds light on how chiefs got engulfed in post-colonial politics and development agenda. However, it does not show how traditional rulers contributed to the struggle for independence.

In her study of the institution of Chieftainship in Africa, L. M. Mair argues that chiefs were tools of colonialism, suggesting that chiefs' relations with their subjects were merely a matter of policy decided upon by the colonial states.³³ Mair argues that traditional authorities were not only custodians of their societies' customs and values but also ideal agents of colonialism and indirect rule since they were obeyed by their subjects.³⁴ She states that African societies were ruled by chiefs because chiefs preserved chiefly authority and maintained their traditional positions.³⁵ Her study is a source of insights into why chiefs were incorporated into colonial regimes, but it is silent on the roles of chiefs in nationalism and political development.

Sekibakibsa P. Lekgoathi, a South African historian, disagrees with the view that chiefs were simple agents of colonialism who served the interests of their colonial masters more than those of their own people. To the contrary, Lekgoathi insists that the chiefly institution was a democratic institution and that chiefs ruled by the will of their subjects.³⁶ In this context, traditional rulers, the historian argues, could not afford to betray their subjects' interests and walked a tight rope as they tried to strike a balance between upholding those interests and those of their colonial master. Lekgoathi does not, however, explore the role of chiefs in modern politics and economic development.

³⁰ Ben Kakoma, 'Chiefs and the State in Independent Zambia: Exploring the Zambian National Press,' *Journal of Legal Pluralism, Special Issues on Chieftainship in Africa*, 9, 358 (1977), p. 145.

³¹ Ben Kakoma, 'Chiefs and the State in Independent Zambia,' p. 145.

³² Kakoma, 'Chiefs and the State', p. 145.

³³ L. M. Mair, 'Chieftainship in Modern Africa,' *Africa: Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Culture*, IX, 3 (1936), p. 3.

³⁴ Mair, 'Chieftainship', p. 12.

³⁵ Mair, p. 12.

³⁶ Sekibakibsa P. Lekgoathi, *History Shows Chiefs can Play a Meaningful Role* (London: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 111.

In his study of the Politics of Independence in Zambia, David Mulford argues that up to 1945 African leadership was in the hands of traditional leaders, religious ministers and school teachers, mostly scattered in rural areas. He argues that chiefs were major political players in the nationalist movement. He shows that the chiefly office in colonial Zambia played a significant role against the formation of the Federation of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953.³⁷ He notes that chiefs joined hands with ANC to raise funds for a joint delegation to London to represent Africans' case against the Federation.³⁸ His study further demonstrates that the Native Authority Ordinance of the 1930s was one of the cornerstones of the Northern Rhodesian government's policy under which it recognised African traditional authorities.³⁹ Mulford's work is a relevant source of useful insights on the chiefs' attitudes towards nationalism. The study is however silent on the traditional authorities' role in Zambia's economic development after independence.

Walima T. Kalusa's study of Kalonga Gawa Undi X is yet another source of insights on traditional rulers. The study is a response to Mahmood Mamdani, one of Africa's leading contemporary analysts, who asserts that colonialism transformed African traditional authorities into agents of imperial domination. Kalusa uses Kalonga Gawa Undi (the paramount chief of the Chewa in Zambia's Eastern Province) to counter Mamdani's argument. Unlike Mamdani, Kalusa demonstrates that the Chewa chief mobilised colonial institutions such as education and the Native Authority system to challenge colonial rule itself and to improve the welfare of his people in the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁰ Walima Kalusa portrays Undi as a chief who turned against colonisation and mobilised his followers to rally behind the struggle for political freedom.⁴¹ His study is a source of insights into the role chiefs played in the nationalist movement and their positive contribution to economic growth after independence.

Adu Boahen and Samuel Chipungu individually expose the roles played by traditional rulers during the colonial period which affected their performances even after independence. They argue that among African leaders were those who challenged colonial governments.⁴² Like

³⁷ David Mulford, *Zambia: The Politics of Independence 1957-1964* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 14.

³⁸ Mulford, *Politics of Independence*, p. 14.

³⁹ See note above.

⁴⁰ Walima T. Kalusa in collaboration with Mapopa Mtonga, *Kalonga Gawa Undi X, a biography of an African chief and nationalist*, (Lusaka: The Lembani Trust, 2010), p. 3.

⁴¹ See footnote above.

⁴² <http://www.google.co.uk/s>, 18 May 2015.

Kalusa, they each disagree with Mahmood Mamdani's view that colonialism transformed African traditional authorities into agents of colonialism. To the contrary, they argue that chiefs in fact held contradictory thoughts, principles and approaches towards imperial supremacy and the people over whom they reigned. Their fear of colonialism was motivated either by their individual or collective needs depending on the circumstances they found themselves in. Boahen and Chipungu demonstrate that there were chiefs who stood their grounds against Whiteman's rule and engaged in nationalism. The separate studies of these authors do not, however, show chiefs' participation towards the socio-economic development after independence.

George C. Bond has also investigated chiefly roles and involvement in nationalist movements. He has shown that the years preceding Zambia's independence witnessed an increasing political upheaval both in urban areas and in the countryside.⁴³ Bond shows that chiefs worked closely with African National Congress in opposing colonialism after 1950.⁴⁴ Among these chiefs were those who switched their loyalty to UNIP after Kenneth Kaunda and other young radicals broke away from ANC in the late 1950s. Although Bond's work does not examine the chiefs' involvement in post-independence politics and economic construction of modern Zambia, it is useful as it highlights the role of chiefs in party nationalist politics.

J. A. Barnes outlines factors that guaranteed the tenure of the chiefly office. He observes that chiefs were mandated to remain in office for as long as they lived, except if they committed serious criminal offenses or there was some serious disaffection on the part of their subjects who mandated them to possess power.⁴⁵ Although this study does not explore the roles of the traditional leaders and is silent on chiefs' role in the growth of post-independence politics, it is useful to this work because it throws light on the chiefs' relations with their subjects.

Like Barnes, Thomas McClendon's study is about chiefs. The study argues that chiefs in Natal in colonial South Africa were used as instruments of power by colonial masters. McClendon argues that colonial authorities overthrew chiefs or imposed sanctions on them if chiefs failed to discharge their duties such as collecting taxes and mobilising labour for colonial enterprise. McClendon argues that such functions and sanctions caused political

⁴³ George C. Bond, *The Politics of Change in a Zambian Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 86.

⁴⁴ Bond, *Politics of Change*, p. 86.

⁴⁵ J. N. Barnes, *Politics in a Changing Society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), p. 153.

instability among Africans.⁴⁶ McClendon's study does not show how hostile relations between African chiefs and colonial rulers were and thus opens a window on why chiefs joined the struggle for independence.

Olufemi Vaughan, another author who has written extensively about traditional rulers, argues that indigenous political structures sustained local governance in colonial Yorubaland. Vaughan demonstrates that Yoruba indigenous political structures were distorted by the system of indirect rule. However, Yoruba monarchs, head chiefs, chiefs, western educated Christian elites and Muslim merchants in Nigeria maintained their traditional authority and in some cases even expanded their power in a rapidly shifting colonial context.⁴⁷ The study is silent on chiefs' contribution to nationalism and economic development.

Daniel A. Offiong's study demonstrates that Christian missionary and British colonial intrusion led to the decline in chiefly authority because the Europeans undermined the authority of chiefs after penetrating and dominating African territories. He notes that colonial influence on African chiefdoms weakened the powers of chiefs whose status also declined. He also shows that post-colonial leaders sometimes removed traditional rulers at will. This study impressively illuminates shifts in the roles of traditional rulers from the pre-colonial period to the present, but it does not examine how chiefs participated in the liberation struggle and the role they played in creating modern African states.

John Tosh's study of chiefs in the Lango society in colonial Uganda highlights the confusion which erupted in the society upon the penetration of Europeans. He stresses that in Lango chiefs became victims of indirect rule and shows how chiefs' power and authority declined through European attacks on the chiefly office.⁴⁸ Tosh demonstrates how certain administrative institutions functioned as instruments of indirect rule. His study, however, does not illuminate the aspects of nationalism but concentrates on the roles played by chiefs in maintaining colonial powers at the expense of the Africans.

Christian John Makgala similarly examines how chiefs in Bechuanaland helped the colonial government to effectively collect taxes in exchange for their own protection. Makgala shows that through reinforcing colonial taxations, the relationship between the British colonial

⁴⁶Thomas McClendon, 'You are What You Eat Up: Deposing Chiefs in Early Colonial Natal, 1847-1957,' *Journal of African History*, 47, 2 (2003), pp. 259-302.

⁴⁷Olufemi Vaughan, 'Chieftaincy, Politics and Communal Identity in Western Nigeria, 1893-1951,' *Journal of African History*, 44, 2 (2003), p. 283.

⁴⁸John Tosh, 'Colonial chiefs in a Stateless Society: A Case Study from Northern Uganda,' *Journal of African History*, 14, 3 (1973), pp. 473-490.

administrators, Tswana *Dikgosi* (chiefs) and their subjects in the Bechuanaland protectorate from 1899 to 1957 became sour because Europeans failed to offer protection to the Tswana people. Chiefs were regarded as betrayers of their subjects because of their collaboration with the whites. Makgala's study shows that under British protection, Tswana rulers who attempted to protect their followers' interest risked of being deposed.⁴⁹ Makgala, however, neither discusses the role chiefs played in the struggle for independence nor their contribution to post-colonial politics.

Research Methodology

The data in this study derives from qualitative research and was mainly collected from published, unpublished and oral sources. At the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ), I consulted colonial documents like District Notebooks, District and Provincial Tour Reports, African Affairs Annual Reports, Secretarial files, Kaonde Council and Native Authority Council Minutes, Letters, and Newspapers. Research at NAZ provided valuable information on the Beston Mukumbi's involvement in nationalism both in Chingola and Solwezi. It also yielded data on the traditional ruler's role in settling disputes and fostering economic development in his chieftaincy and the country as a whole.

I also collected data from the United National Independence Party (hereafter UNIP) Archives. The archives also provided information relating to the chief's role in promoting the nationalist movement and politics after 1964. Data in form of Letters written by Chief Mukumbi, Cabinet Circulars, Presidential Speeches and Circulars provided me with the information of the Chief Mukumbi's participation in the Chona Commission, his roles as Governor, Member of the Central Committee and Minister of State. Information concerning the role of Mukumbi as a traditional ruler and his participation in upholding policies of village registration and mobilisation was also obtained from UNIP archives.

Research at the University of Zambia Main Library yielded books, Journals, Articles Parliamentary Debates, District and Provincial Annual Reports, House of Chiefs Debates and Minutes, and African Affairs Annual Reports. These sources provided me with important data on Chief Mukumbi's contributions in parliament and the House of Chiefs. Provincial Reports and African Annual Reports from the Special Collections Section provided

⁴⁹ChristianJohn Makgala, 'Taxation in the Tribal Areas of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1899-1957,' *Journal of African History*, 45, 2 (2004), pp. 279-288.

information on Mukumbi's role in spearheading political and economic development in Solwezi.

Letters, District and Provincial Tour Reports, Native Authority Minutes, House of Chiefs Minutes and Correspondences were collected from Solwezi Municipal Council and Provincial Secretary's Office. These yielded data pertaining to the chiefs' ascendance to the Mukumbi throne in 1962, his role in the Solwezi Native Authority Council, in nationalism, in politics and economic development. Tour Reports provided data on Mukumbi's contribution to economic development not only of his chiefdom, but also in Solwezi-West Constituency and the district as a whole.

Other useful information derived from documentaries and pictures collected from Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), Zambia National Information Service (ZANIS) and National Agricultural Information Service (NAIS). These sources gave information about the Kufukwila Traditional Ceremony of Mukumbi Chiefdom.

I also gathered information from oral interviews on the chief and members of the royal family at the Mukumbi Royal Palace. Members of the royal family interviewed included his wives, uncles, sisters, children, nieces and nephews of Chief Beston Mukumbi. These interviews provided data on the chief's early life, educational background and early career. They also gave information concerning the chief's role in upholding the traditional customs of the Kaonde people through the Kufukwila Ceremony. Apart from the members of the royal family, sub-chiefs, headmen and senior citizens in the chiefdom were also interviewed. They contributed information pertaining to the traditional ruler's role in the stability and development of the chiefdom.

Veteran politicians, nationalists, and a few retired civil servants in Solwezi were also consulted. Most of the interviews conducted in Solwezi were carried out in Kaonde language, with few of them done in the English. These interviewees provided data on the political career of chief Mukumbi. Some interviewees such as Peter Matoka, General Malimba Masheke and Grey Zulu availed information on Chief Mukumbi's contribution towards the development of politics in Zambia both before and after independence. Some of these informants, including the traditional ruler himself were able to provide data that was lacking in the written source.

Organisation of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study and outlines the background of Senior Chief Mukumbi. It also contains the statement of the problem, objectives, rationale, literature review, methodology and organisation of the study. Chapter Two examines Chief Mukumbi's life and career in detail. It shows how the traditional and the modern education he acquired later shaped his future careers as clerk, mine police, unionist and chief. The chapter demonstrates that Mukumbi's life was shaped by both tradition and western civilisation. Although he acquired modern education and left the village to seek white collar jobs on the Copperbelt, Beston did not lose sight of his culture. He continued to interact with his predecessor who often updated him on the happenings of the chieftdom. Due to lack of documented evidence on the chief's early life, the major sources of the data in this chapter were oral interviews conducted on the traditional leader and the royals within the chieftaincy. These interviews yielded data on the early history, and career of Mukumbi.

Chapter Three documents Chief Mukumbi's role as a nationalist. The chapter shows that the traditional ruler began to involve himself in the nationalist struggle during his school days at Mutanda Riverside School due to the colonial discriminatory acts he experienced there. After completing school, he worked for a year at Kansanshi Mine, before he moved to Chingola where he enlisted in the African National Congress (hereafter ANC) in 1954. The chapter shows that Mukumbi occupied influential positions of Vice Secretary to the ANC Branch Committee and CHAB, and Chairman of the General Workers Trade Union and the Chiwempala Parents Teachers Association. Through these portfolios, he encouraged many Africans to fight against colonialism. The chapter also examines Mukumbi's role as a traditional ruler. The chapter observes that Chief Mukumbi used his position as chief to uphold the traditional customs of his chieftdom, to settle land disputes as well as to unite his people.

Chapter Four assesses the role Mukumbi played in the growth of post-independence politics of Zambia. It also explores his involvement in the economic development of his chieftdom and the country at large. It further investigates how the senior chief combined politics with tradition to the advantage of his chieftaincy. Chapter Five is the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LIFE HISTORY AND EARLY CAREER OF BESTON MUKUMBI, 1932-1961

Introduction

This chapter tries to document the early life of Senior Chief Beston Muluka Mukumbi Ibaloli XV. It recounts his early upbringing in the Kaonde society and reveals how his immediate family and his predecessor prepared the future chief for his royal responsibilities before he came in contact with modern education. The chapter also illustrates how his childhood and early informal education shaped his future aspirations and life. It demonstrates that both his primary and secondary school education influenced the young man's future career choices, and later his chiefly vocation. Beston's modern education shaped his selection of occupations. His early life evolved in an environment where Western education, at the time, was not appreciated by many people. Yet, he yearned to overcome this and became one of the few men in colonial Solwezi to receive modern education.

The chapter further illuminates the traditional ruler's early careers, exploring the different occupations that he pursued after completing his education and demonstrating how the experiences he gained from these professions impacted on his future career as chief. The jobs he did, such as mine policeman, mine clerk, chief clerk, paymaster, unionist and civil servant before joining the Kaonde Native Authority all required literacy. He used his mastery of the English language to articulate issues in these careers he pursued. But Beston Mukumbi's early life was also influenced by the traditional education as much as it was shaped by Western education. The chapter reveals that his traditional upbringing and modern education had great bearing even on his later interest in the nationalist movement, traditional matters and politics. The traditional ruler contributed greatly in the Native Authority by engineering the building of roads, council offices, and also mobilising chiefs to support the nationalist movement, before he finally became a chief. His hard work essentially helped him to further contribute positively to the construction and development of his chiefdom and modern Zambia as a whole. The chapter also examines the traditional ruler's family life.

It is significant to state that this chapter relies mostly on oral evidence as archival and other primary sources that shed light on the chief's early life are very scanty. The data used here was obtained from oral accounts of informants who knew, lived and interacted with Beston during his early life. The traditional ruler himself also served as a principal source of

information on his early life. Reliance on oral data regarding his early life poses serious challenges to the historian as verbal evidence tends to concentrate on the positive experiences of the subject and throw little light upon his failures or weaknesses. The information in this chapter does not escape such distortions.

Beston Muluka Mukumbi's Upbringing

Both documented literature and oral accounts confirm that Beston Muluka Mukumbi was born on 5 November in 1932 at *Mpalala wa Kavuma wa Milunga* in Muluka village of the Mukumbi Chieftaincy in Solwezi.¹ The absence of his birth record from any health institution suggests that he was not born at a modern health facility. This is because modern health institutions were not available in his chiefdom at the time he was born. From birth, Beston Mukumbi was introduced to Kaonde traditional practices, his upbringing founded on Kaonde culture which later influenced his traditional vocation.

His father was Mulota Luwaile Muluka who worked as a retainer to Chiefs Mukumbi Kipozo and Lubinga in the 1920s.² Chiefs' retainers among the Kaonde group were mainly chosen from among the members of the royal family. The protagonist's father, who also, was the headman of Muluka village, reportedly possessed traits of leadership such as settling tribal conflicts amicably and giving good advice to the chief, which seem to have been passed on to his only surviving son, Beston.³

The Muluka village where the heir to the Mukumbi throne was born was located at a place popularly known as Kwa Kiyombo, an area from which descended the Inamwana (mother to the child) family. Inamwana was the Queen mother to the heirs of the Mukumbi throne.⁴ The locality of Muluka, within the area of the queen mother's origin suggests the relationship between the royal lineage and the protégé's family which qualified him to ascend the Mukumbi throne. Beston's mother, Selanyi Kansokomba, descended from within the Mukumbi clans. She was the only female child born to the Kasonkomba family of Kajilo, a neighbouring village to Muluka.⁵ Kajilo Village, like Muluka, had royal connections as it was named after the fifth and sixth chiefs of the Mukumbi Chiefdom. Mukumbi V and VI's names were 'Kajilo Katoka and Kajilo Kafita', respectively. Selanyi, like Luwaile Muluka,

¹ Interview with Chief Mukumbi, Royal Palace, Solwezi, 09 October 2013.

² Interview with Lubese Muluka, Muluka Village, Solwezi, 09 October 2013.

³ NAT/A/22, Zambia's Honours and Awards Correspondence, 19 June 2003.

⁴ Interview with Menivar Shipilo Kangómbe, Margrade Compound, Solwezi, 10 November 2013.

⁵ Interview with Jean Mutantabowa, Muluka Village, Solwezi, 09 October 2013.

was a member of the royal family in her own right. This brief account of Beston Muluka's parents shows that he descended from a firm royal background and it is no surprise that he himself was destined to rule as a chief later in life.

The future traditional ruler was not the only child to Mulota and Selanyi. He was born in a family of eight children: two boys and six girls and he is the second born. However, he assumed the position of first born in the family after his elder brother, Poyimesa, died at an early age.⁶ In 1958, his fifth-born sister Katumpu Espina also died, leaving behind three children. Today, the five living siblings of Chief Mukumbi are Eliya, Ades, Pise, Lubese and Rosemary.⁷ Chief Mukumbi is the only son among the six surviving children in the family.

Beston spent his early childhood together with his family at Muluka village in Mukumbi Chiefdom. For most of his early life, he was nurtured by his biological parents who seemed to have positively influenced his morals and character. Both his mother and father are reported to have tirelessly groomed him as a future chief.⁸ His parents were determined to see to it that their only son emerged a successful ruler of the chiefdom. In view of the fact that they were aware of his eligibility to the Mukumbi throne, Mulota and Selanyi taught Beston to cultivate cordial relations with fellow human beings. They taught him to be tolerant, patient and respectful to fellow humans.⁹

Chief Mangala Mukumbi Lubinga XIV, Beston Mukumbi's immediate predecessor on the throne, made it known in the late 1930s that he had chosen young Beston to succeed him. The future chief received training in household chores and in the customs and norms of the Kaonde culture.¹⁰ His uncle, Ngoshite Muluka (who took charge of the traditional affairs when the chief was out) also taught Beston the importance of the Kaonde culture and tradition. He was trained to appreciate his role in settling disputes, resolving tribal conflicts, venerating spirits, upholding the Kufukwila ceremony, uniting people and judging cases at the royal court.¹¹ The old man further made sure that the future chief assimilated and mastered all the judicial and political functions of the Kaonde chiefly office. This helped the younger man to comprehend his future responsibilities.

⁶ Interview with Eliya Muluka, Royal Palace, Muluka, Solwezi, 09 October 2013.

⁷ Interview with Chief Mukumbi.

⁸ Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, Kenneth Kaunda, Dauti Yamba were half-orphaned in their early years.

⁹ Interview with Chief Mukumbi.

¹⁰ Interview with Chief Mukumbi, Mukumbi Palace, 09 October 2013.

¹¹ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

Besides being trained in Kaonde customs, Beston received instructions from his father in clearing and cultivating farmland, hunting animals and collecting honey and fishing.¹² Most of Mukumbi's lessons were practical. He always accompanied his father on his errands and hunting expeditions, a practice that instilled in him a passion for outdoor life. Partly due to this passion, Beston supported the legal acquisition of firearms and the legalisation of hunting later in the Native Authority and in parliament.¹³ Besides hunting, farming was an important occupation of the heir's family and everyone including the future participated in it for it was the most important source of livelihood for the family. The young man learnt to till the land, harvest and protect crops from birds.

To instill good morals in their son, his parents introduced him to Christianity through the Evangelical Church at an early age of his life.¹⁴ The Evangelical Church managed to win many converts in Mukumbi Chiefdom early before Beston was born. His parents were some of the earliest believers who later introduced their children to the new faith.¹⁵ The teachings of the church, like traditional training helped to impact good values in the young man. Beston paid attention to the instructions of his parents and this helped him to overcome challenges along the way and to face events as they unfolded. He reportedly grew into a dependable person both to his family and the entire chiefdom. This training shaped the future chief, making him a successful ruler later in life.¹⁶

Although young Beston was groomed for his future chiefly office, his character was also influenced by his siblings. He could not escape the pressure that his sisters exerted on his lifestyle. Surrounded by his female siblings, the young man participated in female housekeeping chores, just like them.¹⁷ As such, he got accustomed to performing every form of work around the house. Since he was the oldest of the surviving siblings, he often exercised leadership, making sure that the chores were appropriately carried out within the home especially when his mother was away.¹⁸ Growing among girls was not a source of weakness on his part; instead, it developed in him a strong character. Moreover, being the only son in the family inspired him to develop a sense of responsibility towards his siblings.

¹²Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

¹³ NAT/A/21, Minutes of the Solwezi Native Authority, 03 March 1963, Republic of Zambia, *Parliamentary Debates, Firearm Amendment Bill*, 21 August 1986:

¹⁴ Interviews with the Royal Family, Mukumbi Palace, 09 October 2013.

¹⁵Royal Family, interviews cited.

¹⁶ See note above.

¹⁷ Interview with Chief Mukumbi.

¹⁸ Interview with Lubese Muluka.

Another person who played an important part in the early life of Beston Mukumbi was his grandfather and benefactor, Mukumbi Lubinga XIV. It was Mukumbi Lubinga XIV who identified his grandson as his successor when Beston was still a small boy.¹⁹ The older ruler ensured that Beston received sufficient training as a future chief. Mukumbi XIV often visited Beston's home or summoned the boy to the palace to instruct him in Kaonde jurisprudence, history and culture.²⁰ He also obliged the boy to regularly attend court sessions at the palace.²¹ The training and support Beston received from his predecessor, Mukumbi XIV motivated him to aspire for the chiefly office.²²

Beston Mukumbi's upbringing prepared him to live in a Kaonde society. Like other young men of his age, he learnt to hunt both small and big animals, clear new gardens after every after every three or four years and to build huts.²³ As the Kaonde do not rear cattle, he learnt the skill of taking care of goats and chickens. Like many other children brought up in such a communal setting, the future chief grew up without escaping the social tensions that every other ordinary village child experienced. The opportunity of growing in a rural community instilled in him respect for Kaonde customs. Mutual interaction helped him to develop a passion for people which he later portrayed for the chiefdom when he ascended to power.

The Kaonde society promoted individual and collective experiences including hunting of small animals, mole-rats, rabbits, birds, and fishing. This allowed young male children to acquire traditional values, customs, norms, knowledge and skills.²⁴ In this way, young boys learnt their future manly responsibilities. Informal assemblies (*insaka*) for instance, provided forums for traditional games, blacksmith, and moonlight dances where Beston and other young royals came in contact with the teachings of their society as part of their preparation for the chiefly office.²⁵ Therefore, while it is true that his parents and the immediate family had a major task to groom the heir into a real leader, the society too played its important role in instilling in him its norms and values.

Mukumbi received adequate informal training that prepared him as a future chief of his chiefdom. When time came for him to ascend the throne, the long-standing Kaonde

¹⁹Eliya Muluka, interview cited.

²⁰The late Mangala Mukumbi did not relent in monitoring the progress of Beston.

²¹Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

²²Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

²³Lubese, interview cited.

²⁴Interview with Chief Mukumbi.

²⁵Interview with Kekema Mponda, Unamono Guest House, Solwezi, 15 October 2013.

matrilineal pattern of inheritance was overlooked and he became the first one to inherit the throne on a paternal basis. From way back, succession took the matrilineal path until in 1962 when Beston emerged from the paternal side. Amidst many competing heirs, the protagonist rose to the Mukumbi royal throne after the death of Mangala Mukumbi Lubinga XIV. It follows then that all the experiences of Beston as he grew up pointed to his vocation as a traditional ruler and his later careers trace their origin to his childhood. Beston's rise to traditional power also partially resulted from the training he received from his predecessor, Mukumbi Lubinga XIV who identified him as his successor when Beston was still a small boy.²⁶ The older ruler ensured that the young lad attended regular meetings to train him in Kaonde customs.²⁷ Mukumbi XIV often visited Beston's home or summoned his parents to the palace to remind them of the great task they had of tutoring the heir to the Mukumbi throne.²⁸ Looking at the protagonist's future successes, it may be suggested that he was adequately prepared for his later chiefly responsibilities. The support he got from his parents, and society coupled with Mukumbi Lubinga XIV's encouragement apparently motivated Beston to aspire for the traditional office.²⁹

Beston Mukumbi's early life was not all work. His relatives recalled that he also actively engaged in leisure activities such as dancing and drumming.³⁰ They recalled that the young man was a good dancer and drummer. His involvement in these activities enabled him to play an important role in terms of initiating his sisters when they came of age.³¹ Like any other child, he also found time to play with his peers. He lived like any other child. He also played with his peers, even as he was being trained to become a chief in future in the chiefdom except it was made known to him that a huge traditional duty of ruling his people awaited him in future.³²

Western Education

The discussion on Beston Muluka Mukumbi's early life would be incomplete without an account of his association with Western education which also greatly informed his future. Aware of the value of modern education, his parents took him to school. The potentate was

²⁶ Interview with Eliya Muluka.

²⁷ Interview with Chief Mukumbi.

²⁸ Late Mangala Mukumbi did not relent in monitoring the progress of Beston.

²⁹ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

³⁰ Interviews with the Royal Family.

³¹ Royal Family interviewed.

³² Interview with Mukumbi.

first enrolled into school in 1944 at Kabangu Primary School within the chiefdom.³³ The long distance between the school and Beston's village forced him to be a weekly boarder. This was not an easy matter. Apart from the scarcity of teaching and learning materials, every Friday, the young pupil had to go back home to collect provisions, returning to school on Sunday.³⁴ In spite of the hardships Beston Mukumbi encountered during his primary education, he persevered. When his parents relocated to Kamwela Village in 1944, he moved to Katu Primary School which was closer to their home. He remained at this school until he completed his lower primary education. According to the traditional ruler, the two schools where he did his primary education laid a firm foundation upon which his future successes depended.³⁵ Among many other benefits Beston derived from the two schools was competence in both written and spoken English. Such competence was later indispensable to securing jobs and may have been an important consideration when he was selected to ascend to the Mukumbi throne in 1962. Like traditional education, Western education was paramount in grooming him into a future leader who managed to secure stability and development of his chiefdom.

After completing primary school education in 1948, the future traditional ruler moved to Mutanda Riverside School to pursue his secondary education. This was a mission school administered by Peter Ridgefield, leader of the Evangelical Christian Faith.³⁶ A former teacher at Mutanda recalled that Beston proved himself as an ambitious, brilliant pupil during his school days at the institution.³⁷ Thus, he was chosen as boarding prefect. Other influential pupils at the school were late Timothy Jiranda Kankasa and the late Meckson Chipilipili who later became renowned nationalists and politicians.³⁸ Beniya Luka Yamba, a former inspector of schools and brother in marriage to the potentate was also at Mutanda.³⁹ It is not surprising that the people Beston Mukumbi interacted with at school became his allies both in the nationalist movement and the political field. The benefits of the modern education he got from Mutanda manifested themselves in Beston's later careers and his rise to power.

Beston Mukumbi's quest for upper primary education came with challenges. Although he was a keen pupil, his parents were unable to pay for his education. This forced him to leave

³³ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

³⁴ Interview with Brandina Muluka, Mukumbi Palace, Solwezi, 09 October 2013.

³⁵ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

³⁶ Interview with Peter Wilfred Matoka, Ibex Hill, Lusaka, 25 February 2014.

³⁷ Matoka, interview cited.

³⁸ Interview with Zelita Kankasa Mulonga, Kankasa Farm, Solwezi, 05 November 2013.

³⁹ Interview with Beniya Luka Yamba, Urban Compound, Solwezi, 25 October 2014.

school in 1949. Determined to earn money needed for his school fees, he went in the same year to Chingola, where he was first employed as a mine policeman by the Rhokana Corporation Limited. This was the only way he managed to survive the challenge of school fees. M. A. Ranganathan argues that the colonial state did not provide higher education for Africans.⁴⁰ It was not easy, therefore, to get modern education unless one had means of sourcing funds as most parents did not afford to pay for their children's school.

For Mukumbi, lack of money left him with no option but to find himself a job on the Copperbelt where employment opportunities had been stimulated by the mining industry.⁴¹ After having accumulated enough funds to support his education, he went back to Mutanda to resume his studies in 1950. Most of the people that succeeded in getting education at the time resorted to seeking temporal employments in order for them to earn some money to enable them pursue further studies.⁴² Returning to school after a year must have been a difficult experience for Mukumbi. It meant he had to convince its Principal and teachers of his commitment to studies and to catch up with his peers.⁴³ Nonetheless, he was taken on by the school authorities again.

Beston Mukumbi finished his secondary education in 1953. He became one of the few educated Africans in North-Western Province and Solwezi in particular who acquired modern education during the colonial era which enabled him to find formal employment.⁴⁴ It is indisputable that the traditional ruler realised the value of Western education and appreciated it when he was only a small boy. Its acquisition shaped his future careers.

The importance of modern education to Beston Mukumbi cannot over emphasised. Western education equipped him with the English language and literacy which, in the colonial and post-colonial periods were a source of power, authority and influence.⁴⁵ As shown later, his ability to speak and write English enabled him to secure many white collar jobs and to challenge colonial policies of discriminatory nature against blacks. His education helped him to challenge colonial rulers in their own language. Competent in English, the future chief was able to comprehend issues of governance, to interpret them and to engage European

⁴⁰ M. A. Ranganathan, *The Political Philosophy of President Kaunda of Zambia* (Edinburgh: Holmes McDougall, 1985), p. 16.

⁴¹ See notes above.

⁴² Matoka, interview cited.

⁴³ Interview with Peter Matoka.

⁴⁴ Interview with Kekema Mponda.

⁴⁵ Walima T. Kalusa in collaboration with Mapopa Mtonga, *Kalonga Gawa Undi X, a biography of an African chief and nationalist* (Lusaka: The Lembani Trust, 2010), p. 22.

rulers in their own terms.⁴⁶ As also earlier suggested, modern education may have enhanced his selection as Chief Mukumbi in the early 1960s.⁴⁷

Early Career and Public Service

Western education shaped the careers that Beston Mukumbi pursued after completing his education. Because he was literate, he was employed as a clerk at Kansanshi Mine in Solwezi in 1953.⁴⁸ But the ambitious young man did not stay long at the mine. One year later, he returned to the Copperbelt, where jobs were abundant and attracting migrants from all over Central Africa. There, he settled he settled in the mining area of Chingola where he was soon taken on as chief clerk at Frank Ferguson Limited, one of the leading companies in the colony.⁴⁹ His employment as a chief clerk, demonstrates that Beston Muluka Mukumbi was keen to get a well-paying job.

His aspirations to earn a much more satisfying wage caused the heir to the Kaonde throne to go to the Copperbelt. A major transformation had taken place in the area, altering both the Northern Rhodesian economy and that of the African workers. Beston Mukumbi had earlier experienced the positive effects of economic boom when he worked at Rhokana Corporation Limited as mine policeman. The Copperbelt was the destination for most educated Africans who were looking for such jobs. In the 1950s, mission-educated Africans avoided blue-collar jobs. They preferred office jobs which were common on the Copperbelt and attracted many school leavers. Most Africans avoided recruitment but preferred to find their own way to the Copperbelt to seek employment at particular mines.⁵⁰

Much as mining was the utmost pull of workers on the Copperbelt, Beston appeared not to have dreamed of becoming a full time copper digger because he never secured himself that kind of a job. His career interest was centered on public related occupations. He preferred to do clerical work. Like other educated Kaonde men, Beston sought to be *Kaonde wa kipale*(smart Kaonde).⁵¹ His rise from being a mere clerical officer at Kansanshi Mine to the position of chief clerk at Frank Ferguson demonstrates that Beston Muluka Mukumbi was

⁴⁶ NAT/A/22, Letter from Mukumbi to the British Council, 05 October 1962.

⁴⁷ NAT/A/21, Minutes of the Solwezi Native Authority, 21 July 1962.

⁴⁸ NAZ/A/22, Chief's Correspondences, 05 October 1962, Solwezi, Kelvin Mulenga, *Who is Who in Zambia* (Lusaka: np, 1968), p. 61.

⁴⁹ NAZ/A/22, Chief's Correspondences, 05 October 1962, Solwezi, Kelvin Mulenga, *Who is Who in Zambia*, p. 61.

⁵⁰ Jane L. Parpart, *Labour and Capital on the African Copperbelt*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), p. 31.

⁵¹ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

not looking for anything better than a higher position and well-paying job. All in all, by getting employed on the Copperbelt, Beston helped to correct the belief that people who received the education from rural settings failed to progress.

In 1962, he sought a British Council scholarship to pursue a Public Administration Course overseas.⁵² However, he did not receive any positive response from the sponsors. Besides clerical work, Beston Mukumbi engaged in voluntary activities uplift the social welfare of Africans in the mining area. He joined the Chingola Welfare Society which fought racial discrimination and urged colonial rulers to improve social services for Africans.⁵³ He looked into the plight of Africans because he had a passion for serving others. In this organisation Mukumbi ensured that there were good sanitary conditions in black based schools, health facilities and compounds.⁵⁴ Through the Chingola Welfare Society, Beston Mukumbi also influenced Africans to fight for their rights health life which the colonial state ignored.

From 1954 to 1957, he joined the trade union movement in his quest to improve the lives of workers, and became the Chairman of the General Workers Trade Union (GWTU) for Chingola and Bancroft branches.⁵⁵ In this movement, the heir to the Kaonde throne fought against the injustices that the Europeans imposed on Africans who worked as casual employees in Chingola and Chililabombwe (Bancroft). He also sensitised them about their conditions of service and mobilised African workers to stand against colonial discriminatory acts they experienced in their places of work.

Another voluntary organisation in which Beston Muluka Mukumbi enlisted in the 1950s was the Chiwempala Parents Teachers Association (CPTA). As the Secretary of the CPTA, Mukumbi encouraged parents to take their children to school and, more importantly opposed the colonial education policy that favoured European education and discriminated against African education. The activist was not only eager to see an end to this policy but saw African education as an important to uplifting the standard of living in the country would need educated and well-informed citizens whose skills would be indispensable to its development.⁵⁶

⁵² NAT/21/A, Letter from Chief Mukumbi to the British Counsel, 05 October 1962.

⁵³ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁵⁴ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁵⁵ Kelvin Mulenga, *Who is who in Zambia*, (Lusaka: np.1968), p. 61.

⁵⁶ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

In 1954 when the Chiwempala Housing Area Board (CHAB) was established, Beston Mukumbi was appointed into the executive committee as Secretary. The Board which comprised eight members was chaired by Benny Muhango with Mukumbi as Secretary. Other members included Owen Harah, Mark Munkondya, David Kahenya, and Dickson Chipakata.⁵⁷ The Board was formed specifically to spearhead the planning and development of African compounds and its functions were purely social, rather than political.⁵⁸ As CHAB Secretary, Beston Muluka was also its 'Pay-Master' who paid out wages to workers in the construction business. Under his leadership and that of his fellow executive members, CHAB became a success story in Chingola. By 1957, the organisation had secured better roads, street lighting, and piped water for the residents of Chiwempala Township.⁵⁹ Besides forming 'a direct link with the municipal authorities', it 'recorded tremendous progress' in improving housing and other living conditions in the township.⁶⁰ The African Affairs report of Chingola recorded that 'ten meetings of the Chiwempala Housing Area Board took place in a year and that it recorded positive results.'⁶¹ This demonstrates that the future traditional ruler effectively represented the interests of his fellow Africans. His leadership thus increasingly became visible in Chingola. Chief Mukumbi also worked as Councillor for Chiwempala. He ensured that the Township received the attention of government by constructing roads, providing water and good housing.

It was in Chingola where Beston Muluka Mukumbi began to actively identify with African nationalism that led to Zambia's independence in 1964. As shown in greater detail in the next chapter, Mukumbi joined the African National Congress (ANC) partly as a result of the influence of its President Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula who visited Chingola in the same year.⁶² Within a short time, he won a reputation as one of the bitter opponents of the newly-established Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland dominated by European settlers. In his years as early years as a member of the ANC, he actively fought the Federation, sold ANC membership cards to migrant workers and encouraged them to join the nationalist movement.⁶³ In so doing, Mukumbi contributed a great deal to spreading anti-colonial awareness among Africans on the Copperbelt.

⁵⁷ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁵⁸ NAZ/NRG/AFR/AFF 3, Northern Rhodesia African Affairs Annual Report for 1962.

⁵⁹ Republic of Zambia, Northern Rhodesian African Affairs Annual Report 333B, African Native Affairs, 1957.

⁶⁰ Northern Rhodesian African Affairs Annual Report for 1957.

⁶¹ Republic of Zambia, Northern Rhodesian African Affairs Annual Report, 1957.

⁶² Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁶³ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

As demonstrated later in his study, it was in the African National Congress that Mukumbi fully proved his capability as a leader. Because of his active participation in the party, he was elected as one of the members of the Chiwempala branch of the African National Congress.⁶⁴ Like the Chingola Housing Area Board, the ANC branch in Chingola comprised eight members. The committee was headed by John Chipaya, Andrew Mwenya as Secretary and Beston Muluka Mukumbi as Vice Secretary.⁶⁵ The main aim of the branch was to spread nationalist consciousness among Africans. Having assumed leadership role in the committee, the future traditional ruler intensified his fight for the rights of others. Beston Muluka Mukumbi used his connections with the trade union movement and other bodies in which was active to recruit new ANC members. This view is supported by the Northern Rhodesian African Affairs Annual Report of 1954 which shows that ‘ANC activities had integrated with the trade unions and several permanent members were also trade union officials fighting against racial discrimination in shops, encouraging women to play a greater role in the laying of complaints and uttering several bitter statements in public meetings....’⁶⁶

The activities of the future ruler in Chingola demonstrated his leadership qualities. He exerted his energy to ensure that the rights of the Africans were not undermined by colonists whose major interest was to siphon the wealth from the Copperbelt. Beston, as a leader in many organisations, was not intimidated by the fact that he emerged from a humble background. He worked together with other African elites to challenge colonial rule. In this, he received the support of his predecessor, Mukumbi Lubinga XIV and the Kaonde royal establishment who welcomed the struggle for freedom and monitored the heir’s involvement in nationalist politics. The successes of the future traditional leader in the ANC, Board, union, PTA and the council on the Copperbelt emanated from the encouragements he frequently received from his predecessor.⁶⁷

Impressed by Beston’s achievements, Kaonde chiefs called him to Solwezi and urged him to join Solwezi Rural Council in 1957.⁶⁸ The potentate did not object to the idea of joining the council where he was employed as a clerical officer. He worked for the council when its offices were still at present-day Solwezi Technical Secondary School. The future Kaonde ruler worked so hard that a few months after his appointment he was elevated to the rank of

⁶⁴ Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁶⁵ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁶⁶ NAZ/NRG/AFR/AFF 3, Northern Rhodesian Report for 1962.

⁶⁷ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁶⁸ Interview with Zelita Mulonga.

Public Works Councillor (PWC) of the Public Works Department (PWD). This wing of government was responsible for all the construction of roads and infrastructure in the district. The appointment enabled him to facilitate the building of new offices at the current Civic Centre.⁶⁹ During Mukumbi's time, the council tried to adapt itself to the changing pace of progress and modern methods of local government.

As PWD councillor, he was also a member of the Solwezi District Development Committee (DDC), Provincial Development Committee (PDC) as well as the Provincial Land Works Committee (PLWC).⁷⁰ These commitments gave him the opportunity to win the confidence of both the Africans and the European officers in the district. In 1957, North-Western Provincial Commissioner, F. R. G. Phillips reported that "Excellent progress was made in putting the new buildings under the capable and energetic direction of Beston Muluka, the councillor for public works who had acquired better education than the traditional authorities in the council and possessed some technical departmental responsibilities to the best of his ability."⁷¹ Beston Muluka's success as councillor resulted partly from the cooperation he was accorded by other councillors who headed other departments, namely L. R. Kalepa for (Administrative and Finance), M. M. Mambwe, (Education) and M. Pelama, Health and (Agriculture).⁷² The combined counsel of these men helped the SNAC to undertake many projects such as roads, wells and bridges in the chiefdoms. However, sometimes Beston was at loggerheads with chiefs who felt he was politicking, exaggerating his own importance and undermining their authority.⁷³ This is because most traditional rulers remained too conservative and loyal to the colonial authorities even when the political mood was rapidly changing.

Because of his enthusiasm for hard work, Beston Mukumbi was sent to Chalimbana College for local government training in 1962, for three months. The training he received there fulfilled the potentate's desire for tertiary education.⁷⁴ At Chalimbana College, Beston was received training in local authority management. From highly qualified instructors and people from other parts of the country, he learnt administrative skills that he later deployed as a chief, politician, minister and many other capacities. His acquaintances attribute the

⁶⁹ Zelita Mulonga, Interview cited.

⁷⁰ NAZ/A/21, Solwezi Native Authority Council Minutes, 15 July 1963.

⁷¹ F. R. G. Phillips, Northern Rhodesian African Affairs Annual Report 333B, 1957.

⁷² NAZ/A/21, Chief / ML/MT/PL/16, Minutes of Solwezi Superior Native Authority, 09-10 April 1962.

⁷³ Phillips, Northern Rhodesian Annual Report for 1957.

⁷⁴ NAZ/A/21, Minutes of the Solwezi Native Authority Council, 17 September 1962.

successes he later scored to the training he received at Chalimbana.⁷⁵ Chief Mukumbi endeavoured to equip himself with management knowledge and skills which were necessary for him to acquire before succeeding to the royal throne.

It may be clear from this brief history that Beston Mukumbi's career were at first humble. He first worked as a policeman, graduated through clerical jobs on the Copperbelt and became a PWD Councillor in Solwezi. In all these jobs, the future chief took advantage of the skills and knowledge he acquired to prepare for new careers. These occupations opened him to new influences. Together, the careers shaped how the future chief interacted with and evidence shows that they prepared him well later occupations. According to Zambia's former Prime Minister Malimba Masheke who worked closely with Beston Mukumbi after independence, these careers created in Mukumbi the spirit of service above self.⁷⁶ All this prepared him for the traditional assignment that lay ahead of him.

It is unavoidable to state that Beston Muluka Mukumbi's early life reached its peak when he worked in Solwezi Native Authority Council (also known as the Kaonde Native Authority). As a councillor in the SNAC, he acquired administrative skills that he later put to good use as a chief. He was able to settle disputes, unite the people and provided development in the chieftdom. It was while Beston was serving as councillor that his predecessor, Mukumbi Lubinga XIV became confident that the heir was now ready to assume his chiefly duties. By the 1960s, the former chief had grown too old to administer the chieftaincy or contribute to its growth. Therefore, Beston assumed chiefly duties even before the death of his precursor. From the early days as Chief Mukumbi, he became instrumental in promoting the construction of schools and dispensaries in the chieftdom through the Public Works Department (PWD). Because of this, the new traditional leader won the support of the District Commissioner as a worker who supported government programmes.⁷⁷

Family Life

Beston Mukumbi's early life history would be incomplete without discussing his marital status. The traditional ruler married his first wife, Enes, of Kajimina village in Solwezi in 1953 soon after getting a job at Kansanshi Mine.⁷⁸ This means that he began to raise a family of his own immediately after finishing school. When he became chief in 1962, Enes assumed

⁷⁵ Zelita Mulonga, Interview cited.

⁷⁶ Interview with Lt. Gen. Malimba Masheke, Kasupe, Lusaka, 20 February 2014.

⁷⁷ NAZ/A/21, Solwezi Native Authority Council Minutes for 1961.

⁷⁸ NAZ/A/21, Minutes for 1961.

the title of *Mwaji* (first wife), as the Kaonde tradition demanded, to signify her first position in marriage to the chief. She spent the first nine years of her marriage as the only wife of Chief Mukumbi.⁷⁹ The traditional ruler's marriage to Enes today, counts among the longest and most successful marriages, having lasted more than sixty years. Moreover, the marriage is a fruitful one as the couple was blessed with ten children, namely Niferatey, Golden, Douglas, Kennedy, Catherine, Gerald, Kyalikosa, Rebecca, Mavis and Brenda.

Enes' status as the only wife, ended in 1962 when her husband decided to take a second wife, Beatrice. Beatrice originated from the Pelema family of Chikuma village in Mutanda area of Mukumbi chiefdom.⁸⁰ Factors that could have led to the chief taking another wife are strictly regarded as royal secrets. However, one reason was that the second wife would fulfill some traditional customs. The second one is that polygamy among many traditional authorities is perceived to be a source of prestige and power. For Chief Mukumbi, marrying two women was important to him because it doubled his source of encouragement and inspiration towards his chiefly duties.⁸¹ His second wife gave the chief six children: Kalilele, Mpanga, Espina, Getrude, Cecilia and Bashi.⁸²

In 1973, the traditional ruler married his third wife Joyce of Kainya village. Joyce Mukumbi indicated that marriage arrangements started in 1972 and lasted for a year a year.⁸³ Joyce bore two children: Dorothy and Kaumisha, still living today.⁸⁴ Senior Chief Mukumbi managed to live in harmony with all his wives. He united the family as one through encouraging communal cooking and eating meals together.⁸⁵ The children were brought up like they were born from the same mother. Joyce Mukumbi stated that her years of marriage exposed her to a lot of experiences especially when her husband joined active politics in 1978.⁸⁶ She travelled with him each time he went on official duties and meetings while the first wife, as tradition required, remained at the palace to take care of the palace affairs. Enes, together with the uncle to Chief Mukumbi, Ngoshite, always took over the administration of the chiefdom in the absence of the traditional leader.⁸⁷

⁷⁹ Interview with Enes Muluka Mukumbi, Royal Palace, Solwezi, 09 October 2013.

⁸⁰ Jean Mutantabowa.

⁸¹ Interview with Chief Mukumbi.

⁸² Interview with Brandina Muluka.

⁸³ Interview with Joyce Mukumbi, Royal Palace, Solwezi, 09 October 2013.

⁸⁴ Joyce Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁸⁵ Interview with Joyce.

⁸⁶ See note above.

⁸⁷ Interview with Lubese Muluka.

Joyce was not the last wife to the traditional ruler. The traditional leader married his fourth and last wife Menivar Shipilo Kang'ombe in 1978 at the climax of his political career. Kang'ombe is from Shipilo village in Mpakamabo area within the Mukumbi Chieftaincy became the fourth wife to Chief Mukumbi. She and the traditional ruler, whose marriage was based on cousinship, have three children together: Mawala and a set of twins.⁸⁸ Chief Mukumbi also adopted two children whom Menivar had before getting married to him. The last wife did not, however, live for a very long time at the palace as she relocated to Solwezi town where she resides today. She alleged this did not mean she was divorced since traditionally, royal marriages were permanent.⁸⁹ She added that it was not traditionally right for a wife to any traditional ruler to divorce her husband as royal marriages were interminable, except in death.⁹⁰ Senior Chief Mukumbi however has three wives after Beatrice died in 1992, having spent thirty years with Chief Mukumbi.⁹¹

As a family man, the traditional ruler employed his wives and children to help him in executing his duties. Before Beston became chief, his wife Enes supported him to succeed in his careers as a source of inspiration. She ensured that her husband organised meetings for his extra activities.⁹² Chief Mukumbi was involved in spearheading nationalist campaigns with the support of his wife Enes. At the chieftom level, she presided over traditional affairs whenever her husband was attending to national matters.⁹³ Enes's contribution to Mukumbi's chieftainship demonstrates the importance of Mukumbi's marriages towards his success. In the political field, his wives played important roles too. Joyce, on one hand, always accompanied the traditional ruler on all government assignments. She indicated that she was privileged to attend most opening ceremonies for parliament and travelled with the Chief both overseas and within the country for various assignments.⁹⁴

Menivar, on the other hand was introduced to politics by her husband soon after they got married in 1978. She helped her husband to mobilise the electorates and resources in order to foster development in the area. Menivar reported that she monitored the developmental projects in the constituency even in the absence of Mukumbi.⁹⁵ Thus, Chief Mukumbi's

⁸⁸ Lubese, Interview cited.

⁸⁹ Interview with Menivar Shipilo Kang'ombe.

⁹⁰ Menivar, interview cited.

⁹¹ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁹² Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁹³ Interview with Ades, Pise, Lubese, Eliya and Brandina Muluka.

⁹⁴ Interview with Joyce Mukumbi, Mukumbi Royal Palace.

⁹⁵ Joyce, interview cited.

polygamous life positively influenced his life, career and chiefly office. He strategically delegated roles to his wives for him to successfully administer his duties. Polygamy enabled him to blend traditional roles with politics. It is important to state that children were also crucial to his life, career and traditional office. Beston Mukumbi ensured that his children received Western education and he incorporated them into his programmes. One of the children, Kaililele, for instance became the spokesperson at the palace.⁹⁶ He attends to visitors at the palace and acts as a clerk to the chief. Beston Mukumbi made sure that all his children from the four different wives were equally trained in the manner that made them contribute to success.⁹⁷ At the palace, the wives and all the children worked together as one family. Their royal duties helped to unify the Mukumbi family and allowed the chief to pursue his politics and perform chiefly functions.

Although some of the children to the traditional leader have since departed, his royal highness guaranteed that all his children acquired modern education.⁹⁸ Chief Mukumbi took his children to school in order to become independent. He believed in Western education because it worked well in his own life. But even though the traditional ruler had passion for modern education, he did not forget about tradition. As a traditional ruler, he managed to introduce his family to his cultural values.⁹⁹ The desire for education did not end at the palace, but he made it part of tradition for the whole chiefdom. The chief summoned every parent that failed to take their children to school, and parents enjoined to enroll children in school and not marry them off at an early age. As a result, the chiefdom has produced elites, working as teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers to mention but a few.¹⁰⁰

Generally, the protagonist worked hard and ensured that the young generation in the chieftaincy was inspired to get educated. The learning opportunities for the young people in the chiefdom were availed through the many schools that were built and upgraded in the area through the chief's efforts.¹⁰¹ Kyalikosa observed that discipline reigned in the palace and that it was instilled to everyone who was under Mukumbi's leadership.¹⁰² The traditional ruler implored his subjects to instill discipline in their children to help the chiefdom grow in

⁹⁶ See note above.

⁹⁷ Interview with Kyalikosa Mukumbi, Miteck, Solwezi, 05 November 2013.

⁹⁸ Interview with Chief Mukumbi.

⁹⁹ Interview with Kyalikosa Mukumbi.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Kekema Mponda, Interview with Yvonne, Lumwana East, Solwezi, 08 October 2013, Interview with Group Leader Kaula Mwene, Mukumbi, Solwezi, 04 October 2013.

¹⁰¹ Kaula Mwene, interview cited.

¹⁰² Interview with Kyalikosa Mukumbi.

unity and remain stable. His area enjoyed peace and stability since his rise to power. It continued expanding as different groups of people from other areas choose to settle in the chiefdom because of the peace.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the early life of Senior Chief Mukumbi. It argued that his life was influenced by the rural setting in which he grew up. His life was deeply influenced by the demands of traditions and customs of his society. This, in itself entails that his growing was not different from those of his peers. The chapter demonstrated that his upbringing was also influenced by modern education. His indulgence with Western education created in his personality a blend of two cultures. His life was thus influenced by both modern education and local customs. The protagonist's career choice was anchored on the modern education which he acquired. Even though Beston did not do any tertiary studies in his early life, his secondary school education earned him descent jobs in different organisations which exposed him to the world of nationalist politics. The chapter demonstrated that the protagonist played a role in arousing black consciousness. His instrumental role in the Native Authority as Public Works Councillor also left his imprint on the walls of many communities through championing rural development. It showed that the Native Authority won him the support of Kaonde chiefs to take up his chiefly office after the death of Mukumbi XIV.

The chapter also showed that the traditional ruler was a family man whose married life was multi-purpose. He engaged his fourth wife, Menivar into partisan politics, while he exposed his third wife, Joyce to civilisation by taking her along to his government assignments. Above all, his first wife, Enes championed the traditional affairs of the chiefdom each time the traditional ruler left his chiefly duties to perform political tasks. The chapter thus, portrayed Mukumbi's married life as a strategically planned one. His wives helped him perform both his traditional and political roles. His children played functions that united the family.

CHAPTER THREE

CHIEF MUKUMBI AS NATIONALIST AND TRADITIONAL RULER, 1948-1964

Introduction

Most studies on African nationalism have focused on the nationalist elites and the role they played in the struggle for independence. This focus on the elites masks the important role traditional rulers and other freedom fighters at grassroots level played in the nationalist struggle. This chapter attempts to show the role Senior Chief Mukumbi played in the politics of independence between the late 1940s and 1964. It illuminates the grievances which propelled him to enlist in the nationalist movement. The chapter shows that Beston Mukumbi was influential in challenging colonial rule. In the 1950s, not only did he play an important part in mobilising nationalist support but also in spreading the tidings of nationalism in Solwezi through the Kaonde Native Authority. The chapter highlights the strategies that he devised against white misrule. Finally, it shows how he executed his traditional responsibilities in his chiefdom after he became chief in 1962.

The Birth of a Nationalist

As intimated in the last chapter, Beston Muluka Mukumbi became interested in anti-colonial politics in the late 1940s when he was a pupil at Mutanda Riverside School in Solwezi.¹ He joined other pupils in opposing the maltreatment, racial segregation, and unequal treatment perpetrated by European teachers against Africans. At Mutanda, Beston Mukumbi witnessed racial oppression at first hand.² Like other Africans at the school, he was a victim of name-calling (Kaffir) from some white teachers, who openly discriminated against black pupils and teachers alike. White teachers refused to share toilets, dining utensils and the staffroom with their African counterparts on account that they were superior to blacks. Peter Matoka, Mukumbi's former teacher at Mutanda remembered that racist acts by Europeans at the institution were not only directed at the students but also at African teachers.³ Matoka recalled that African teachers were regarded as semi-educated and thus subjected to lower wages, separate toilets, staffroom, inferior houses and sporting activities.⁴ Both African pupils and teachers were not allowed to mingle with Europeans. Zelita Kankasa Mulonga, a

¹Beniya Luka Yamba, Zelita Kankasa and Chief Mukumbi, interviews cited.

²Beston Mukumbi teamed up with Timothy Kankasa who spearheaded resistance to racism at Mutanda Riverside School in Solwezi.

³Peter Matoka, interview cited.

⁴Matoka, interview cited.

sister to the renowned late politician, Timothy Jiranda Kankasa and an age-mate to Mukumbi, recalled that Mukumbi and other schoolboys failed to hide their bitterness against such colonial injustices. She recalled that students rebelled against such injustices through demonstrations, riots and boycotts in which Beston Mukumbi participated.⁵

Racism was not only practised at Mutanda Riverside School but throughout the country. In the 1950s, African students embarked on resistance against racial segregation and colonialism. This led to disturbances in many schools across the country. As Thomas Rasmussen observes, these disturbances demonstrated that anti-colonial nationalist sentiments were widely and deeply felt among ordinary people.⁶ As he insists, students' demonstrations were not prompted by national-level African leaders, aimed at embarrassing the colonial state and threatening its security but students were self-motivated.⁷ Together with the late Timothy Kankasa, Meckson Chipilipili and other school boys, Beston Mukumbi participated in such demonstrations. Thus, the Mutanda Riverside School was rocked by numerous riots and demonstrations. Beston Mukumbi and Kankasa particularly were instrumental in orchestrating such riots and urging people to join in the nationalist struggle for independence.⁸ Kankasa who was older than the Beston, was thus expelled from school but Mukumbi escaped expulsion.⁹ He continued participating actively in the nationalist struggle as a pupil at Mutanda up to the time he left school in 1953.¹⁰

The year Beston Mukumbi completed standard VI coincided with the establishment of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This changed Africans' approach to the liberation struggle. Africans rallied behind the newly-formed African National Congress (ANC) to challenge the white-dominated Federation. In Solwezi, the ANC gained popularity especially at schools. Beston did not at first enlist in the ANC because he had just acquired himself a job at Kansanshi Mine and started a new life.¹¹ According to the 1953 provincial annual report on African Affairs, the Kansanshi Management scrutinised and employed only youths who did not support the ANC.¹² This employment policy made Mukumbi to at first refrain from nationalist politics. By the time he moved to Chingola in 1954, however, he was aware

⁵Zelita Kankasa Mulonga, interview cited.

⁶Thomas Rasmussen, 'The popular basis of anti-colonial Protest', in William Tordoff (ed.), *Politics in Zambia*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), p. 44.

⁷Rasmussen, 'The popular basis of anti-colonial Protest', p. 44.

⁸Rasmussen, 'Anti-colonial Protest', p. 44, Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁹Zelita Kankasa, interview cited.

¹⁰Zelita, interview cited.

¹¹NAZ/1/14-40, Kansanshi Mine-General Land, F/5/2 Vol. 1, 11 September 1953.

¹²NAZ/Q/18/Vol. II, NWP, Provincial Annual Reports on African Affairs, 09 November 1953.

that the struggle for freedom was spreading rapidly throughout the colony, especially among the educated on the Copperbelt. This supports the notion that nationalism found its keen supporters in towns, where migrants from rural schools were attracted by job opportunities but disillusioned by poor working conditions and thus began to fight colonialism.¹³ Beston Mukumbi was one of such migrants.

On the Copperbelt, his involvement in nationalist politics on the Copperbelt deepened as he realised that African conditions there were worse than what he had experienced in Solwezi.¹⁴ On the Copperbelt, Beston Mukumbi discovered that Africans there were mistreated at work places, used as cheap labour in the mines and employed in lowly-paying jobs as cooks and garden-boys.¹⁵ Worse still, they were exposed to poor living conditions. Their houses did not have piped water and their compounds such as Chiwempala, Chabanyama, Kapisha, Muzabwela, Kasompe and many others were overcrowded and lacked sanitation and proper roads.¹⁶

In contrast, European living and working conditions were far much better. Regardless of their educational levels, Europeans were employed in white collar jobs in both public and private firms.¹⁷ They held senior positions in offices and cruelly treated Africans. In addition, Europeans lived in sparsely populated residential areas with good roads, sanitation and piped water. Further, their schools were of good standards and properly stocked with learning/teaching materials. African children were excluded from such schools. A former freedom fighter, John Chilekwa, recalled that Nakatindi Primary School, formerly Helen White School was, for example, for European pupils only until after independence.¹⁸

On the Copperbelt, Beston Mukumbi became disillusioned with poor African living and working conditions. He despised European supremacy over Africans at places of work, in shops, hospitals, at schools and other social places.¹⁹ He was equally unhappy with rampant racial discrimination. This situation increased his political consciousness. Therefore, it is no surprise that in 1954 when Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, the President of the African Congress, visited Chingola on his recruitment drive, Beston Muluka Mukumbi did not

¹³ John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 249.

¹⁴ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

¹⁵ Mukumbi, interview cited.

¹⁶ Mukumbi, interview cited.

¹⁷ African conditions were pathetic in Chingola forcing African elites to rise against colonial rule.

¹⁸ Tamara Muhango Muswala, Documentary on Zambia's 50th anniversary, ZNBC, Kitwe, 16 October, 2014.

¹⁹ Tamara Muswala, Zambia's 50th anniversary, 16 October, 2014.

hesitate to join the ANC.²⁰ He soon became an active political actor, indulging in violent demonstrations and boycotts along with other activists.²¹ Mukumbi supported the ANC because he believed that the party would put racial oppression to an end.²²

Beston Mukumbi did not remain a mere member of the ANC. A year or two after enlisting in the party, he was elected as Vice Secretary of the Executive Committee of the party's branch in Chiwempala.²³ The committee was headed by John Chipaya, a fearless nationalist. Another executive member was Andrew Mwenya (Secretary) and the Committee was answerable to Dingiswayo Banda, another fearless freedom fighter on the Copperbelt.²⁴

Working closely with other committee members, Beston Mukumbi worked hard to organise and recruit new members for the ANC in Chingola between 1954 and 1957.²⁵ This was by no means easy as the colonial government²⁶ often frustrated the operations of the ANC through banning its meetings or arresting its leaders. According to Chief Mukumbi's own testimony, he became known to the colonists as an 'agitator' who spearheaded the anti-colonial movement in Chingola.²⁷ This was because he often forced his way into European-owned shops in defiance of colour bar. He routinely entered Nchanga Trading Store in a show of defiance to white supremacy in full view of the police.²⁸ For this, Beston Mukumbi was often harassed by policemen.

As Vice Secretary, the young nationalist was in the frontline of mobilising new members and selling ANC membership cards. As the nationalist campaign intensified on the Copperbelt, he called several meetings each week to update his members on the struggle against colonial rule.²⁹ He implored ANC members to confront colonial vices such as insults, name-calling, physical abuse, and poor wages with courage. A year after enlisting in the ANC, Beston Mukumbi resigned from employment in order to concentrate on strengthening the ANC

²⁰ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

²¹ Mukumbi, interview cited.

²² Goodwin Bwalya Mwangilwa, *Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula: A Biography of the Lion of Zambia* (Lusaka: Multimedia Publications, 1982), p.33.

²³ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

²⁴ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

²⁵ Northern Rhodesian African Affairs Annual Report for 1958. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1957.

²⁶ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

²⁷ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

²⁸ Herbert Matoka, Zambia National Information Services (ZANIS), *Zambian Jubilee Documentary*, 24 October 2014.

²⁹ The Europeans doubled their efforts to suppress African resistance who rose to fight against them.

branch and other party organs on the Copperbelt.³⁰ In this way, he devoted all his energy to organising the party in the combat against colonialism.

Like other committed ANC leaders, the young nationalist faced opposition from some Africans who, convinced that colonial rulers would never surrender power to Africans, collaborated with the colonial state. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, violent clashes frequently erupted in the mining area between these collaborators and more committed nationalists, including the future Kaonde chief.³¹ These confrontations, however, did not dissuade him from organising the ANC. His fearless attacks against colonialism helped him to attract new followers who understood the importance of the ANC in the struggle and sympathised with him.³² Mukumbi was certain that sooner or later black majority rule would be attained.

The young nationalist believed that the liberation struggle was not a simple task and that the white settlers would not relinquish power without a struggle. Consequently, he employed a number of strategies to counteract the colonial government's measures aimed at frustrating African nationalism. Given that the government prohibited nationalist meetings, he organised secret meetings with ANC followers in churches, at funeral houses and in cemeteries.³³ One of the cemeteries where he held such meetings frequently was the Old Chingola Cemetery, where the Nchanga Open Pit Mine is situated today. Such places were beyond the surveillance of the colonial government and thus enabled Beston Mukumbi and the other leaders to spread political awareness amongst the residents of Chingola. The graveyards were regarded as peaceful areas and, as such, the colonial police ignored gatherings there. According to Mukumbi, the Old Chingola Cemetery remains in his memory as a place where nationalists fought for the freedom of Zambia.³⁴ It is an example of how Africans used funerals and burial sites as avenues for fighting against colonialism.

Beston Mukumbi continued organising meeting in cemeteries even after he switched his loyalty from the ANC to the United National Independence Party (UNIP), after the new party was formed in 1959. Walima Kalusa demonstrates that 'from the inception of UNIP, the party extended its anti-colonial struggle to the symbolic realm by mobilising popular support...through using funerals and gravesites as recruitment and meeting centres on the

³⁰Chief Mukumbi, Interview cited.

³¹Chief Mukumbi, Interview cited.

³²Mukumbi, Interview cited.

³³Funerals and churches impacted positively on the Nationalism Movement.

³⁴Gravesites and churches hosted many successful nationalist meetings.

Copperbelt.³⁵ Since colonial authorities regarded cemeteries as sacred areas, they did not interfere with the gatherings even when it was obvious that political activities took place there. Gravesites and funeral gatherings, therefore, remained important to spreading political consciousness across ethnic groups as they interacted during funerals. As a nationalist actor, Mukumbi took advantage of this situation to mobilise people. In 1957, Provincial Commissioner, F. R. G. Phillips reported that in Chingola, African nationalist used funerals to jeopardise colonial rule.³⁶ Funerals and gravesites were thus important to the development of the nationalist movement in Chingola.

Other than using cemeteries and funerals to challenge colonial rule, Beston Mukumbi and other nationalists drew on the voluntary organisations in which they provided leadership to wage the anti-colonial struggle. For example, the nationalist turned the Chiwempala Housing Area Board (CHAB), the Parents Teachers Areas (PTA), and other bodies examined in the last chapter to recruit new members for the nationalist movement and to strengthen it. This observation was conceded by European authorities who saw African voluntary organisations in the 1950s as the mouthpiece of the ANC and UNIP.³⁷

Beston Mukumbi's political activism continued after 1957 when the Kaonde Royal Establishment recalled him to Solwezi.³⁸ His recall may in fact have been instigated by some members of the establishment who supported the anti-colonial struggle. Such chiefs probably saw the young nationalist, with his modern education and political activism, as essential to undermining colonial rule.³⁹ Beston did not disappoint them. As soon as he joined the SNAC, he was appointed as Public Works Department Councillor (PWDC) a colonial institution responsible for the development of rural roads and infrastructure. Together with most of the freedom fighters in the Solwezi Native Authority Council, he began to organise the nationalist movement in the district. Through SNAC, Beston Mukumbi recruited Chiefs Mujimanzovu, Matebo, Mumena, Mulonga, Kalilele, Musaka and Chikola into the nationalist fold.⁴⁰ Like other freedom fighters, he successfully urged traditional rulers to refuse to

³⁵ Walima T. Kalusa and Megan Vaughner, *Death, Belief and Politics in Central African History* (Lusaka: The Lembani Trust, 2013), p. 169.

³⁶ Republic of Zambia: Northern Rhodesian African Affairs Annual Report for the year for 1957.

³⁷ F. R. G. Phillips, Northern Rhodesian African Affairs Annual Report for 1957.

³⁸ Interview with Kekema Mponda, Unamono Guest House, Interview with Zelita Kankasa Mulonga, Interview with Kalichini Sebele, Interview with Gilbert Mlutula Wisamba, UNIP Offices, Solwezi, 14 October, 2013.

³⁹ See note above.

⁴⁰ NAT/21/A, Minutes of the Solwezi Native Authority, 02 March 1962.

collect taxes and implement colonial policies in their chiefdoms to undermine colonial rule.⁴¹ To this end, the Kaonde nationalists routinely toured chiefdoms to urge chiefs and their subordinates to play their part in the nationalist struggle.⁴²

Beston Mukumbi's political allegiance to the ANC was short-lived. This was because in the late 1950s, he, like other young radicals in the ANC, became frustrated with Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula's moderate leadership.⁴³ By that date, such radicals had lost faith in the ANC and its president.⁴⁴ Beston began to identify himself with Kenneth Kaunda and his colleagues who accused Nkumbula of being too conservative, too old and too slow in his approach to driving away Europeans.⁴⁵

Differences between Nkumbula and the Kaunda-led group led to the splitting of the ANC in 1958 when the radicals formed the Zambia African National Congress (ZANC) on 24 October.⁴⁶ The new party was full of energetic nationalists and soon gained popularity countrywide since many Zambians believed that it comprised leaders capable of winning political freedom. ZANC was, however, banned by the colonial state soon after its formation. But, in 1959, it was revived and named the United National Independence Party (UNIP).⁴⁷ The new nationalist party attracted most of the prominent members of ANC who supported UNIP's militant nationalist approach. Sikota Wina contends that Kaunda's advantage over Nkumbula was that he broke away with a good number of senior but young, well-known and educated ANC officials.⁴⁸

Beston Mukumbi was not ignorant of these political transformations. In 1961, he left the ANC and joined UNIP as a fully paid up member.⁴⁹ Many other leading members of ANC in Solwezi followed his example. Prominent ANC leaders in Solwezi who emulated him included Daskein Kakompe, Hannock Kikombe, Rodwell Mwepu, Levy Nyevuka, Jonathan Nshindo, Kosamu Bornward Munangwa, Timothy Jilanda Kankasa, and Meckson Chipilipili.

⁴¹ UNIP/ ICH/9-586, Presidential Correspondences, 01 April 1963, David Mulford, *Zambia: The Politics of Independence*, p. 22.

⁴² Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁴³ UNIP/7/ 1/12, Presidential Affairs, 14 August 1963, Sikota Wina, *The Night Without a President* (Ndola: Mission Press, 1985), p. 5.

⁴⁴ UNIPA/7/1/18, Presidential Affairs, 01 February 1963.

⁴⁵ M.C. Musambachime, 'Dauti Yamba's Contribution to The Rise and Growth of Nationalism in Zambia, 1941-1964,' *African Affairs: Journal of the Royal African Society*, 90, 359 (1991), p.277.

⁴⁶ UNIP/ 7/1/12, Presidential Affairs, Ian Kee Van Donce, *World Bibliographical Series Vol. 51, Zambia revised Edition*, (England: Oxford), p. 124.

⁴⁷ UNIPA/ANC Presidential Affairs, 01 August 1958.

⁴⁸ Sikota Wina, *The Night Without a President*, p. 5.

⁴⁹ UNIP/15/1/24: Electoral Commission of Zambia list of Aspiring Parliamentary Candidates, 1978.

Others were Mako Pelama, Muke Mambwe, Stanely Sandang'ombe, Ruimas Kalepa and Lasto Tepula.⁵⁰ This group of freedom fighters worked with Beston Mukumbi to popularise UNIP in Solwezi. Many of them would in fact play an important role in the 1961 civil disobedience campaign under which they destroyed public schools, roads and bridges.⁵¹

In UNIP, Beston Mukumbi seems to have become more active than he was in ANC. This is because UNIP was more radical and due to his leadership, the party became better organised with more branches in the district than the ANC. From this position, UNIP intensified its political campaign in the area and indeed North-Western Province, with the party winning a large following, especially in Kasempa and Solwezi districts.⁵²

But not all was well in UNIP. As the ANC lost membership in Solwezi, UNIP equally suffered a similar setback since some of its members defected to the ANC in the early 1960s. John Kalenga, a renowned politician in the province and political ally of Mukumbi resigned from UNIP as he felt that the party was a tribal and violent movement that regarded the North-Western as a second class province.⁵³ Additionally, in Mwinilunga, Chief Sailunga refused to work with UNIP, but clung to ANC as he believed that the latter party respected traditional rulers. In spite of this, Beston Mukumbi continued to campaign for UNIP, ensuring that members of the Kaonde Royal Establishment and in SNAC supported the party.⁵⁴ This made UNIP to win a lot of support from the Kaonde chiefs. Many of these traditional leaders in turn convinced their followers to be loyal to UNIP. Consequently, as David Mulford observes, ANC's political fortunes steadily declined as UNIP became stronger.⁵⁵

The future traditional ruler played a critical role in UNIP's fight against colonial rule. He organised UNIP meetings in his Kimasala House which served as venue for UNIP nationalist meetings. His residence became a hive of political activity, serving as a political hideout for Kenneth Kaunda each time he held nationalist meetings in the district.⁵⁶ He, on several occasions saved Kaunda from being arrested by the police for political assemblies in Solwezi,

⁵⁰ Gilbert Mlutula Wisamba, Zelita Kankasa and Eunice Sebele, interview cited.

⁵¹ Rasmussen, *Political Philosophy of Kaunda*, p.43.

⁵² Republic of Zambia: Northern Rhodesian African Affairs Annual Report, Solwezi, 1960.

⁵³ UNIP 7/ 1/ 12, Presidential Affairs, Press Release by John Kalenga, 14 February 1963.

⁵⁴ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁵⁵ David C. Mulford, *Northern Rhodesian General Elections-1962*, (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 37.

⁵⁶ Interview with M. Kombe, Kandemba, Solwezi, 25 October 2013; Zelita Kankasa and Chief Mukumbi, interviews cited.

by hiding him in his house.⁵⁷ This explains his close and long-lasting relationship with Kaunda.⁵⁸ Kaunda's appreciation of Beston Mukumbi's contribution to the nationalist movement generally and UNIP particularly was expressed through appointing him to various positions of influence and power in the party and government after independence in 1964.⁵⁹

Mukumbi's importance to the nationalist struggle cannot be overstressed.⁶⁰ Through his political activism, UNIP brought to an end political apathy, and indifference towards nationalism in Solwezi.⁶¹ The nationalist assisted the party to raise political awareness by employing nationalist strategies he had earlier acquired on the Copperbelt.⁶² In Solwezi, he doubled the efforts to admit more new members to the nationalist movement. By so doing, he turned UNIP into an important organ of political liberation. Through the party, he confronted and challenged colonial intimidation and secured chiefs' support for nationalism. He spoke on their behalf in the SNAC and turned it into an ally against colonial rule. But he was careful not to alienate the colonial government even when he fought it. This is evidenced by the active support he received from the colonial government in implementing public projects such as the building of wells, schools, health centres and roads in the area under SNAC. The successful implementation of these projects helped the heir to win many followers.

Beston Mukumbi as Traditional Ruler

Mukumbi ascended to the Kaonde throne on 16 May 1962. As a chief, he continued to entice his followers to support nationalism while at the same time working with the colonial government.⁶³ It must be noted that at the time Chief Mukumbi ascended to the Mukumbi throne, colonial authorities were still manipulating African traditional authorities to win their support against nationalism. As Walima T. Kalusa observes, this was intended to turn chiefs into agents of colonial subjugation.⁶⁴ However, Chief Beston Mukumbi was aware of this intention and he did not allow himself to be used by Europeans against his own people after he assumed the chiefly office. As already noted, he used his traditional office to influence his subjects to support nationalism. He toured his chiefdom regularly to sensitise his subjects

⁵⁷ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁵⁸ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁵⁹ Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁶⁰ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁶¹ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁶² Republic of Zambia: Northern Rhodesian African Affairs Annual Report, 1960.

⁶³ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁶⁴ Walima Kalusa, *Kalonga Gawa Undi X: A Biography of an African Chief and Nationalist* (Lusaka: Lembani Trust, 2010), p. 1.

about the importance of independence. Like Chief Tungati of Luwingu District, the new chief despised the widespread ill-treatment of Africans by Europeans.⁶⁵ Moreover, he wanted his fellow chiefs to join in the struggle against colonialism.

In 1963, he was elected Chairman of the Provincial Chiefs Standing Executive Committee.⁶⁶ In this capacity, Chief Mukumbi chaired regular political meetings of the committee in order to persuade members of the Solwezi Native Authority to vote for UNIP.⁶⁷ He also organised other chiefs as party agents, urging them to sell UNIP cards to their subjects. The nationalist and chief also joined other Kaonde chiefs who protested against the government's failure to protect the UNIP supporters from ANC attacks.⁶⁸ In 1963 itself, Chief Mukumbi confronted the ANC Secretary to stop attacking UNIP members.⁶⁹ He did this after government failed to respond to UNIP complaints against ANC. Regardless of threats from ANC, the traditional ruler managed to enlist eight chiefs in UNIP, out of the ten traditional rulers who constituted SNAC.⁷⁰

The influence Chief Beston Mukumbi had in SNAC, earned him a large following. Among his sympathisers were his subjects, headmen, fellow chiefs and many supporters of UNIP. Through him, UNIP campaigns for freedom attracted the attention and support of many Kaonde people. Additionally, he worked with other chiefs from other parts of the colony to combat colonial rule. Among the prominent chiefs he collaborated with were Chiefs Kalonga Gawa Undi, Mapanza, Ikelenge and Chikwanda who fought alien rule through the Council of Chiefs which became the House of Chiefs in 1962.⁷¹ Walima Kalusa argues that chiefs succeeded in turning the Council and later the House of Chiefs into a mouthpiece of the liberation movement.⁷²

Chief Mukumbi used the House of Chiefs to spread nationalist influence and to reach out to other nationalist leaders across the country.⁷³ For example, as a member of the House, he wrote a letter in early 1964 advising Kaunda to oppose the candidature of Hannock Kikombe

⁶⁵ Musambachime, 'Dauti Yamba's Contribution, p.264.

⁶⁶ NAZ 1/1/35, Administrative Councillor to Chiefs Mukumbi, Mumena and Mulonga, 15 July 1963.

⁶⁷ NAT/A/21, Local Government (Rural Local Authorities) Ordinance Minutes of the Solwezi Superior Native Authority Council Meeting, 02 July 1963.

⁶⁸ NAT/A/21, Local Government (Rural Local Authorities) Ordinance Minutes, 02 July 1963.

⁶⁹ NAT/A/21, Local Government Ordinance Minutes, 1963.

⁷⁰ NAZ1/2/105, No- ADM: 4, Vol. LV, Provincial Annual Report African Affairs, 09 December 1963.

⁷¹ Kalusa, *Kalonga Gawa Undi*, p.54.

⁷² Kalusa, *Gawa Undi*, p. 54.

⁷³ UNIP/5/3/1, Minutes of National Council, 14 September 1963, UNIP/5/3/2, Administrative Report, 08 January 1964.

who was adopted for Kabompo Constituency, as UNIP candidate, against an independent candidate.⁷⁴ With Chiefs Kapijimpaga, Mumena and Mulonga, Chief Mukumbi questioned the popularity of Kikombe in the constituency. He further advised Kaunda to be cautious with regard to the activities of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society which did not allow its members to vote.⁷⁵ The chief feared that unless Kenneth Kaunda handled this issue carefully, the Watch Tower Society would discourage voters and thus prevent UNIP from winning a landslide victory in the 1964 general elections. Mukumbi believed that only massive participation by Africans in these elections would secure electoral victory for UNIP. Kaunda welcomed the idea implored all Zambians to rally behind UNIP to fight colonialism effectively.

Beyond participating in politics of nationalism, Beston Muluka Mukumbi carried out his responsibilities as a traditional leader of the Kaonde chiefdom. When he assumed power, he expanded the number of villages in the chiefdom. According to a District Commissioner's Tour Report, there were only sixty scattered villages with a sparse population of less than 600 people when Beston ascended the throne in 1962.⁷⁶ The palace was also dilapidated. The traditional ruler attempted to improve the face of the palace by renovating it and acquiring a flag, a date-stamp and all the bureaucratic materials which had long been scarce at the court.⁷⁷

To improve the social welfare of the chiefdom, Chief Mukumbi also successfully lobbied the government to provide roofing sheets and other material assistance to his subjects. This was in a bid to help people build more decent and permanent houses.⁷⁸ The chiefdom recorded improvement in terms of housing as many of the chief's subjects built houses roofed with corrugated sheet.

In his early years as traditional ruler, Beston Mukumbi implemented a number of reforms to improve the efficiency of the administration of his chiefdom. He embarked on registering villages and appointed sub-chiefs (*Bitumbafumo*) and senior headmen (*Bakulumpe babijiji*) to help him in governing his domain. All together, the chief appointed fifteen sub-chiefs and

⁷⁴ ANC 5/3/1, Positing of Candidates, 14 January 1964, ANC 7/14/ Press Release on One-Party Democracy, 25 February 1972.

⁷⁵ NAT/A/ 22, Chief Mukumbi to President Kenneth Kaunda, 22 April 1963.

⁷⁶ NAT/A/21, Solwezi District Tour Report, 29 December 1962, NAT/A/22, Mukumbi Royal Establishment to Solwezi Town Clerk, 23 October 2003.

⁷⁷ NAT/A/22/90, Chief Mukumbi to Solwezi District Secretary, 03 November, 1962.

⁷⁸ Interview with Senior Headman, Kaula Mwene, Mwene Village, Solwezi, 04 November 2013.

more than fifty headmen.⁷⁹ These leaders helped him in settling disputes between their subjects and admitting new settlers to the chiefdom, allocating them farmland, as well as helping new-comers to settle down. The settlers mainly came from Mwinilunga, the Congo and other places in the province. Chief Mukumbi made them build permanent houses of burnt bricks with iron sheets.⁸⁰

In addition to improving the administration of the chiefdom, the traditional ruler worked hard to uphold the Kaonde culture and customs. For him, culture was an integral element of his leadership. To this end, he re-introduced the Kufukwila traditional ceremony in the same year he ascended the chiefly office.⁸¹ The ceremony, which had been banned by colonial rulers, became an instrument through which the chief sought to unify his people and to preserve their history, cultural values, norms and traditions. Once a year, his subjects travelled from near and far places to be part of Kufukwila celebrations.⁸² To date, the Kufukwila ceremony continues to be celebrated annually during the second weekend of May at the Mukumbi palace. According to the chief, the month marks the ripening of new crops that are sacrificed to Kaonde gods during the ceremony.⁸³

The Kufukwila festivities start on the eve of the ceremony with various dances. These festivities go on throughout the night until the following day, while the chief remains secluded.⁸⁴ On the actual day of the ceremony, the traditional ruler, dressed in his customary attire, appears at the main arena accompanied by his wives. After greeting his people, Senior Chief Mukumbi proceeds to the Milumba yaba Kubashakulu shrine to invite the spirits of the deceased to the commemoration. As shown in the figure below, he is carried in a hammock to the shrine, where he venerates and thanks the gods of his forefathers for the abundant food and good health. He also thanks the ancestors for uniting the chiefdom in harmony.

⁷⁹ Interview with Senior Headman, Kaula Mwene, 04 November 2013.

⁸⁰ Group interview with immigrants; Elias Chingembu, Malaika Kaputula, Alfred Mankishi, Malaika Kandala, Gasto Muhumpu and John Chikeza, 04 November 2013.

⁸¹ Elias Chingembu, Malaika Kaputula, Alfred Mankishi, Malaika Kandala, Gasto Muhumpu and John Chikeza, interviews cited.

⁸² Elias Chingembu, Malaika Kaputula, Alfred Mankishi, Malaika Kandala, Gasto Muhumpu and John Chikeza, interviews cited.

⁸³ NAT/A/22, Solwezi District Tour Report Annexure 1, North-Western Province, 03 July 1962.

⁸⁴ Brandina Muluka, interview cited.

Figure 1: Senior Chief Mukumbi in his traditional carriage (Hammock) during Kufukwila Ceremony



Courtesy of National Agricultural Information Service (NAIS), May 2013.

At the shrine, Senior Chief Mukumbi performs several rituals; including offering libations and imploring his ancestors to intercede on behalf of his subjects (see Figure II). These rituals, which the chief performs before going back to the main arena for the rest of the celebrations, are intended to appease the spirits of dead Kaonde chiefs.⁸⁵ The *Kufukwila* ceremony is important because it allows Mukumbi's subjects to meet annually to pay their respect to the spirits of their departed ones. Such rituals are intended to secure healing, good luck, peace and security from the ancestors.⁸⁶ They are also important in that young boys and girls who take part in these rituals and their dances like Manchancha and Katembo learn to socialise and appreciate their customs.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Group Interviews with Members of the Royal family, Mukumbi Palace, 09 October 2013.

⁸⁶ Interviews with Members of the Royal family.

⁸⁷ Pise Muluka and Kekema Mponda interview cited.

Figure II: Appeasing ancestors at the shrine during *Kufukwila* Ceremony



Courtesy of NAIS, 2013.

In re-introducing the Kufukwila ceremony, therefore, Chief Mukumbi and his subjects have played an important role in preserving their cultural values. This observation is reinforced by the fact that the ceremony is also used to initiate young girls. The female royal guides (sisters to Chief Mukumbi) are in-charge of initiating girls by secluding and training those who have attained puberty and are ready to enter into marriage.⁸⁸ The ceremony reinforces Kaonde culture and encourages Mukumbi's subjects to uphold their values and norms.⁸⁹

Chief Mukumbi was not only a cultural nationalist who resuscitated the Kufukwila ceremony, from his enthronement, he became actively involved in settling boundary or land disputes. In 1963, for example, he settled an old boundary dispute which had soured relations between his and Chief Musele's subjects.⁹⁰ To settle the dispute, he asked Paramount Chief Mwata Yamvwa of the Democratic Republic of Congo to arbitrate.⁹¹ Mwata Yomwa's intervention

⁸⁸ Pise Muluka, Ades Muluka and Lubese Muluka, interviews cited.

⁸⁹ Chief Mukumbi and Joyce Mukumbi, interviews cited.

⁹⁰ Interview with Chief Mukumbi and Joyce.

⁹¹ NAT/A/21, Chief Mukumbi to Chief Musokantanda, 21 July 1963.

in the matter resolved the dispute in favour of Beston Mukumbi.⁹² In the same year, Senior Chief Mukumbi arranged for a meeting at Jiundu where Chief Musele and the Solwezi District Commissioner (DC), together with his African clerks attended.⁹³ The meeting also ruled that although the land at the centre of the dispute had been taken over by Chief Musele many years ago, it belonged to the Mukumbi chieftaincy. The DC's ruling in favour of Chief Mukumbi did not, however, end the dispute. The judgment deepened enmity between the two traditional leaders, prompting Chief Mukumbi to seek Musokantanda's intervention again in 2000.⁹⁴ Chief Musokantanda's latter intervention seems to have yielded positive results, as calm was restored to the two rival chiefdoms.⁹⁵

Chief Mukumbi's other chiefly functions involved installing subordinate Kaonde chiefs. Between the 1970s and 2011, the traditional ruler presided over the installations of Chiefs Kasempa, Kalilele, Mulonga, Matebo and Mujimanjovu.⁹⁶ He was also at the centre of resolving the succession disputes that marked the latter chief's succession.⁹⁷ As a peace-maker, Senior Chief Mukumbi also arbitrated many other land and succession disputes within and between Kaonde chiefdoms.⁹⁸ It was in recognition of such leadership that the Mukumbi Royal Establishment sought Beston's recognition as senior chief in 1995.⁹⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Senior Chief Beston Mukumbi contributed to the attainment of independence in Zambia. It showed that he vigorously contributed to the campaign against colonial rule through the African National Congress and UNIP and used various voluntary organs to champion the nationalist cause in Chingola. He continued his nationalist struggle through the Kaonde Native Authority after he relocated to Solwezi in the late 1950s. Apart from spearheading the nationalist movement, he used his chiefly position to mobilise people against colonial rule after he ascended to the throne. The traditional ruler further promoted culture through reviving the Kufukwila ceremony and discharged his traditional functions, which included the settling of disputes in the chiefdom. The practice promoted unity and cooperation.

⁹² NAT/A/21, Mukumbi to Musokantanda, 21 July 1963.

⁹³ NAT/A/21, Minutes of the Solwezi Superior Native Council Meeting, 19 December 1963.

⁹⁴ NAT/A/21, Chief Mukumbi to Chief Musokantanda of Congo, 03 June, 2000.

⁹⁵ The two Chiefdoms began to collaborate after peace was restored.

⁹⁶ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁹⁷ Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁹⁸ Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁹⁹ NAT/A/22-101/15/12, Mukumbi Chieftainship Seniority, 21 June 1995.

CHAPTER FOUR

POLITICS AND ECONOMY IN POST-COLONIAL ZAMBIA, 1965-2015

Introduction

After Zambia's independence in 1964, Senior Chief Mukumbi Ibaloli XV continued to be an important political player. This chapter investigates his political career from 1965 to 1991, when multi-party democracy was re-introduced in Zambia. It shows that during this period, the traditional ruler served in various capacities and thus contributed to the development of the economy and politics in the post-colonial period. The chapter shows that during this time, the senior chief held various positions in the ruling United National Independence Party and the government, including that of Deputy President of the House of Chiefs (1966-1973), Commissioner in the Chona Commission (1971), parliamentarian (1978-1991, Governor (1986-1988), and, lastly, Member of the UNIP Central Committee (MCC) (1990-1991).

The chapter demonstrates that as a member of the House of Chiefs, an organ of traditional rulers from all provinces of Zambia, he became a mouthpiece through whom chiefs' concerns and grievances were expressed. To Senior Chief Mukumbi, the House of Chiefs became an organ through which chiefs would preserve not only their power but also their culture. The chapter further shows that as a commissioner in the Chona Commission, Mukumbi influenced his subjects in the North-Western Province to endorse the formation of the One Party Participatory Democracy in 1971, and, as a Member of Parliament, voiced the concerns of the rural poor through his campaign for the construction of wells, boreholes, roads, clinics, schools and police posts in his constituency. Moreover, Chief Mukumbi used his influence as Governor to foster economic development in his chiefdom and constituency. His influence extended to the whole province when he was appointed Minister of State for North-Western in 1990. Finally, his appointment by Kaunda as Member of the Central Committee gave him an opportunity to represent the North-Western Province as a whole at the highest level of UNIP. As an MCC and Minister, Chief Mukumbi contributed not only to the development of the province but Zambia as a whole.

The Chief and Early Post-Independence Politics

After the attainment of independence in 1964, Senior Chief Mukumbi continued participating in politics while holding on to the chiefly office. His involvement in early post-independence politics was motivated by his desire to contribute to the development of the newly-

independent country, and especially to empower Zambians economically. Mukumbi's involvement in post-colonial politics may be said to have begun on 4 April 1966 when he took oath as a Member of the House of Chiefs.¹ The House of Chiefs comprised chiefs selected from different parts of the country, chosen to preside over traditional affairs on behalf of their subjects and other traditional rulers. It provided a forum where chiefs would preserve culture and contribute to maintaining peace and harmony in the country.² As a representative of the Kaonde people, Chief Mukumbi wanted to use this institution to enlighten his subjects so that they participated in government's socio-economic and political projects. Moreover, he saw the House of Chiefs as a tool by which he could win his subjects' allegiance for the ruling party. He thus continued to encourage his subjects to buy UNIP cards and to become active supporters of the party after independence.³

The House of Chiefs also enabled Senior Chief Mukumbi to promote the cultural, historical and the values of his people. To Chief Mukumbi, the House of Chiefs was a vehicle through which cultural preservation and sustainability could be achieved. In the House of Chiefs he often urged other traditional rulers to support the institution and promoted the traditional customs and values of their people.⁴

Apart from using the House of Chiefs to preserve the culture of his chiefdom, Beston Mukumbi deployed it to protect the chiefly office, national unity and peace. For example, he used the House to oppose the Local Courts Bill proposed by the Kaunda government in 1965 to remove traditional rulers from presiding over local courts and thus undermine their judicial authority. Addressing the House of Chiefs in 1966, Senior Chief Mukumbi moved that:

‘Local Courts Bill be rejected by the House of Chiefs in Zambia because it undermined the authority of chiefs by banishing them from sitting in courts as presidents during court proceedings. He observed that by introducing the Bill, government allowed the House of Chiefs to become an opposition since traditional rulers were not ready to accept the proposition that made them lose respect in their chiefdoms. He suggested that the initial arrangement where chiefs nominated and recommended candidates to the Judicial Service Commission

¹ Republic of Zambia: Minutes of the tenth Meeting of the House of Chiefs, 04 April 1966.

² <http://www.thezambian.com/constitution/1996,partxii.aspx>, 11 July 2013.

³ House of Chiefs Minutes.

⁴ Interview with Chief Mukumbi.

whenever vacancies occurred in their courts was accepted by all traditional leaders because it maintained their powers and dignity.’’⁵

His motion was seconded by Chiefs Mwanachingwala and Mwana Mulena Siisii.⁶ Like Chief Mukumbi, the two traditional rulers noted that traditional rulers were abused by the state in the manner in which the Local Courts Bill was presented to them as they were not consulted over this matter. However, parliament passed the Bill and it became law before the end of 1966, despite the condemnation it attracted from chiefs.

Senior Chief Mukumbi’s opposition to the Courts Bill may have contributed to his election as Deputy President of the House of Chiefs. From 1966 to 1973, he occupied this position under Paramount Chief Kalonga Gawa Undi X of the Chewa of Eastern Province who was the President of the House of Chiefs.⁷ During their term of office, they together effectively used the House to oppose divisive politics that threatened to undermine the peace and chiefs’ influence. For instance, in the early 1970s both chiefs openly condemned the activities of the United Progressive Party (UPP) which clashed with UNIP, leading to bloodshed after the UPP was formed in 1971.⁸ According to Senior Chief Mukumbi, traditional rulers regretted that UPP worked against unity, undermining the peace and progress of the country which chiefs sought to promote.⁹

As chairman of the Provincial Executive Committee of the House of Chiefs, the Kaonde traditional ruler called upon other chiefs in North-Western Province to oppose UPP followers, whom he dismissed as enemies of UNIP.¹⁰ To this end, he repeatedly denounced the UPP as a tribal party and advised chiefs to shun it.¹¹ The traditional ruler called upon the chiefs to rally behind the UNIP government and urged them to promote its developmental programmes, including the Second National Development Plan whose success the chief believed depended on chiefs’ co-operation with the UNIP government.¹² Like Paramount Chief Kalonga Gawa Undi, Chief Beston Mukumbi committed himself to working with

⁵ Republic of Zambia: House of Chiefs Minutes, 06 April 1966. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1967.

⁶ House of Chiefs Minutes, 06 April 1966.

⁷ UNIP/LUA/1/30, President Circulars to Cabinet Office, 11 April 1971.

⁸ NAZ/EP 1/1/54, Address by Kalonga Gawa Undi, President of the House of Chiefs to President Kaunda during House of Chiefs meeting, 12 November 1971, p.4.

⁹ House of Chiefs meeting, 12 November 1971, p.4.

¹⁰ NAT/A/21, NWP 1/1/35, Administrative Councillor to Chiefs Mukumbi, Mumena and Mulonga, 15 July 1963.

¹¹ UNIP/5/3/1/06, Chief Mukumbi to Senior Chiefs to Chiefs of North-Western Province, 10 March 1972.

¹² UNIP/5/3/1/06, Chief Mukumbi to Senior Chiefs to Chiefs.

UNIP because he believed that the party could help foster unity, security and development in Zambia.¹³

Chief Mukumbi's leadership in the House of Chiefs and loyalty to President Kenneth Kaunda earned him a place in the Chona Constitution Review Commission in 1971, when the president appointed him to represent the House of Chiefs on the Commission.¹⁴ The twenty-two member Commission led by the Vice-President Mainza Chona was instituted by President Kaunda to look into the establishment of one-party democracy in Zambia. The Commission was tasked to recommend changes in the constitution of Zambia that accorded with the practices and procedures of the one-party system of governance.¹⁵ Mukumbi took up the task seriously because he believed that multiparty-politics was the sources of divisive politics. He hoped that the one-party system would help promote peace, security and unity in the country, thus ending political violence and bickering that dogged the early years of Zambia's independence.

From the onset of the work of the Chona Commission, Beston Mukumbi urged his subjects to support the formation of one-party democracy.¹⁶ He thus joined the chorus of majority in the country calling for the formation the one-party state.¹⁷ Together with the late Humphrey Mulemba, then Minister of Mines and Deputy President of the Chona Commission, the traditional leader toured the whole province addressing meetings at which he urged people to embraced one-party politics. An eyewitness recently recalled that Chief Mukumbi's ability to address people in their own languages, i.e. Kaonde, Luvale and Lunda all of which he spoke fluently, proved crucial to winning their support for the one-party system of governance. Because of this, the Chona Commission received overwhelming support throughout the province.¹⁸

The one-party participatory democracy became operational in Zambia in 1973. The new system of government was expected to be reviewed after a period of ten years. However, by 1983 when the constitution was supposed to be reviewed, the UNIP government remained silent on the matter. According to General Malimba Masheke, former Prime Minister, no one

¹³ Republic of Zambia: Minutes of the House of Chiefs Meeting, 24 May-02 June 1976.

¹⁴ UNIP/LUA/1/30, Statement by His Excellency The President, Dr. K. D. Kaunda at the Press Conference Appointing A National Commission on the Establishment of A One-Party Democracy in Zambia, 11 April 1971.

¹⁵ UNIP/LUA/1/30, Statement by His Excellency President Kaunda.

¹⁶ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

¹⁷ UNIP/LUA 1/30, Presidential Press Conference.

¹⁸ Malimba Masheke, interview cited.

was courageous enough to call for the review process, except Chief Mukumbi who challenged government to explain its position on the matter.¹⁹ The Kaonde traditional ruler questioned government's reluctance to review the one-party constitution as provided for in the recommendations of the Chona Commission. It seems that by 1983, the chief had become disillusioned with the one-party state because its undemocratic practices such the vetoing of parliamentary candidates whom UNIP officials saw as a threat to the party's hold on power.²⁰ Although Mukumbi had earlier contributed to the establishment of the one-party participatory democracy, he in 1983 boldly supported a bill that called for an immediate end to this undemocratic practice.²¹

Besides his involvement in the affairs of the House of Chiefs, Chief Mukumbi dedicated his time to improving the welfare of his subjects through urging the UNIP government to provide social services. To this end, in 1967, he prevented the Provincial Health Officer in Solwezi from closing the Mumbezhi dispensary due to its dilapidation and lack of trained medical personnel in the district.²² Instead, the traditional ruler successfully urged the Ministry of Health to renovate the dispensary and to send medical workers to the dispensary, observing that this facility saved his people from travelling long distances to seek medical assistance. The chief further called upon the government to build the Mukumbi Rural Health Centre, which officially opened on 24 August 1967.²³ The new health centre complemented the services of the Mumbezhi dispensary whose operations began in the colonial days. This development eased people's access to medical attention.

As part of his effort to improve the economic welfare of people in his chieftdom, the chief urged them to enlist in government production committees intended to boost economic production in rural areas. Consequently, in 1970, for example, his subjects formed production committees that sought to increase the production of cash crops and livestock. The chief also encouraged his subjects to engage in intra- and inter-village competitions. Under these competitions, different villages exhibited crops and livestock at village, district and provincial agricultural shows. Individuals and villages that won the competitions

¹⁹ Malimba Masheke, interview cited.

²⁰ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the Fifth Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, 23 February 1983. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1984.

²¹ *Parliamentary Debates of the Fifth Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, 23 February 1983.

²² NAT/A/22/107, Chief Mukumbi's letter to the Provincial Medical Officer on the Abandonment of the Mumbezhi Dispensary, 02 February 1967.

²³ NAT/A/22/CH/B/10, Official Opening of Mukumbi Rural Health Centre, 24 August 1967.

received prizes at ceremonies that the chief sometimes presided over.²⁴ In Mukumbi's chiefdom, such competitions became a regular feature and boosted in the 1970s.²⁵ The combination of agricultural shows and these competitions contributed to expanding agricultural production and thus helped in repelling hunger, poverty and diseases in the chiefdom.²⁶

Chief Mukumbi enticed the UNIP government to undertake development projects in his chiefdom. Such projects included constructing clinics and schools, sinking boreholes, and supplying agricultural inputs.²⁷ The traditional leader also welcomed experts who taught farmers new agricultural methods and promoted good nutrition and sanitation in the area.²⁸ In so doing, he reinforced government policies that aimed at uplifting people's social and economic welfare after independence.²⁹

The Rise of a Parliamentarian

Senior Chief Mukumbi began to participate more in national politics after the introduction of the one-party state. When Solwezi Constituency was split into Solwezi-East and Solwezi-West Constituencies in 1972, the chief decided to contest the Solwezi-West parliamentary seat after he was adopted as candidate in October 1973.³⁰ His opponents in a highly contested election were his former classmate Timothy Jiranda Kankasa, Kafupi Kuliye, Joseph Kachinga, Mastard Muke Mambwe and Gilbert Mulutula Wisamba.³¹ Mukumbi lost the seat to Timothy Kankasa who got 91 votes against the chief's 82 votes in the primary elections.³² Kankasa was elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) for Solwezi-West constituency, while Mukumbi's plans to serve in the first one-party government failed. Despite losing the elections, he continued to urge his subjects and other traditional authorities in the province to remain united and loyal to UNIP.³³

²⁴ UNIP/1/1/2/1, Presidential Guidelines for the Establishment of Village and Ward Committee, 06 October 1970; Interview with Chief Mukumbi.

²⁵ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

²⁶ Kekema Mponda, interview cited.

²⁷ NAT/CH/B/10, Letter from P. L. Zimba, District Secretary, Solwezi, 30 May 1967, NAT/CH/B/10, G. M. Simuusa, District Governor, to Chief Mukumbi, 08 May 1969.

²⁸ NAT/CH/B/10, Letter from P. L. Zimba, District Secretary, Solwezi, 30 May 1967, NAT/CH/B/10, G. M. Simuusa, District Governor, 1969.

²⁹ Miha Drevensek Ofmconv, *The Challenge for Christian Living Today*, Quarterly Magazine Vol. 4, 2002, pp.24-25.

³⁰ *Times of Zambia*, 30 October 1973.

³¹ *Times of Zambia*, 1973.

³² *Times of Zambia*, 1973.

³³ Interview with Grey Zulu, Former Prime Minister of Zambia, Makeni, Lusaka, 22 February 2014.

Chief Mukumbi's failure to secure the Solwezi-West parliamentary seat in 1973 did not discourage him from pursuing the dream to become an MP. To prepare adequately to win the seat in future, the traditional ruler began to court his subordinate chiefs, headmen and their followers, making visits to villages to win their support.³⁴ In October 1978, he re-contested the seat and beat his closest rival, Timothy Jiranda Kankasa, by a landslide margin.³⁵ This demonstrates that the chief had by that date won the confidence and trust of his followers.³⁶

Chief Mukumbi officially became a MP in December 1978 when he and other new MPs were sworn-in by the National Assembly (NA) Speaker, Robinson Mwaakwe Nabulyato.³⁷ As an MP for Solwezi-West, his leadership extended beyond the chieftdom to the whole constituency. This means that the new MP, as Chief Mukumbi recently recalled, now represented not just his subjects but also other people in the constituency, notably the rural poor.³⁸

The new MP demonstrated his desire to represent the poor soon after he joined Parliament. Early in 1979, he asked the UNIP government to increase funds to the Ministry of Community Development, which was responsible for the social and economic welfare of the poor in the country. Speaking in parliament, he argued that without increased funding the Ministry could not implement in villages social and economic schemes, which the Kaonde parliamentarian saw as the basis of national development.³⁹ Thus, he called for the expansion of social welfare facilities in rural areas. In particular, the MP challenged the government to reinvigorate the Department of Social Welfare, observing that the department had failed to satisfy the needs of vulnerable people in rural areas due to lack of funds, transport and trained personnel to attend to their affairs.⁴⁰

³⁴ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

³⁵ UNIP 15/1/24, List of aspiring candidates in the general elections, 1978, Gilbert Mlutula and Luka Yamba, interviews cited.

³⁶ UNIP/5/5/2/2, Presidential Circular, Cabinet Circular No-13, 1969, Gilbert Mlutula Wisamba and Kekema Mponda, interviews cited.

³⁷ Republic of Zambia, *Daily Parliamentary Debates of the First Session of the fourth National Assembly, Oaths and Affirmations*, 16 December 1978. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1979.

³⁸ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

³⁹ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the First Session of the Fifth National Assembly*, 20 February 1979. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1980

⁴⁰ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the First Session of the Fifth National Assembly*, 20 February 1979.

The MP's concern for the poor extended to young people who were denied the right to vote due to lack of National Registration Cards (NRCs).⁴¹ He was disappointed that many young men and women without NRCs could not participate in voting. Therefore, he challenged the Ministry of Home Affairs to address the problem by deploying officers to remote places to issue NRCs.⁴² Similarly he asked government to build police stations in his and other rural areas to help curb crime. Among such crimes was the brewing of local beer, commonly known as Kachasu, whose excess consumption, he believed, destroyed families and prevented people from undertaking developmental activities like agriculture in outlying areas. Chief Mukumbi, therefore, fought for the enforcement of the law banning the brewing of Kachasu.⁴³ To curb the vice in his own chiefdom, he punished brewers and drinkers of the illicit brew by making them work on his farm.⁴⁴

As an MP, Chief Mukumbi called for the improvement of conditions of service for government workers based in rural areas. The MP particularly lobbied for the construction of better houses and clinics for agricultural extension officers, health personnel, policemen and teachers to attract them to work in rural areas.⁴⁵ Within his constituency such lobbying seems to have yielded positive results. Dawson Kafwaya, a former District Education Standard Officer (DESO) observed that when he was posted to Mukumbi Primary School on his first appointment in the late 1970s, he found decent accommodation at the school and a clinic nearby.⁴⁶

In parliament, Chief Mukumbi often fought for equal provision of social services between rural and urban areas. He often lamented that the provision of hospitals, schools, and roads weighed in favour of urban centres, and he challenged the government to provide similar services to rural populations across the country.⁴⁷ His views in parliament struck a responsive chord among other MPs because he raised issues that affected the majority of the people in

⁴¹ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the First Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, 08 February 1979. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1980. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1980.

⁴² Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the First Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, 08 February 1979.

⁴³ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the Fifth Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, 15 February 1983. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1984.

⁴⁴ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁴⁵ Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁴⁶ Interview with Dawson Kafwaya, Zambia College of Open Learning, Solwezi, 27 December 2014.

⁴⁷ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the First Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, 28 August 1979, *Daily Parliamentary Debates of the Fifth Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, January-March 1983. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1980/1984.

Zambia.⁴⁸ In parliament, Chief Mukumbi reportedly exhibited deep thought in his deliberations, and his contributions in the House of Parliament won approval of other parliamentarians.⁴⁹

In an effort to improve the welfare of the rural dwellers, the MP lobbied the government to expand educational opportunities in his constituency and extend the national electricity grid to North-Western province as a whole. By 1979, his constituency had very few primary schools and only one secondary school.⁵⁰ In the 1980s, he encouraged people in the constituency to build more primary schools through self-help projects, personally mobilising labour for molding of bricks, gathering of firewood and making of kilns to burn bricks for the construction of schools.⁵¹ Such projects received warm support from his subjects. With their support, the MP presided over the building of Kambazhi, Kayonge, Kananga, and Manyama Primary Schools between 1980 and 1990. He also facilitated the building of schools at Lumwana East, Luamvundu, Kanzala, Kachiwezhi, Musangezhi, Kankozhi, Kalengelenge, and Kansonde Primary Schools.⁵² In Mumena area, the traditional ruler initiated the construction of Kamano, Lunsala and Muyashi Primary Schools.

Chief Mukumbi equally tackled the lack of secondary schools in his constituency. To this end, he worked closely with the government to transform some primary schools into secondary schools in the area. This resulted in upgrading Shinda, Mangala, Mulubwa, Lubinga, Munkozhi, Shitun'gu, and Kyansununu Primary Schools to Basic Schools, while Jiundu Primary School became a fully fledged secondary school.⁵³ Schools were not only built in his chieftdom, but distributed throughout his constituency.⁵⁴ From only one secondary school at the when he became an MP, his constituency boasted of more than twenty basic schools by 2003.⁵⁵ The increase in schools availed many school-going children an opportunity to acquire education, with the MP inviting the World Vision into his constituency in the 1980s to sponsor children whose families were too poor to pay for the education.⁵⁶

⁴⁸ Malimba Masheke, interview cited.

⁴⁹ Peter Matoka, interview cited.

⁵⁰ Kaula Mwene, interview cited.

⁵¹ , Mwene, interview cited.

⁵² Kekema Mponda, Kyalikosa Mukumbi, Chief Mukumbi, interviews cited. Also interview with Alina Nyikosa, Former Provincial Women Chairlady for UNIP, Valley View School, Solwezi, 10 October 2013.

⁵³ NAT/A/21, Minutes of Solwezi Native Authority, 09 August 1963.

⁵⁴ Kekema Mponda, interview cited.

⁵⁵ NAT/ 1/21, *Honours and Awards, Letter from the Mukumbi Royal Establishment*, 19 June 2003.

⁵⁶ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

In his quest to avail education to the rural poor, Chief Mukumbi disagreed with other MPs who supported the Boarding Fees Bill announced in Parliament in 1986 by the Minister of General Education and Culture, A. Simuchimba.⁵⁷ Opposing the bill in Parliament, Chief Mukumbi noted that school fees disadvantaged many pupils whose parents failed to pay them in May 1986, forcing pupils to drop out of school.⁵⁸ The law-maker noted that the people of Zambia had rejected the introduction of boarding fees because the fees deprived their children of access to education.⁵⁹

Chief Mukumbi, however, did not succeed in preventing the Boarding Fee Bill from becoming law because many parliamentarians supported it. Since his views were not supported, he implored the Minister of Education to control the amount of school fees paid by pupils and to ensure that they were put to good use.⁶⁰ He further called for the improvement of the welfare of pupils in boarding schools by providing them with such necessities as beds, blankets and other items lacking in many schools.⁶¹ The MP also suggested that the welfare of children with special disabilities in boarding schools equally needed to be improved.⁶²

By the 1980s, the Kaonde traditional ruler was concerned with the inadequate provision of tertiary education in Solwezi and in the country as a whole. To this effect, he welcomed the government's plan to construct a new University of Zambia campus in Solwezi in 1981.⁶³ He hoped that building such as campus in the district would enhance his subjects' access to university education and supplement the efforts of Solwezi Teachers College and Solwezi Trades Institute in providing tertiary education in the district. Mukumbi's fight for a local university campus was, however, not successful. In the 1980s, there were no funds to undertake the project and thus the government shelved it.⁶⁴

Being an MP and chief, Beston Mukumbi was equally concerned with the high cost of agricultural inputs, which undermined the ability of rural farmers to engage in cash-cropping. He often opposed increases in the price of fertilizers. In 1980, for example, he proposed to

⁵⁷ Republic of Zambia, *Parliamentary Debates of the Third Session of the Fifth National Assembly*, 12to 22 August 1986. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1987.

⁵⁸ *Parliamentary Debates of the Third Session of the Fifth National Assembly*, 12to 22 August 1986.

⁵⁹ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the Third Session of the Fifth National Assembly*, 12to 22 August 1986. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1987.

⁶⁰ *Parliamentary Debates of the Third Session of the Fifth National Assembly*.

⁶¹ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of First Session, Parliament Library*, 24 January- 23 March 1984. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1985.

⁶² *Parliamentary Debates of First Session, Parliament Library*, 24 January- 23 March 1984.

⁶³ Republic of Zambia, *Parliamentary Debates of the Second Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, 29 July- 22 August 1980, Vol. LIV. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1981.

⁶⁴ *Parliamentary Debates of the Second Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, 29 July- 22 August 1980.

the Minister of Agriculture to consult chiefs in rural areas before the ministry decided to raise the prices of fertilizers.⁶⁵ The MP noted that high prices of fertilizers and other farm inputs deepened poverty in the country as people would not afford to buy the inputs. In 1986, Chief Mukumbi attributed voter apathy in the country to the high cost of fertilizers and government's failure to combat rural poverty.⁶⁶ The traditional ruler, therefore, opposed the Finance Minister's call for increasing prices of agricultural inputs for the 1986/87 crop season, arguing that small-scale farmers did not have the capacity to purchase farm inputs at high prices because of their low income.⁶⁷

In his efforts to raise standards of living in his constituency, the MP implored the Minister of Commerce and Industry to establish a pineapple industry in Solwezi in the 1980s.⁶⁸ For the same reason, he persuaded the Ministry of Cooperatives to revive the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) in 1984.⁶⁹ SIDO, which had become defunct in the district, was thus revamped to assist small-scale farmers with soft loans to enable them buy agricultural implements for sustainable agriculture.⁷⁰

It is clear, then, that Chief Mukumbi used parliament to debate issues that affected the poor. He used it to articulate the many challenges rural dwellers and chiefs experienced. As chief and MP, he understood the grievances of the rural poor and often brought them to the attention of the government. In the same way, he was aware of the grievances of chiefs arising from living in dilapidated palaces, lack of transport and negligence on the part of government. To overcome some of these difficulties, he frequently requested government to purchase vehicles for chiefs and thus enable them to execute their duties effectively.⁷¹ He also despised the mistreatment chiefs suffered during the annual presidential official opening ceremony of the National Assembly. In 1984, he complained that chiefs were not provided with transport to attend these ceremonies and reminded the government to appreciate the critical role chiefs played in the development of the country. Other MPs including Best

⁶⁵ *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 July- 22 August, 1980.

⁶⁶ Republic of Zambia, *Parliamentary debates*, 22 August 1986.

⁶⁷ *Parliamentary debates*, 22 August 1986.

⁶⁸ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates*.

⁶⁹ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the First Session of the Fifth National Assembly*, 24 January-23 March 1984. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1985.

⁷⁰ Kekema Mponda, interview cited.

⁷¹ Republic of Zambia, *Parliamentary Debates of the Third Session of the Fifth National Assembly*, 12 February 1986. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1987.

Hatuba, Julias Peter Chomba, Justin Chimba, S. Phiri, Michael Chilufya Sata, Muzaza Musangu, and Daniel Munkombwe supported his views.⁷²

Besides articulating chiefs' plight, Chief Beston Mukumbi called for improvement in the provision of health facilities in his constituency. To this end, in 1984, he successfully called for the introduction of a flying doctor services in the constituency.⁷³ The flying doctor service was the most viable medical facility for remote places where roads were deplorably impassable. It was a reliable source of transferring emergency cases from such areas to referral hospitals.⁷⁴ Through this facility, Chief Mukumbi ensured that rural health centers in his constituency accessed drugs and medical care. He was also concerned with the affairs of the Solwezi General Hospital which was the only referral hospital in the district. In 1986, he challenged the Health Minister, Chashi, to increase the number of doctors from six to twenty-seven and from thirty-seven nurses to ninety-six.⁷⁵ Government, however, did not have the capacity to provide adequate staff due to lack of medically trained personnel.

The MP was aware that medical personnel abandoned clinics due to lack of accommodation and other poor working conditions. He thus advised the government to build a nursing school in Solwezi to train local people who be employed locally when they finished their training. Addressing the National Assembly in 1984, Chief Beston Mukumbi moved that 'it was paramount that the Ministry of Health began building the Solwezi Nursing School since....'⁷⁶ His proposal led to the commencement of constructing the health facility in the same year.⁷⁷ The Solwezi School of Nursing institution was officially opened in January 1988.⁷⁸ The training of nurses eventually mitigated the shortage of nurses at health centers in Chief Mukumbi's constituency and patients no longer walked long distances to seek medical assistance. Every year, the institution produced more than fifty enrolled nurses, most of whom, were posted within the province.⁷⁹ This development went hand in hand with

⁷² Republic of Zambia, *Parliamentary Debates of the First Session of the Fifth National Assembly*, 23 March 1984. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1985.

⁷³ Kekema Mponda, Luka Yamba and Peter Matoka, interviews cited.

⁷⁴ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁷⁵ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the Third Session*.

⁷⁶ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates*.

⁷⁷ Peter Matoka, interview cited.

⁷⁸ Motoka, interview cited.

⁷⁹ Interview with Pauline Kyubo Mayambu, Saviye, Solwezi, 12 April 2014.

building more health centers in Solwezi. Today, Solwezi-West Constituency alone has more than ten clinics.⁸⁰

It is tempting to think that, as an MP, Chief Mukumbi's only sought to improve the social and economic welfare of people in his constituency.⁸¹ But his passion for the underprivileged transcended his constituency. When about 200 village headmen were displaced in Kalomo in Zambia's Southern Province to pave way for white commercial farmers in 1984, the chief expressed his displeasure and implored the government to de-gazette some forest areas in Kalomo in order to resettle the affected people.⁸² In the same vein, he challenged the Ministry of Lands to plant rubber trees in North-Western, Northern, Copperbelt and Luapula Provinces to create employment and reduce the scarcity and cost of tires in the country.⁸³

It is clear therefore that Chief Mukumbi became an advocate who articulated the plight of the poor in the country as a whole and used his position in parliament to suggest how the conditions could be improved. This observation is supported by his condemnation of numerous and high taxes the government imposed on Zambians. Perceiving high taxes as detrimental to development, the MP joined other parliamentarians who began to call for amending the tax law in the early 1980s.⁸⁴ At the same time, he became alarmed by the growing number of shanty compounds and landlessness across the country. Unsurprisingly, he became a staunch advocate of the 'go-back-to-the-land' policy under which the Zambian government encouraged people in urban areas to relocate to their villages.

The law-maker's involvement in parliamentary debates between 1978 and 1990 earned him the confidence of the Speaker of the National Assembly, the late Robinson Mwaakwe Nabulyato. This is reflected by the fact that the Speaker periodically appointed the chief to lead delegations overseas to represent Zambia at parliamentary conferences. For instance, between 1978 and 1984, Nabulyato asked Chief Mukumbi to accompany President Kaunda and the Speaker himself to conferences in Spain, Yugoslavia, India and Srilanka.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Kyalikosa Muluka Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁸¹ Interview with General Malimba Masheke.

⁸² Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the First Session of the Fifth National Assembly*, 24 March 1984. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1985.

⁸³ *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 March 1984.

⁸⁴ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the Second Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, 28 March 1980. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1981.

⁸⁵ General Masheke and Chief Mukumbi, interviews cited.

According to Chief Mukumbi, these conferences exposed him to new political and economic ideas essential to the development of the country.⁸⁶

In 1985, the traditional ruler led a delegation to Lome in Togo to attend an Inter-Parliamentary Conference (IPC) and later another delegation to attend the Regional Parliamentary Conference (RPC) in Malawi.⁸⁷ The IPC Assembly was the principal statutory body that brought together parliamentarians in Africa to study international problems and to make recommendations for action.⁸⁸ Chief Mukumbi's involvement in this conference helped him to comprehend various challenges other African countries faced such as hunger, diseases, ignorance and conflicts. The traditional leader's last international assignment as a parliamentarian was to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in Zimbabwe in 1990. The conference drew parliamentarians from all Commonwealth countries who discussed ways of curbing political unrest that engulfed many parts of the world. The CPA conference took place when Zambia was preparing for transition from the one-party system to multi-partism. It was perhaps because of this international exposure and leadership that the MP was appointed to be part of a select committee instituted by UNIP in 1989 to investigate the re-introduction of multi-party democracy in Zambia.⁸⁹ This was in response to mounting pressure from the newly-formed Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD). The committee urged UNIP members to accept change in order to avoid bloodshed in the country.

Chief Mukumbi's Other Portfolios and Functions

Chief Beston Muluka Mukumbi's active involvement in parliament and loyalty to President Kaunda was rewarded in many ways. Between 1986 and 1991, Kaunda appointed him to several positions within the ruling party and government. In 1986 itself, the president appointed him as Governor of Solwezi district.⁹⁰ Governors were executive officers tasked to foster both political and economic development, and they were accountable to their respective provincial ministers.⁹¹ In his capacity as Governor, Chief Mukumbi's main role

⁸⁶ Masheke and Chief Mukumbi, interviews cited.

⁸⁷ Masheke and Chief Mukumbi, interviews cited.

⁸⁸ www.ipu.org/strct-e/istconf.htm, 26 January 2015.

⁸⁹ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

⁹⁰ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the Fifth Session*, 1986; Wisamba and Kekema Mponda, interviews cited.

⁹¹ UNIP/5/5/2/2, Ministerial statement Cabinet, 01 February 1969, Gilbert Wisamba, interview cited.

was to implement government policies, plans and programmes in the district.⁹² For instance, during his term of office, the governor implemented the government's policy aimed at boosting agricultural production among subsistence farmers in rural areas. Under this policy the chief successfully presided over the demarcation and distribution of small-scale farms in the district.⁹³

In 1990, President Kaunda promoted the chief to the position of Member of the Central Committee (MCC), the supreme body of the ruling party consisting of top UNIP members.⁹⁴ In the same year, Kaunda appointed Chief Mukumbi as Minister of State for North-Western Province.⁹⁵ The traditional ruler thus became the political representative of the head of state in the province as a whole. In this capacity, Chief Mukumbi coordinated and chaired meetings of the Provincial Development Committee. He also supervised the activities of government departments and took part in formulating government policies.⁹⁶ Evidence suggests that he was an effective minister who made sure that government ministries carried out developmental projects in his province. A former top-ranking UNIP official who worked in the North-Western Province between 1988 and 1990 recently recalled that under Chief Mukumbi's leadership the province received adequate attention in terms of the construction of wells, roads, bridges, clinics and schools and other benefits and therefore developed rapidly.⁹⁷

Chiefly Duties

In spite the demanding nature of the positions Chief Beston Mukumbi occupied, he still continued to discharge his chiefly duties, including settling disputes among his subjects over land preserving culture, and combating social vices like theft and drunkenness which became rampant in the 1980s and 1990s. Chief Mukumbi tried to strike a balance between politics and traditional duties. He travelled to the chiefdom every weekend to attend to traditional

⁹² UNIP/5/5/2/2, Cabinet, 01 February 1969.

⁹³ Solwezi District Council, Civic Centre, 1988.

⁹⁴ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited, *Parliamentary Debates of the Second Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, 19 June - 06 July 1990. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1991.

⁹⁵ NAT/A/22, No-502, Office of the Prime Minister, M. N. Masheke DFS, MCC, MP, Prime Minister, 26 September 1990, CAB/PR/10, Cabinet Office, Ben C. Kakoma, Provincial Political Secretary, 27 September 1990, J. K. Miyato, MP, Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and NCDP, 01 October 1990, UNIP/MCC/LP/RM/PERS, R. Mwale, MCC, Chairman (Luapula, Province, 20 August 1991, The Ambassador, Mainza Chona, Embassy of the Republic of Zambia, 76, avenue d'Iena, 75116 Paris, 20 August 1991.

⁹⁶ J. M. Mwanakatwe, Secretary General to the Government, 01 February 1969.

⁹⁷ Alina Nyikosa, interview cited.

matters. However, since he was often required to attend UNIP and government meetings in Lusaka, his uncle Headman Ngoshite Muluka and the chief's first wife Enes helped him in discharging these responsibilities in his absence. By delegating some authority to his wife and Headman Ngoshite, the chief was able to engage in national politics until 1991 when the MMD defeated UNIP in elections.

It can be argued that Chief Mukumbi played an important role in this political transition. This is because when many Zambians began calling for the re-introduction of the multi-party system towards the end of the 1980s, the chief, who by that time had become unhappy with the one-party system, added his own voice to the call. It is for this reason that he was one of the few MCC leaders who advised President Kaunda to restore multi-party democracy in Zambia.⁹⁸

Economic Activities

An account of Chief Mukumbi's life after Zambia's independence would be incomprehensive without examining his contribution to the country's economic development. At independence, the country inherited an economy which solely dependent on copper. From the 1970s, the economy suffered a major blow as copper prices drastically declined on the world market. In response, the Zambian government instituted measures to diversify the economy and reduce dependence on copper. In this context, the government sought to expand agricultural production in rural areas and called on chiefs to encourage their subjects to engage in growing cash crops.

Aware that traditional rulers could play an important part in the country's economic development, Chief Mukumbi enthusiastically supported the government's economic programmes. In the late 1960s, he intensified the campaign to increase the production of maize, beans, sweet potatoes and pineapples within his chiefdom and beyond.⁹⁹ The chief often toured villages, urging his subjects to grow crops to fight poverty and create wealth. He also ensured that farm inputs were delivered into his chiefdom before rains commenced each year. The result was that his chiefdom became food-secure. An informant observed that the Mukumbi chiefdom never received any relief food from government since it produced excess

⁹⁸Masheke, Chief Mukumbi, Menivar Shipilo Mukumbi, Alina Nyikosa and Eunice Kalichini Sebele, interviews cited.

⁹⁹Kaula Mwene, interview cited.

food crops.¹⁰⁰ The availability of farm inputs motivated his followers to grow enough food crops both for consumption and for sale.

The chief also ensured that farmers in Solwezi found market for their commodities. In 1980, he appealed to the National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBOARD) to open more depots in the area so that maize produced in the district did not go to waste.¹⁰¹ Chief Mukumbi also advised government to develop farming schemes in the province that would encourage local farmers to grow beans on a larger scale.¹⁰² He saw the crop not only as a source of income but also good nutrition for his people. Promoting intensive farming in his chiefdom meant that the chief needed to provide the means by which the produce reached the market. The traditional ruler therefore successfully lobbied the government to construct and maintain roads in his chiefdom and in other parts of district.¹⁰³ Through such efforts, feeder roads were constructed in most parts of the chiefdom, especially in maize-growing areas like Kyanyika, Mangala, Mumbezhi, Mutanda and Jiundu.¹⁰⁴ Among the feeder roads built in his chiefdom in the mid 1960s was the Kitungula road, constructed at a cost of 300 pounds.¹⁰⁵ The road opened up remote areas, enabling farmers to easily transport their produce to markets.

Similarly, the construction of a road in the Lumwana area enabled farmers who grew pineapples there to transport their produce to Solwezi town and beyond, thereby protecting the produce from going to waste. Where roads and bridges were bad and government did not work on them, Chief Mukumbi mobilised local labour to mend them.¹⁰⁶ People cooperated and, in some cases, constructed new roads with the support of the chief. From the 1970s onward, their efforts to build roads and bridges were complemented by the work of the Rural Development Agency (RDA), which was established to construct roads in rural areas.¹⁰⁷ The chief took advantage of the agency to ensure that it built feeder roads in the chiefdom to allow the smooth delivery of both inputs and produce.¹⁰⁸ Although Chief Mukumbi's

¹⁰⁰ Elias Chingémbu, interview cited

¹⁰¹ Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the Second Session of the Fourth National Assembly*.

¹⁰² Republic of Zambia: *Parliamentary Debates of the Second Session of the Fourth National Assembly*, 11 January- 28 March 1980. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1981.

¹⁰³ Chief Mukumbi, Interview cited.

¹⁰⁴ Mukumbi, Interview cited.

¹⁰⁵ NAT/A/21, Capital Works Programme, 03 March 1965.

¹⁰⁶ Minevar Shipilo Mukumbi, interview cited.

¹⁰⁷ UNIP/LUA/1/30, Presidential Circulars on the Mobilisation of the Masses for Rural Reconstruction and Development, 05 November 1971.

¹⁰⁸ Chief Mukumbi, interview cited.

political career ended when UNIP lost power in 1991, he continued to champion the development of roads in his chiefdom. In 2010, he lobbied for the construction of the Mukonzhi-Kainya Bridge after the bridge was damaged by the heavy rains.¹⁰⁹ The construction of this bridge was vital because Mukonzhi and Kainya areas were among the major food producing areas in the chiefdom and the province as a whole.

Chief Beston Mukumbi was also aware of the importance of mining in the economic development of his chiefdom and the nation. Therefore, in 1986, he called upon the government to diversify the mining sector by exploiting such minerals as amethyst and uranium rather than concentrating on copper.¹¹⁰ He also challenged the government to employ security measures to curb the illegal mining of minerals. The traditional ruler observed that the country lost a lot of wealth through the smuggling minerals from the country.

To foster mining, the traditional leader surrendered in 2003 a vast piece of land in his chiefdom to Lumwana Mining Company Limited to enable it to prospect for copper.¹¹¹ Once vast deposits of copper were discovered Barrick Gold Mining Corporation opened the Lumwana Mine, Africa's largest single open pit mine today.¹¹² Large-scale mining has created job opportunities for about 4000 local people and a foodstuffs market for farmers. Further, the mining company has also helped to construct roads within the Mukumbi chieftaincy, thereby enabling local farmers to transport goods to the market.¹¹³

Chief Beston Mukumbi receives mining royalties from Lumwana Mine, and shares them with chiefs Mumena and Matebo.¹¹⁴ He also ensures that his subjects benefit from the mine. Since mining began in the chiefdom, he has engaged Barrick Gold Mining Corporation to train local subsistence producers in improved farming methods, construct markets, build and renovate schools and to sponsor vulnerable students at tertiary level.¹¹⁵ Mining has thus

¹⁰⁹ NAT/22/CH/B/10, Chief Mukumbi to Town Clerk, Solwezi Municipal Council, 28 November 2010.

¹¹⁰ Republic of Zambia, *Parliamentary Debates of the Third Session of the Fifth National Assembly*, 20 February 1986. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1987.

¹¹¹ NAT/A/22, Mukumbi Ibaloli Royal Establishment to Solwezi Municipal Council, 12 August 2003.

¹¹² *The Post Newspaper*, 18 February 2014, p. 18, *Post*, 19 March 2014.

¹¹³ Interview with Chief Mukumbi, Interview with Malaika Kaputula, Mukumbi Chiefdom, Solwezi, 04 November 2013, Alfred Mankishi, Mukumbi Chiefdom, Solwezi, 04 November 2013, Interview with Kaula Mwene, Mukumbi Chiefdom, Solwezi, 04 November 2013.

¹¹⁴ Kyalikosa Muluka Mukumbi, Mrs. Joyce Mukumbi, interviews cited. Also interview with Beatrice Kawisha Lumwana Turn-off, Solwezi, 04 October 2013.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

enabled the local people to combat hunger and poverty and to raise their standard of living.¹¹⁶ The Kaonde traditional has continued to contribute towards the economic development of his chiefdom and nation at large through the Lumwana Mine. To date his contributions have remained valid to his subjects and people of Zambia. Schools, clinics and roads are still being expanded due his input and follow ups.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that Senior Chief Mukumbi engaged in active politics and economic development after Zambia became independent in 1964. As Governor, MCC and Minister of State in the Kaunda government, the chief took part in shaping and implementing various policies and participated in the creation of one-party democracy in 1972 and the re-introduction of multi-party politics in the 1990s. Throughout his terms as Parliamentarian, Governor, MCC and Minister of State, the traditional ruler represented the rural poor. He sought to alleviate the plight of the rural population through representing them and securing for them social services like school, clinic, roads and bridges. Even after his party UNIP lost power in 1991, the Kaonde chief continued to promote their interests.

¹¹⁶Chief Mukumbi, Kaputula Kandala, Beatrice Kawisha and Gasto Muhumpu, interviews cited.

¹¹⁷Kekema Mponda, interview cited.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to document the life history of Beston Muluka Mukumbi, Senior Chief of the Kaonde people of Solwezi. It demonstrates that his early life was influenced by the cultural context in which he was born. At a tender age, the future chief imbibed the cultural values and customs of his society. Such upbringing inculcated in him devotion for Kaonde customs and values. Modern education also played a part in molding his character. At school, he acquired literacy skills and learnt the English language which later enabled him to secure white collar jobs and to articulate anti-colonial sentiments. The study insists that at Mutanda Riverside School, in the 1940s, Beston Muluka Mukumbi experienced European racial discrimination against Africans. This profoundly shaped his future political thought, making him an ardent nationalist who opposed discrimination against Africans. Beston Mukumbi came to believe that the only way to conquer colonialism was to fight colonial misdeeds.

The future Kaonde chief's opposition to colonialism increased when he moved to Chingola in mid-1950s. There, like at Muntanda School, he encountered deeply-rooted racial discrimination against Africans at work places, in hospitals, shops, hotels and other social spaces. Thus, he enlisted in the African National Congress which spearheaded the anti-colonial struggle. He also became active in the Chiwempala Housing Area Board, the General Workers Trade Union, Parents Teachers Association, and, as this study shows, he deployed these organs to spread political and nationalist awareness to Africans. Although most of these organisations were not political in nature, the future chief took advantage of his leadership in them to politicise many Africans in Chingola and other parts of the Copperbelt. Through these bodies, he attracted many people to support the ANC and to fight for the improvement of the welfare of the Africans.

This study further argues that Beston Mukumbi continued his fight for freedom in Solwezi after 1957, when he joined the Solwezi Native Authority Council (SNAC). Appointed as Public Works Councillor in SNAC, he used the position not only to foster economic development in his chieftom but also to spread political consciousness among the local people. Consequently, he influenced Kaonde chiefs to support the nationalist movement and implored them to sensitise their own subjects to join the African National Congress en masse. After ANC lost popularity with the formation of the United National Independence Party

(UNIP) in the late 1950s, Chief Mukumbi turned his political allegiance to the new party. Under UNIP, his political activities broadened with the young nationalist organising party meetings, shielding Kenneth Kaunda from being arrested by the colonial police, and selling UNIP membership cards. The study has further demonstrated that the chief continued the campaign against colonial rule even after he ascended the Mukumbi royal throne in 1962. As a chief, he implored his subjects to support nationalism through enlisting in UNIP, a party that steered the country to political freedom two years later.

The chief's involvement in politics did not end with Zambia's independence. This study has shown that he continued participating in the post-colonial politics because he wanted to contribute to the socio-economic and political development of the country. To this end, the traditional leader served in many capacities: Deputy President of the House of Chiefs, Commissioner in the Chona Commission, MP for Solwezi-West, Governor, Minister of State and MCC. Serving in these portfolios enable him to play an important role in the social and economic development of his chiefdom, constituency and the country as a whole. The established that Chief Mukumbi was instrumental in initiating social and economic development that resulted in the construction of schools, clinics, roads and other public works in his area and beyond. He also played a role in the reintroduction of multi-party system in 1991.

It is clear from this study that Chief Mukumbi IX championed the improvement of the social and economic welfare of his people in the chiefdom after he retired from active politics in 1991. He thus welcomed the opening of Lumwana Mine. This development has contributed to improving the living standards of his subjects in his chiefdom through creating employment opportunities and market for the local produce.

Beyond playing an important part in promoting the social and economic welfare of his people, Chief Beston Muluka Mukumbi has equally been instrumental in preserving Kaonde culture, performing his traditional functions as the custodian of his culture. Apart from settling disputes within and beyond his chiefdom, he revived the Kufukwila ceremony in 1962 to preserve and pass Kaonde cultural values, norms and customs to future generations.

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