
Recovering

Nonviolent

History

Civil Resistance
in Liberation Struggles

edited by
Maciej J. Bartkowski



BOULDER
LONDON

4

Zambia: Nonviolent Strategies Against Colonialism, 1900s–1960s

Jotham C. Momba and Fay Gadsden

Zambia, previously known as Northern Rhodesia, is one of the five southern African countries, together with Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, that achieved independence without recourse to armed resistance. From the second decade of the 1900s, Africans living in Northern Rhodesia began to organize themselves into civic and professional associations to improve their social and economic conditions under colonial rule. These early associations provided an important foundation for more militant political activity later. The struggle against the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and for independence waged in the 1950s and early 1960s was based primarily on nonviolent strategies and tactics. In this chapter, we examine resistance to colonial authority, the struggle against federation, and the nationalist movements that led to Zambia's independence in October 1964.¹ We describe the origin, development, and nature of the resistance movements and how they contributed toward the development of a sense of national identity and a political culture that rejects murderous violence.

Historical Background

The area comprising contemporary Zambia was colonized in the late nineteenth century and first ruled for Britain by the British South Africa Company, which united its administration over the new Northern Rhodesia in 1911.² The Colonial Office assumed control in 1924 over a sparsely populated and impoverished territory whose borders had been decided in Europe with no consideration of its ethnic composition. Over seventy tribes, each with its own language, inhabited Northern Rhodesia. Some of these peoples had

traded with each other or raided their neighbors for slaves and cattle, some had resisted European invasion, and others had allied with the European invaders as a strategy for protection against their local enemies. But it was colonial rule that united them and created the framework of a new nationhood. It provided territorial boundaries, the experience of a unified administration, a system of communication through roads and railways, a common language of administration (English), and an educational system that at its upper levels involved the mixing of peoples from all over the country. The urban centers that grew in response to the needs of administration and the wider economy brought together peoples from all over the territory.

As a British protectorate, the responsibility for governance was held by the British colonial secretary who was accountable to Parliament in London. British colonies enjoyed freedoms of speech, assembly, and the press, but these were limited by systems of permits, registration, and fees. And the colonial government could ban any organization that, in its view, threatened the peace. In the 1920s and 1930s, Northern Rhodesia's Africans could and did form associations, call meetings, publish newspapers, and form political parties from the 1940s.

Britain's declared goals in the colonies were devolution of power and, ultimately, self-government. In practice this meant establishing institutions of representative government and at times accommodating nationalist demands, but within an overall context of resisting and slowing down the process of independence. Thus, Northern Rhodesia, like other African colonies of Britain, had a Legislative Council and an Executive Council comprising some elected members (initially Europeans) alongside government officials. The political battle was ultimately over the composition of these bodies and the qualifications for the franchise, that is, who controlled them. These parameters inclined nationalist aims to be essentially constitutional and democratic.

The political situation in Northern Rhodesia was complicated by the presence of immigrant communities, traders from the Indian subcontinent, and Europeans who came as farmers and miners after the development of copper mining in the mid-1920s. Europeans received preferential treatment. The government provided them with segregated schools and hospitals, accepted employment policies that restricted senior and better paying jobs to Europeans, and condoned a color bar in shops and cafés. Most significantly, it granted them representation on, but not control of, the Legislative Council established in 1924.

While in South Africa after the Boer War and in Southern Rhodesia in 1923, the British government had devolved power to European minorities, its declared policy for Northern Rhodesia was the paramountcy of African interests, clearly stated in the Passfield Memorandum of 1930 and reaffirmed by subsequent colonial secretaries:

the interests of African natives must be paramount, and if . . . those interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former shall prevail. . . . His Majesty's Government regard themselves as exercising a trust on behalf of the African population, and they are unable to delegate or share this trust, the objective of which may be defined as the protection and advancement of the native races.³

Successive Northern Rhodesian governments obscured the meaning of paramountcy by privileging European interests, but in 1961 the colonial secretary again invoked it to justify a Northern Rhodesian constitution giving Africans a majority of seats in the legislature.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Europeans in Northern Rhodesia hoped to secure their dominance through some form of union with the European-controlled southern territories. From 1949, the British government supported such a federation in order to encourage regional economic growth and provide a buffer to apartheid South Africa. Despite the concerted opposition of the African population of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the Federation was imposed in 1953. This convinced African political leaders in Northern Rhodesia that the only strategy against perpetual European dominance was to gain immediate political independence and secede from the Federation.

Early Resistance to Colonial Rule

Early forms of resistance were organized within individual tribes and did not involve cooperation between the peoples of the new territory or any concept of a new politics. In some instances, resistance was armed. This is not remembered with any pride in nationalist mythology, if it is remembered at all, in contrast to the Shona *chimurenga* in Zimbabwe.⁴ This may be because Zambians take pride in their peaceful history, because their unarmed independence struggle did not require the precedent of an armed revolt, and also perhaps because only some peoples were involved and a reference to them might challenge Zambia's fragile sense of national unity.

As colonial administration was consolidated and taxes imposed, resentment of European authority smoldered all over the new territory. There were localized tax revolts among the Lunda people in 1907 and the Gwembe Valley Tonga in 1909, and Henry Meebelo documented several cases of refusal to pay tax by the Namwanga and Bisa peoples of Northern Province. They also refused to provide forced labor and even to recognize colonial authority. Meebelo quotes one colonial official on the resistance of the Namwanga people: "In several instances the Wanyamwanga in the neighborhood have refused absolutely to obey me in any way and all along I have made clear to them that if any serious case of this kind comes to my knowledge again I would punish the offending village by turning the people out and destroying it (Bell to Dewar, 31 August, 1896, NER A8/2/2)."⁵

That this resistance was backward looking to an older form of politics is illustrated by the fact that it was often led by people who were either traditional leaders or linked to the traditional establishments. Thomas Rasmussen provides two examples from the North-West and Southern Provinces: in one, a Luvale chieftainess, dethroned a decade earlier by the colonial authorities, led 250 people in an antiadministration protest against the colonial administration; in the other, in the Mazabuka District of Southern Province, a chief was dethroned for leading his people in protests for land rights.⁶ Meebelo recorded similar cases in Northern Province and suggests that the traditional authorities tried to “become popular by whipping up popular grievances against the *boma* [government centers].”⁷ Much of this resistance was unsuccessful: taxes were levied, land was seized, and forced labor was exacted. But in Northern Province, chiefs and headmen succeeded in persuading the administration to reverse their decisions to abolish *chitemene* (a system of shifting cultivation) and allow a compromise between settled and shifting agricultural systems. This early resistance often involved violence, by Africans in revolt and by their colonizers in asserting their authority.

Proto-Nationalist Resistance

The growth and popularity of African-led churches and the beginning of worker solidarity in the towns reflected and strengthened the development of a sense of African identity and a rejection of the European assumption of racial supremacy. There was widespread support for Christian sects, founded originally by African Americans, which argued for African control in the church, for equality of white and black, and for the eviction of all Europeans.⁸ In Northern Province in 1918–1919, thousands were converted by Watchtower and accepted the teachings of racial equality, the rejection of chiefly and colonial authority, and the departure of Europeans. In the 1920s in Luapula Province, Watchtower gained support, preaching disobedience stating that, “God only is to be respected and obeyed. Nobody on earth has the right to it: anymore Europeans than the native chiefs. The Europeans have no right whatsoever in the country.”⁹ The colonial government arrested “seditious” preachers and banned Watchtower in 1935 on suspicion of having influenced a strike in the Copperbelt.

The Copperbelt towns became a melting pot in terms of ethnic identity. Worker protests articulated a united African position. From the late 1920s, the newly opened mines attracted workers from all over the country and further afield, notably Nyasaland and Tanganyika.¹⁰ The colonial government saw political dangers in urbanization and was concerned that the workers should not be detribalized. Therefore, it insisted that the workers be short-term migrants who would return to their villages. They also introduced a system of tribal elders in the mines as a channel of communication

with the mines' administration to strengthen tribal authority and prevent the emergence of worker organizations. These strategies were not successful. African miners resented the contempt and violence with which they were treated and the privileges of their white supervisors. Strikes erupted in 1935 against increased taxation, and again in 1940 for higher pay at a time of inflation. In 1940 the miners elected their own leaders, the Group of 17, to negotiate with the mine owners. The national character of their action was evident in the language of their demands that assumed a united African labor force and the multiethnic composition of their leadership, "which was marked by a careful tribal balance."¹¹ The strikes received mass support and were generally conducted with moderation. In 1935 stone throwing at Roan Antelope mine in Luanshya in the face of armed police resulted in the deaths of six and wounding of twenty-two miners, but this experience influenced the adoption of a nonviolent strategy in 1940. Signs for strike action posted in the mine compounds urged miners not to "fight or cause disturbances because if we do, they will bring many machine guns and airplanes."¹² Again, however, strikers were provoked and shot. But advocacy of nonviolent action became a recurring theme for postwar nationalist resistance: Africans should demonstrate the power of their numbers through solidarity, but not risk death at the hands of colonial forces.

From the late 1940s, the miners were unionized and other African workers, truck drivers, shop assistants, and civil servants formed themselves into unions. During the 1950s, the colonial government accepted under pressure from both mine owners and unions that many Africans would remain in the towns as permanent workers. The development of a multiethnic urban proletariat, politicized through participation in collective action, was an important factor in the growth of a sense of national identity. Although the miners' union played a role in anti-federation campaigns, it generally distanced itself from the independence struggle, instead prioritizing economic issues.¹³ Nevertheless, its struggles had strong anticolonial overtones. For example in 1956, a series of mine strikes exacerbated political tensions and anti-European feelings. More importantly, miners provided a cohesive and militant support base for nationalist parties that miners joined.

Development of Civic Organizations and a Political Leadership

From the second decade of the twentieth century, Western-educated men—teachers, clerks, evangelists, and storekeepers—organized themselves in welfare associations to improve their positions within the colonial system. The longer-lasting and most active welfare associations were town based, although some rural associations were formed. These societies were multiethnic, they

were organized along democratic lines (i.e., officeholders elected, public meetings held, and resolutions debated by members), and grievances were brought to the attention of government for redress.

The first welfare association—the Mwenzo Welfare Society—was formed around 1912 in Mwenzo, a Protestant missionary station in Northern Province. Forced to close by World War I fighting in the area, it was revived in 1923. Its declared objectives were mild: “The aim of the association is neither directly or indirectly to subvert the authority of the Government or any lawful establishment, or to induce the community to do so. It is rather one of helpful means of developing the country in the hands of two necessary connecting links—the government and the governed.”¹⁴ There was rapid growth of associations in the towns between 1929 and 1931. The best-known and largest associations were established in Livingstone, Broken Hill, and Ndola in 1930, each with a couple of hundred members from different professions.¹⁵

Although the associations that formed in towns along the railway line were more militant than Mwenzo Welfare Society, their demands were couched in similar diplomatic language. This lack of militancy in language and the careful legality of their actions were in part tactical to avoid being banned but also perhaps due to an awareness of the power of the colonial state. From 1924 to 1953, the educated minority did not wish to overthrow the colonial state, but only to influence and participate in it.

The associations articulated African grievances. They raised health issues, pointing to the high African death rate, poor and inadequate housing in towns, lack of clean water and sanitary facilities, and shortage of clinics and hospitals. They demanded more and better schools. Associations in towns asked for garden plots for food growing while rural associations asked for better agricultural advisory services. They complained about the quality of meat and fish sold to Africans by local European shop owners and asked for more township markets. They protested against government-imposed racial discrimination, being required to carry passes and not being allowed to walk on European-only pavements, and being prohibited by the railways from buying tea and food at stations. They objected to white men taking African women as concubines and to the rudeness with which they were treated by Europeans.

The welfare associations often achieved local objectives. A government newspaper for Africans in Northern Rhodesia was started. In Ndola a government school was set up, sanitary conditions were improved, a township market was opened, and land was provided for garden plots. The railway began to stop at the African location in Ndola so that Africans, who were not allowed to move in the European sector at night, would not be stranded overnight.¹⁶ The associations were also involved in direct action to improve the economic and social situation of Africans by leading awareness-raising

campaigns among the local populations to send their children to school and to practice hygiene and sanitation.

In the 1930s the welfare associations involved themselves in political issues, opposing amalgamation with the south, and in 1933 they united to form the United African Welfare Association and planned to move into the villages. However, the colonial government blocked this attempt to create a united countrywide organization.

The achievements of the welfare societies should not be measured only by how successful they were in obtaining governmental concessions. Their importance lies also in their adaptation to the new colonial realities of territorial boundaries and political power—in 1923 the Mwenzo Welfare Society wanted to call itself the Northern Rhodesian Native Association, “indicating that they had more than a local interest”¹⁷—and their assumption of responsibility for improving the lives of Africans territory-wide. The associations developed a culture of political awareness and engagement, democratic organization and decisionmaking, a belief in racial equality, and a sense of African unity despite tribal and territorial differences. The first territory-wide nationalist party grew out of the welfare societies.

In the rural areas of Southern Province, especially the Plateau Tonga region, former Seventh-Day Adventist pastors and teachers, who became small-scale commercial farmers, formed the local leadership in protest politics during the 1930s and 1940s. They aimed at exerting influence on local councils and chiefs and sabotaging government programs by campaigning against local participation and cooperation with government officials.¹⁸ Their activities culminated in the formation of a political party called the Northern Rhodesia African Congress in 1937. The party never really took off since the colonial administration denied it registration. Yet it is significant because it adopted a national posture, listing among its objectives “to keep and promote the welfare and interests of Africans in Northern Rhodesia” and “to inquire and report any matter tending to injure the welfare of Africans in Northern Rhodesia.”¹⁹ Some leaders of this aborted congress came to play a prominent role in the formation of the Northern Rhodesia Federation of Welfare Societies in 1946, which in 1948 transformed itself into the Northern Rhodesia African Congress.²⁰ Unlike in 1937, the 1948 Northern Rhodesia African Congress was allowed by the government to register as a political party. It also had a more national composition.

Another channel for moderate, reformist political activity after 1938 was that government advisory bodies sought to involve the new African educated elite in local government. Colonial administration had previously operated through chiefs, but in 1938 Native Authority Councils were established in rural areas (and later African urban advisory councils in towns) to incorporate educated African men into the colonial administration and thus discourage independent political action. During World War II, this system

ceased to be confined to local government. The advisory councils elected representatives to provincial councils, and in 1946 a territory-wide African Representative Council (ARC) was set up that sent two members to the Legislative Council. These bodies did not satisfy African aspirations, but membership did provide experience in democratic procedures and enabled the educated to contribute to their communities on such issues as education, sanitation, and township organization. They also provided a forum to articulate African opinion. The ARC opposed federation and in 1952 both the central and local councils rejected “partnership” as conceived in the proposed Federation.²¹ The relationship between these governmental councils and African political parties was not always harmonious, but their membership sometimes overlapped and at times the political parties sought to influence the councils. In 1951, the ARC elected two African National Congress (ANC) members to the Legislative Council.

Tactics of Resistance Against Federation

White settler demands for self-government and the threat of federation united popular discontent and educated Africans’ opposition to colonialism into a combined movement. The multiethnic composition of the welfare associations of the 1930s and 1940s helped them to form the basis of a nationwide movement with a nationalist outlook: first the Northern Rhodesia Federation of Welfare Societies, which changed its name to the Northern Rhodesia African Congress in 1948 and was renamed in 1951 the African National Congress. Most welfare associations became branches of the Congress.

From the British government’s point of view, the Federation was to be a partnership between white and black. Africans in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland never believed this was possible, many having experienced life in white-controlled Southern Rhodesia.²² From 1949 to 1953 Congress led an increasingly desperate campaign to prevent Northern Rhodesia’s incorporation into the Federation. The decision to impose federation in the face of popular opposition precipitated the struggle for independence, hence Congress’s change of name to ANC with its leader, Harry Nkumbula, stating in 1952 that African interests could be protected only by an independent African government.²³

Before it had organized itself as a national party, Congress was faced with the threat of federation. Anti-federation activity therefore went hand in hand with the party’s formation, the establishment of branches, appointment of officials, and development of policies. From 1951 the ANC had a full-time headquarters with staff, provincial officials, branches in the towns and rural areas, and national conferences. It was strong in the north, the south, and the Copperbelt. The 1952 annual conference formed a Supreme

Action Council to direct the campaign against federation and made plans for a youth wing.²⁴

One strategy against federation was to appeal directly to the British government by sending delegations to pressure the colonial and British government. At the 1951 ANC annual conference, 100 chiefs in attendance agreed to raise money for a joint delegation to London in 1952. When the delegation did not succeed, Nkumbula symbolically burned the government white paper announcing federation. Protest meetings were held throughout the territory to mobilize African opinion. In April 1953 when the British government had determined to introduce federation, Congress called a national strike that Nkumbula called a day of national prayer. The response, however, was half-hearted, although it was observed in two Copperbelt towns and in Lusaka.²⁵ The ANC failed to involve the largest trade union (the miners), as most people were resigned to the inevitability of federation. In his study of the nationalist movement, David Mulford argues that, although there was mass support for the ANC's anti-federation stance, the party itself was poorly organized and "failed to mount a single action which involved more than a handful of officials and sympathetic supporters."²⁶ Mulford suggests that the ANC's anti-federation campaign articulated public opinion rather than leading it. Africans opposed federation, but they were not united behind the ANC.

Federation plans for the Kariba Dam, a hydroelectric project on the Zambezi River that would create the world's largest artificial lake and displace tens of thousands of people, featured strongly in ANC propaganda in the mid-1950s. However, banned in the Gwembe Valley, ANC workers could not exercise open leadership of the local resistance and proved powerless to halt the Federation's most prestigious project (now notorious for its neglect of the dam's social impact). Spontaneous local noncooperation—such as vanishing into the bush or simply sitting down and refusing to move when the resettlement trucks came to a village—succeeded in delaying the project until the government became forceful in September 1958. The territorial governor tried in vain to convince Chipepo men in Chisamu to accept the resettlement of women and children before the flooding. When he ordered them to board the trucks, the Chipepo men charged the police who opened fire, killing eight and wounding at least thirty-two.²⁷ The Chisamu confrontation ended open defiance. In her classic study on this resettlement, Elizabeth Colson comments,

Throughout Gwembe, people faced the fact that they could be killed or seriously injured if they defied a Government that was prepared to kill them. . . . Despite all earlier talk that Europeans cared nothing for Africans and that Government had abandoned them, they had not believed their own angry accusations until Chisamu. Momentarily people lost faith in the ANC. Many were angry with its national and local agents for leading them

into danger. . . . Mpwe villages were enthusiastic partisans of ANC until Chisamu. . . . In the aftermath they turned on their local ANC agent for reporting to the district officer their refusal to move.²⁸

In the early years of nationalist activity in opposition to federation, political ideas and practices, some of them contradictory, emerged and have persisted in Zambian politics. In a 1951 speech to party workers in Kitwe in the Copperbelt, Nkumbula stated, "Our national spirit, now ripe, is an upthrust from our long suffering. . . . We are a nation and like any other nation on earth we love to rule ourselves."²⁹ Nkumbula's argument that the nation was born from its history of suffering could be used to support a pluralist position: one belonged to the nation by virtue of birth and experience and was as much a nationalist in a trade union or a government advisory council as in the ANC. However, cooperation and toleration of other political bodies was interspersed with opposition and hostility. While the constitution of the ANC contained clauses committing the party to nonviolent actions, this strategy was open to question. The ANC annual conference of 1953 called for a policy of "non-cooperation without violence" to any policies detrimental to African interests, yet the ANC used threats and intimidation to gain acceptance of its policies (e.g., in the enforcement of boycotts) and in 1957 Nkumbula threatened to rescind the nonviolence clause.³⁰

ANC support declined in the mid-1950s, following the imposition of federation. However, it pursued its policy of noncooperation in rural areas, particularly in the north, for instance, forming action groups in Chinsali in 1955. There were some strikes, but noncooperation also took other forms. People were encouraged to refuse to feed touring government officials and to ignore regulations for compulsory communal storage of kaffir corn and cassava. Boycotts of Asian- and European-owned shops that practiced segregation were a direct challenge to the Federation's partnership policy and were perceived by both the shopkeepers and the boycotters as political action. Butchers' shops were a particular target, as were beer halls run by town councils. These boycotts had an economic impact and also were a demonstration of African unity and strength. During this period, ANC leaders were arrested for various offenses such as possession of banned literature and organizing illegal meetings.

The Radicalization of the Independence Struggle

A new urgency was brought to the nationalist movement in 1957 by proposed changes in the Federation's constitution that reduced African representation in the Federal Assembly and a new constitution for Northern Rhodesia that also gave more representation to Europeans. The heightened militancy, replicated in Nyasaland by Kamuzu Banda's Malawi Congress

Party, contributed to the split in the Northern Rhodesian nationalist movement in 1958. Younger nationalists considered Nkumbula not militant enough and formed the Zambia African National Congress (ZANC) led by Kenneth Kaunda. This split also meant that, after 1958, two nationalist parties competed for support among the African populations. Party branches were established as widely as possible, newsletters published, supporters canvassed, and opponents from the rival party harassed; thus, there began a tradition of interparty violence.

The two political parties continued the kinds of protests that had been organized in the preceding years. In 1959, the ANC sent another delegation to London to protest against constitutional plans.³¹ There were public burnings of the passes that Africans were required to carry. More boycotts of shops, beer halls, tearooms, and hotels were mounted. There was an intensification of campaigns of noncooperation with government policies such as storage of grain and inoculation of cattle. In 1959, the ANC threatened to refuse to pay taxes.³² The new organization, ZANC, also engaged in more militant forms of civil disobedience and, in 1958, it organized a successful boycott of elections for the new constitution. That boycott created a political atmosphere of tension and even violence. Mobs threw stones at police and Europeans.³³ Secondary school pupils went on strike and rioted. The Commission of Inquiry into the student disturbances reported that the two nationalist movements were not directly involved in provoking the student disturbances, but “the political climate of nationalist opposition to the colonial authorities did contribute to the local students’ challenge to the school authorities” and to European teachers’ being seen as a “local expression of colonial rule.”³⁴

The reaction of the colonial government was to increase repression. Union leaders were detained after a strike in 1956. ZANC was banned and its leaders imprisoned and exiled to remote areas after its call for an election boycott. Many ZANC party officials, including its leader Kaunda, were imprisoned. The jails were overflowing in 1959. These measures were counterproductive, backfiring on the authorities and fueling African resistance. The exiled leaders worked at gaining more popular support. ZANC branches remained intact underground.³⁵ Similarly, the banning of ZANC’s successor, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), strengthened rather than weakened the party.

UNIP began to develop as a national party and a future government with a network of branches. It developed policies on education, health, and the economy; encouraged the few well-educated Zambians who were not already in the party to join so that they could be appointed to future government positions; and recruited members from the European and Asian communities, thereby making it a national party. Its practice of appointing rather than electing officials was seen as more efficient, but certainly was less democratic.

As other British African territories were attaining independence, UNIP in 1961 rejected a proposed constitution for Northern Rhodesia that aimed to secure white minority rule and launched a cha cha cha (after the dance) campaign in its strongholds in Luapula and Northern Provinces. The plan was a campaign of property damage to make the territory ungovernable until the proposed constitution was abandoned. In the resulting “disturbances,” lasting from July 15 until October 31, 146 roads were either destroyed or blocked, 64 bridges destroyed, 64 schools destroyed, 77 other public buildings destroyed, 69 motor vehicles burned or destroyed, and 20 African protesters killed by security forces. However, the official report also acknowledged that, in Luapula, “the protesters did not contemplate any premeditated attacks upon the Bomas [government centers] or mission stations. . . . The violent reactions to the security forces . . . were a result of plans to resist interference rather than deliberate acts of aggression.”³⁶ The property destruction ended immediately when the British government indicated that they were reconsidering the constitutional proposals that aimed to secure white minority rule. The civil unrest prompted the British government, which had already accepted that Nyasaland (Malawi) was leaving the Federation, to accept that Zambia should move to majority rule and independence. After this, a peaceful transition was assured: there were too few European settlers to attempt to seize power.

The Role of Women in the Nationalist Struggle

Women participated in the nationalist movement in Zambia, but it was controlled by men. Only within the past thirty years have women developed a movement to achieve equality. Women were active in some of the early mass protests on the mines and in the villages as vocal opponents encouraging the men to behave more aggressively. Simon Zukas, a leader of the Ndola Anti-Federation Action Group, recalls one man objecting to women attending meetings because they were dangerous: women goading men had once caused a riot.³⁷ Some women later joined the women’s organizations of mass membership parties, but they tended to be widows and wives of party members or of men who had been persuaded by the party to allow their participation. Men decided party policy while women’s primary duties were to raise funds, cater for party meetings, house nationalist leaders, run funeral committees, and recruit more women. Women participated in the boycotts and marches and joined men in solidarity actions, for example, by burning their colonial marriage certificates when their husbands were burning their identity cards. Women in Luapula Province organized political meetings and helped hide political prisoners in the 1950s. Julia Mulenga, a widow known as Mama Chikonameka, organized women to march, bare

breasted, against the color bar and also to confront the colonial secretary at the airport.³⁸ Although women played a significant role in the independence movements, and their participation involved shaping and taking part in political society, their presence did not threaten male authority or challenge the parties' hierarchical structures and bullying culture that continued into the independence period.

Nonviolent Strategies

As in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesian nationalism was partly inspired by the Indian National Congress Party with its Gandhian philosophy of nonviolent resistance. The African National Congress of South Africa, founded in 1911, followed a nonviolent policy until the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. The African political parties formed in Northern Rhodesia included nonviolence clauses in their constitutions and frequently repeated this commitment. In 1948, a Northern Rhodesian African Congress memorandum warning of civil war urged its followers to "be cool and non violent."³⁹ Zukas found it hard to explain the red stripes (representing the international working class) in the badge of the Ndola Anti-Federation Action Committee: "no blood had been spilt . . . nor was there a wish to have any spilt."⁴⁰ In 1959, the *Voice of UNIP* newspaper urged its supporters to conduct their boycotts without violence and to give no excuse for "the use of armed force upon innocent victims."⁴¹

Some leaders had an ethical commitment to nonviolence, but for the majority the tactics of petitions, meetings, marches, boycotts, stone throwing, and destruction of infrastructure were a pragmatic response to the prevailing situation and a strategic recognition that similar tactics had worked in other former British colonies. The militant action prior to independence often spilled into violence, frequently in response to the violence of the colonial authorities. This never involved plans to kill government officials or white residents, let alone to launch an armed struggle.

Factors Influencing a Nonviolent Strategy

Leadership

Kaunda, who led the more radical nationalist organization (UNIP) and became Zambia's president, began reading the writings of Mohandas Gandhi (Mahatma) in the early 1950s. When he visited the United Kingdom in 1956, he met pacifists through the Movement for Colonial Freedom and was in contact with the weekly *Peace News*. On release from prison in

1960, he hoped majority rule could be achieved “through a non-violent struggle. I therefore ask you all to be calm, patient and non-violent.”⁴² At public rallies where crowds were antagonized by the police presence, he reminded them “that our policy was one of non-violence.”⁴³ The cha cha cha damage to physical infrastructure was referred to as “positive action and did not involve plans for attacks on people.”⁴⁴ Kaunda’s advocacy of non-violent actions was perhaps a way of avoiding loss of life, particularly African life, when faced with a more powerful opponent rather than taking a principled stand. He warned Britain of violence worse than that of Mau Mau if Africans lost their patience.⁴⁵ His influence, however, was undeniably a moderating factor. During the violent, sometimes lethal, conflicts between the Lumpa Church and UNIP supporters, he refused to endorse violence. According to the district commissioner of Isoka, “Kenneth Kaunda himself did everything possible to persuade the opposing sides to resolve their differences peaceably.”⁴⁶

After independence Kaunda was committed to ending white domination in southern Africa, which included such support for the liberation struggles as providing headquarters and in some cases a rear base for guerilla activities in Southern Rhodesia. His government’s position was that, “if armed struggle is the only choice left for Zimbabwe and Namibia, we shall support it. Zambia has made it clear that we do not participate in acts of killing if peace can be attained without further bloodshed.”⁴⁷ However, on several occasions, Kaunda expressed his strong views against “mindless violence.” Even during the liberation wars, he was willing to negotiate with white regimes—a position that at times brought him into conflict with the leaders of the liberation movements.⁴⁸

British Colonial Policies

British government strategy sometimes contributed to reducing confrontation as constitutional conferences and Commissions of Inquiry had the effect of keeping open hope for improvement. The UNIP leadership was also aware that there were British parliamentarians, from all parties, who were supportive of African independence. In 1960, the landmark “wind of change speech” by British prime minister Harold Macmillan offered further encouragement that Zambia could follow the path of Ghana and Tanganyika.

International Support for Nonviolent Resistance

By 1960, Zambian nationalists had obtained the active support of a number of African leaders, particularly Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah, Tanganyika’s Julius Nyerere, and Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser, offering further assurance that independence could be achieved nonviolently. These countries helped fund UNIP in the spirit of pan-Africanism.

UNIP also received support from the international peace movement. In 1961, Kaunda was offered support from a pacifist group called the World Peace Brigade, comprised of the “Gandhian Movement, segments of the peace movement particularly in Europe and USA, groups engaged in non-violent struggles for social justice, and movements for national independence and reconstruction.” The group was prepared to march from Tanganyika to Lusaka in international support of UNIP’s rejection of the proposed 1961 constitution and in solidarity with its demands for independence.⁴⁹ This never happened as the violence and disruption caused by the cha cha cha protesters persuaded the British government to grant independence to Northern Rhodesia. But Kaunda’s awareness of this potential support must have strengthened his negotiating position with the British government.

The Role of Christianity

Christianity has been influential in both the colonial and postcolonial periods, helping to create a sense of national identity. It also has influenced the nature of political discourse. The Christian churches ran almost all of the schools in Northern Rhodesia and, even when the government opened a secondary school, it stressed the importance of Christianity. Nationalist leaders in the preindependence period, and government leaders and senior civil servants since then, were all educated together at the same few schools.⁵⁰ Because this education was both Christian and based on a British curriculum, it influenced students to have democratic ideals, which they contrasted with the reality of Northern Rhodesia. It also inclined them to have peaceful and pragmatic aims, toward social democracy rather than socialist revolution. Nationalists integrated their Christianity with their politics. The welfare societies opened their meetings with prayer. When Nkumbula called a strike against federation he called it a day of prayer.

The Christian churches have a tradition of intervention in politics in Zambia that aims to achieve peaceful and, in their eyes, just solutions. In the early colonial period, European missionaries were appointed to represent African interests on the Legislative Council and many became critics of European exploitation of Africans. Several of the churches opposed federation. In 1951, the World Council of Churches denounced federation and called for the eventual transfer of power to Africans,⁵¹ a position later echoed by the Catholic bishops and the United Church (Copperbelt Protestants).⁵²

Conclusion

After the 1920s, there were no further plans for violent resistance to colonial authority. Strikes in 1935 and 1940 degenerated into violence in the face of provocation, but they were intended as a demonstration of worker

solidarity through withdrawal of labor. This period also saw the beginning of a new form of politics in the associations formed by the educated African minority. Democratically organized and multitribal, seeking to change colonial policies through lobbying and self-organized action to improve conditions, they provided a basis for the development of the postwar nationalist party. The aims of this and subsequent nationalist parties were essentially constitutional, to prevent the introduction of a white-dominated federation, and later to pressure the colonial government to introduce a constitution for majority rule.

When petitions, meetings, and symbolic protest failed to change government policy, Africans resorted to more militant and often illegal actions—boycotting shops and beer halls, refusing to obey selected regulations, and boycotting elections. Finally and successfully, a campaign of nonlethal destruction of infrastructure made two provinces ungovernable. The nationalist parties adopted nonviolence clauses in their constitutions; their leaders continuously urged followers to be calm in the face of provocation from colonial forces. And Kaunda was a leader with a real concern to arrive at solutions through nonviolent actions. However, threats and violence became common ways to persuade people to follow the party line, to buy party cards, and to support boycotts. This was later followed by inter-party violence.

The fact that Zambians have lived in peace for the forty-six years of the country's existence is a constant in political rhetoric and is indeed appreciated by the people of Zambia and the international community. Two political parties competing for power before independence provided a precedent for a rather aggressive form of pluralism. Apart from a few unsuccessful coup attempts, the politically disaffected have generally turned toward political movements. This was true even of the final years of the one-party state when a popular movement convinced Kaunda to reintroduce multiparty democracy. Robin Palmer, referring to his years in Zambia in the 1970s, notes, "Zambia was a free country, a decent, tolerant place, even within a one-party system, where people didn't kill each other because of politics. It was also an island of peace and sanity."⁵³

Notes

1. Northern Rhodesia (Zambia)'s eastern neighbor, Nyasaland, gained its independence in 1963 as Malawi while Southern Rhodesia became Zimbabwe in 1980.

2. Northern Rhodesia had several provinces: Northern Province (split in the 1950s into Luapula and Northern Provinces), North-Western Province, Southern Province, Barotseland, Eastern Province, Central Province, and Western Province.

3. Statement of the Conclusions of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom as Regards Closer Union of East Africa, Cmd. 3574. Quoted in David Mulford, *Zambia: The Politics of Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

1967); Lord Passfield, colonial secretary in the first Labour government in Britain, is better known as Sidney Webb, the Fabian socialist and cofounder of the London School of Economics.

4. *Chimurenga* refers to the Shona people's wars against white domination. The first was the 1896 rebellion and the second against the Ian Smith regime in the 1960s and 1970s. Individuals who acted as spirit mediums of some mythical revered figures—such as Nehenda, Kagubi, and Kadungure—took a leading role in the first *chimurenga*. Charwe, Hehanda's spirit medium, was executed for her role. See David Lan, *Guns and Rains: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985), 6.

5. Henry S. Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism: A Prelude to the Politics of Independence in Northern Zambia, 1893–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), 93.

6. Thomas Rasmussen, "The Popular Basis of Anti-Colonial Protest," in *Politics in Zambia*, ed. William Tordoff (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), 50–51.

7. Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism*, 111–113.

8. Robert Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

9. Mwelwa Musambachime, "The African Voice in Northern Rhodesia: The Case of Mweru-Luapula, 1890–1930," Seminar Paper No. 1 (History Department, University of Zambia, May 22, 1987), 7.

10. Patrick Ohadike, "Development of and Factors in the Employment of African Migrants in the Copper Mines of Zambia 1940–66," *Zambian Papers* No. 4 (Lusaka: Institute for Social Research, 1969), 7.

11. Charles Perrings, *Black Mineworkers in Central Africa: Industrial Strategies and the Evolution of an African Proletariat in the Copperbelt, 1911–41* (London: Heinemann, 1979), 220.

12. Rotberg, *Rise of Nationalism*, 171.

13. Henry S. Meebelo, *African Proletarians and Colonial Capitalism* (Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation, 1986), 416–420.

14. *Native Affairs Report* (Lusaka: Government of Northern Rhodesia, 1929).

15. David J. Cook, "The Influence of Livingstonia Mission upon the Formation of Welfare Associations in Zambia, 1912–31," in *Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa*, ed. T. O. Ranger and John Weller (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 98–134.

16. *Ibid.*, 119.

17. *Ibid.*, 109.

18. Jotham C. Momba, "Peasant Differentiation and Rural Party Politics in Colonial Zambia," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11, no. 2 (1985): 289.

19. Mac Dixon Fyle, "The Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) in the Protest Politics of the Tonga Plateau, Northern Rhodesia," *African Social Research*, no. 26 (1978): 460.

20. Rasmussen, "The Popular Basis," 52–53.

21. Mulford, *Zambia*, 27, 33.

22. Godfrey Huggins, the Southern Rhodesian who became the first prime minister of the Federation, infamously compared the partnership between white and black with that of a rider and his horse.

23. Rotberg, *Rise of Nationalism*, 243.

24. Mulford, *Zambia*, 22.

25. Rotberg, *Rise of Nationalism*, 262–263.

26. Mulford, *Zambia*, 25.

27. *Gwembe Commission Report, 1958* (Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Circumstances Leading up to and Surrounding the Recent Deaths and Injuries Caused by the Use of Firearms in the Gwembe District and Matters Relating Thereto (Lusaka Government Printer, 1958), 11–12, cited in Elizabeth Colson, *The Social Consequences of Resettlement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), 40.

28. Colson, *Social Consequences*, 41.

29. Mulford, *Zambia*, 20.

30. *Ibid.*, 37, 45, 64–65.

31. *Ibid.*, 100.

32. *Ibid.*, 114, 116; and Momba, “Peasant Differentiation,” 287.

33. Stone throwing was perceived as political protest. In the first few decades after independence, when an individual with no obvious qualifications was appointed to a political position, the popular and slightly derogatory assumption would be that he had been “a stone thrower.”

34. Rasmussen, “The Popular Basis,” 44.

35. Mulford, *Zambia*, 107.

36. Northern Rhodesia Government, *An Account of Disturbances in Northern Rhodesia July to October, 1961* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1961), 77–78. UNIP claimed more than 100 were killed. UNIP, “Grim Peep in the North.”

37. Simon Zukas, *Into Exile and Back* (Lusaka: Bookworld, 2002), 71.

38. Gisela Geisler, *Women and the Remaking of Politics in Southern Africa* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitut, 2004), 42–44.

39. Rotberg, *Rise of Nationalism*, 219.

40. Zukas, *Into Exile and Back*, 65.

41. Rotberg, *Rise of Nationalism*, 305.

42. Kenneth Kaunda, *Zambia Shall Be Free* (London: Heinemann, 1962), 139.

43. *Ibid.*, 139–140.

44. *Ibid.*, 153.

45. *Ibid.*, 155. The Mau Mau rebellion was a revolt of the Kikuyu group called Mau Mau in Kenya in the 1950s against British colonial rule, conducted with much brutality on both sides.

46. John Hudson, *A Time to Mourn: A Personal Account of the 1964 Lumpa Church Revolt in Zambia* (Lusaka: Bookworld, 1999), 54–55. The Lumpa were too frightened to return to their villages of origin and went into exile in the Congo.

47. Government of the Republic of Zambia, *Official Verbatim Report of the Proceedings of the National Assembly*, January 17–March 21, 1975, 2799–2800, Lusaka.

48. Jotham C. Momba, “Change and Continuity in Zambia’s Southern African Policy: Kaunda to Chiluba,” *Africa Insight* 31, no. 2 (2001), 20.

49. Charles Walker, “Non-violence in Eastern Africa 1962–64: The World Peace Brigade and the Zambian Independence,” in *Liberation Without Violence: A Third Party Approach*, ed. A. Paul Hare and Herbert H. Blumberg (London: Rex Collings, 1977).

50. Brendan Carmody, *The Evolution of Education in Zambia* (Lusaka: Bookworld, 2004), 150–151.

51. Rotberg, *Rise of Nationalism*, 239.

52. Kaunda, *Zambia Shall Be Free*, 145.

53. Robin Palmer, *A House in Zambia: Recollections of the ANC and Oxfam at 250 Zambezi Road, Lusaka, 1967–97* (Lusaka: Bookworld, 2008), 4. He was comparing Zambia not only to the countries of the south involved in freedom wars, but also to Banda’s “murderous dictatorship” in Malawi.

Appendix: Conflict Summaries

This appendix has been compiled by the book's editor, Maciej Bartkowski, based on the information presented in the corresponding chapters of the book. Cases are arranged alphabetically. (Any omissions in the tables are either of the editor's own making or the information was not available.)

Key

Method and Type of Nonviolent Action

Nonviolent intervention

Disruptive

Creative

Noncooperation

Political

Economic

Social

Protest and persuasion

Length of the Campaign

Short: 1 day up to 4 weeks

Medium: 1 month up to 1 year

Long: More than 1 year

Level of Participation of People

Low: 1–100 people or less than 20 percent of the population

Medium: 100–1,000 people or between 20 percent and 50 percent of the population

High: More than 1,000 people or more than 50 percent of the population

Zambia

Action	Method/Type	Date	Length	Level of Participation	Direct Impact	Long-Term/Overall Impact of Civil Resistance
Refusal to pay tax, provide forced labor, and recognize colonial authority	Noncooperation/ <i>Economic, Political</i>	1890 onward		Medium	Most of the resistance was unsuccessful as taxes were levied, land seized, forced labor exacted Some resistance succeeded in persuading the colonial administration to reverse its decisions to abolish a system of shifting cultivation and allow for its use next to a settled agricultural system	
African-led churches called for equality of blacks and whites and rejection of both colonial and traditional chiefly authority	Protest and persuasion	1918 onward	Long	Low	Thousands were influenced by the teaching of the churches The colonial government arrested “seditious” preachers and banned Watchtower	Strengthened development of a sense of African identity and a feeling of empowerment
Workers’ strikes in Copperbelt towns	Noncooperation/ <i>Economic</i>	1935 and 1940	Medium	High	Strikes emphasized unity in diversity of the African labor force Advocacy of nonviolent action was present during strikes and helped engender moderation and nonviolent (though militant) behavior as part of the postwar nationalist resistance	
Labor unions representing various professional groups were formed	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	late 1940s	Long	High	Unions’ pressure forced the colonial government to reverse its policy on short-term labor migrants and accept that Africans would remain in the towns as permanent workers	Facilitated development of a politicized multiethnic urban proletariat that in turn helped the growth of a sense of national identity Labor unions became the source of a militant support for nationalist parties as their economic struggles had strong anticolonial overtones
Setting up welfare associations	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	1920 onward	Long	High	The welfare associations often achieved local objectives. Under their public pressure in Ndola, government among others set up a new school, improved sanitary conditions, opened a township market, and distributed land for garden plots	The associations developed political awareness, including strengthening African unity beyond tribal differences, and taught democratic organization and decisionmaking The welfare associations were a harbinger of the first territory-wide nationalist party
Welfare associations led awareness-raising campaigns, protested against racial discrimination, demanded better schools and infrastructure	Protest and persuasion	1920 onward	Long	High		
Formation of political groupings and parties with nationalist goals	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Creative</i>	From late 1930s until late 1950s	Long	High	Colonial authorities at first denied registration Taught political organization, participation, and mobilization skills Provided forums for Africans to articulate their political opinions	
Sending delegations to London to pressure the colonial and British government to reject the idea of a Federation with white-dominated Southern Rhodesia	Protest and persuasion	1950 onward	Long	High	The delegation did not succeed	
Protest meetings held throughout the territory to mobilize African opinion against the British. Harry Nkumbula, leader of African National Congress, symbolically burned the government white paper announcing a Federation	Protest and persuasion	1950 onward	Long	High		
National strike	Noncooperation/ <i>Economic</i>	April 1953	Short	Low	The response to a call for a strike was not widespread. It was observed in two Copperbelt towns and in Lusaka The ANC failed to organize a broad coalition in support of its anti-federation strike	Resort to nonviolent actions made Zambians more inclined to seek political change through political parties and movements rather than through violence. Zambia’s postcolonial history has been largely peaceful and politically less violent than many of its neighbors
Refusal to feed touring government officials	Noncooperation/ <i>Political</i>				Boycotts had an economic impact Resistance actions motivated people by showing the unity and strength of the movement	
Campaigns of noncooperation with government: refusal to store grain and inoculate cattle, ignoring regulations for compulsory communal storage of kaffir corn and cassava	Noncooperation/ <i>Political, Economic</i>	1959			Increased government repression Political leaders, including Kenneth Kaunda, were arrested Harsh measures backfired, fueling support for resistance and nationalist parties	
Boycotts of Asian and European shops that practiced segregation, including butcher shops, beer halls, tearooms, and hotels	Noncooperation/ <i>Economic, Social, Political</i>	1950s				
Women marched, bare breasted, against the color bar	Protest and persuasion					
Women in Luapula Province helped hide political prisoners	Noncooperation/ <i>Political</i>	1950s				
Public burnings of the ID passes that all Africans were required to carry	Protest and persuasion	1959				
Boycott of elections	Noncooperation/ <i>Political</i>	1958				
Launching the cha cha cha campaign that aimed at damaging property and infrastructure to make the territory ungovernable	Nonviolent intervention/ <i>Disruptive</i>	1961	Short	High	From July 15 to October 31, 146 roads were either destroyed or blocked, 64 bridges destroyed, 64 schools destroyed, 77 other public buildings destroyed, and 69 motor vehicles burned or destroyed—making the territory ungovernable for the British Twenty African protesters killed by the police The campaign prompted the British government to accept that Zambia should gain independence	