

# *The University Of Zambia and the Liberation of Southern Africa, 1966–90\**

HUGH MACMILLAN

(African Studies Centre, Oxford University)

*This article examines the role of the University of Zambia (UNZA) in relation to the liberation of southern Africa, and seeks to cast light on Zambia's often ambivalent role. A contradiction emerged between the Zambian government's support for liberation abroad and its intolerance of criticism at home. The university came to be seen as a centre of opposition and was often a place of conflict. I seek to answer a number of questions. What was the role of exiled academics and intellectuals, such as Jack Simons, Ben Magubane, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Lewis Nkosi and Fay Chung, at the university in the first two decades of its existence? Why did issues relating to the liberation struggle become points of conflict in the major crises of 1971 and 1976? What was the role of the founders of the Chikwakwa Theatre – and the exponents of 'theatre for development', John Reed, Michael Etherton and Fay Chung – in the radicalisation of the student body? What role did UNZA staff such as Simons, Magubane and Chung play in the life of the liberation movements to which they belonged? What was the role of UNZA in the training of students who went on to play important roles in liberation movements and in government on their return to their home countries? What were the links, from an UNZA perspective, between the liberation struggles waged by exile groups based in Zambia and the demand for democracy in Zambia itself?*

Shortly after his release from prison in February 1990, Nelson Mandela addressed students on the campus forum (a central meeting place) at the University of Zambia (UNZA). It was his first trip abroad and the first time he had spoken at a university since his release. As I noted at the time in a letter reporting the event:

He spoke well though his praise of [President] Kaunda and his appeal for discipline were not what the students wanted to hear. Winnie [Mandela] rather saved the day by saying that the students should be disciplined [but only] if the university authorities were prepared to listen to them.<sup>1</sup>

Mandela's visit to Zambia was a hugely symbolic event, marking the culmination of the country's involvement in the liberation struggle in southern Africa, an involvement as old as the country itself. Zambia had emerged into independence in 1964 while still economically entangled with settler-ruled Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa. Mandela's visit to the university could also be seen as a tribute to the role of UNZA in the liberation struggle. The less than enthusiastic reception accorded to him by the student body reflected something else, however – the unpopularity of a United National Independence Party (UNIP) government that had presided over nearly two decades of economic decline. A few months later, police prevented the students from marching to State House, President Kaunda's residence, to

---

\*I would like to thank the Leverhulme Trust, and Professor William Beinart and the African Studies Centre, Oxford University, for funding, sponsoring and hosting my research on the history of the ANC in exile in Zambia. I am grateful to Morris Szeftel and the JSAS readers for helpful comments on the draft and to Lucy Graham for her help with the final draft.

1 Author's personal papers (hereafter Macmillan papers), Hugh Macmillan to Mona Macmillan, 21 March 1990.

protest about an increase in the price of maize meal, the country's staple food, imposed under pressure from the IMF as part of a structural adjustment programme. The students resolved to take their protest 'to the people' instead. Starting in the high-density townships such as Kalingalinga, near the university, riots soon spread around Lusaka and lasted for three days.<sup>2</sup> These triggered a process that resulted in the end of the one-party state and the defeat of Kaunda and UNIP in multi-party elections in 1991. This was the seventh time that a university crisis had resulted in the closure of the institution since 1971, but it was the first time that student protest had had such important political repercussions.

There are a number of published accounts of student consciousness and protest at UNZA.<sup>3</sup> Published in 1976, the first and most influential of these was Michael Burawoy's article on 'consciousness and contradiction', which drew on his own experience of the 1971 closure. He pointed out that conflict was likely to be endemic in the university because of the inherent contradictions between the new university's roles as a teaching institution and as a symbol of nationhood, as well as the 'solidary' function that it was expected to play in support of the 'dominant political organs', while abstaining from opposition to the policies of the government. The university drew especially great pressure because of its uniqueness and the lack of established mechanisms for containing criticism in the new state. In this context Burawoy saw individuals as 'agents' or 'carriers' of contradictions. He did not see the purpose of his study as 'cast[ing] light on student protest in general but [rather] to illuminate the nature of the Zambian political and social structures'.

In this article I do not intend to repeat earlier studies of student protest, or to make generalisations about the relationship between universities and liberation movements. My purpose instead is to look at the role of UNZA in relation to the liberation of southern Africa, in the hope that this will cast light on Zambia's own often ambivalent role. The country's leaders felt themselves under a moral obligation to provide refuge and support to people from the five countries in the region that were engaged in liberation struggles, but members of liberation movements often made unruly guests, and they did not always respect the country's sovereignty. There was an emerging contradiction between the Zambian government's support for liberation abroad and its intolerance of criticism at home. A number of questions arise. What was the role of exile academics and intellectuals, such as Jack Simons, Ben Magubane, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Lewis Nkosi, and Fay Chung, at the university in the first two decades of its existence? Why did issues relating to the liberation struggle become points of conflict in the major crises of 1971 and 1976? What was the role of the founders of the Chikwakwa Theatre and the exponents of 'theatre for development', John Reed, Michael Etherton and Fay Chung, in the radicalisation of the student body? What role was played by UNZA staff such as Simons, Magubane and Chung in the life of the liberation movements to which they belonged? What was the role of UNZA in the training of students who went on to play important roles in liberation movements and in government on their return to their home countries? What were the links, from the university's perspective, between the liberation struggles waged by exile groups based in Zambia and the demand for democracy in Zambia itself?

2 Macmillan papers, Hugh Macmillan to Mona Macmillan, 17 July 1990.

3 For earlier accounts of student protest at the University of Zambia, see M. Burawoy, 'Consciousness and Contradiction: A Study of Student Protest in Zambia', *British Journal of Sociology*, 27, 1 (1976), pp. 78–98; N.J. Small, 'Zambia – Trouble on Campus', *Index on Censorship*, 6, 6 (1977), pp. 8–14; Y.G.-M. Lulat, 'Determinants of Third World Student Political Activism in the Seventies: The Case of Zambia', in P.G. Altbach (ed.), *Student Politics: Perspectives for the Eighties* (Metuchen, NJ, Scarecrow Press, 1980), pp. 234–66; R. Balsvik, 'Student Life at the University of Zambia: Strikes, Closures and the Disruption of Learning, 1965–92', *Zambia Journal of History*, 8 (1995), pp. 1–20. Michael Burawoy completed an MA in Sociology at UNZA in 1972 with a dissertation titled 'The Roles of the University Student in the Zambian Social Structure'.

The establishment of UNZA in 1965–6 was a consequence of the break-up of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland at the end of 1963, and the independence of Zambia the following October. The country's need for its own university became more urgent when Rhodesia made its unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) in November 1965, resulting in the subsequent repatriation of Zambian students who had been studying in Rhodesia at the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland – itself a product of the ill-fated and settler-controlled Federation. UDI also resulted in the exodus of some academic staff to the new university in the north, which opened in 1966 with 300 students. Enrolment grew slowly to 3,500 students by 1990. As the Zambian middle class was initially extremely small, the majority of students in the early years came from junior professional and clerical backgrounds, with always a strong contingent from the Copperbelt. The great majority of students received state bursaries and were directed to particular courses, sometimes contrary to their preferences, by government manpower planning. Students tended to see themselves as members of an elite group, and had the expectation of well-paid employment on graduation. There was a quota for foreign students, who never numbered many more than 5 per cent of the student body. The bulk of these students came from Rhodesia and South Africa, and were funded by the United Nations, the Scandinavian-backed Inter-University Exchange Fund (IUEF) and the African-American Institute. The great majority of students – 80 per cent throughout the period under review – were male, and gender relations were often tense, as was apparent from the language of student magazines. University governance derived from the British model, while curricula were organised on American lines. Most students entered university after O levels (Form V) and did a four-year degree. Most of the academic staff were initially expatriates, and localisation was a slow process, which involved sending graduates overseas for postgraduate study through a staff development programme.<sup>4</sup>

## **Jack Simons and the ANC**

Difficult though it is to judge the impact of individual academics on universities and students, it is reasonable to suggest that in the early years of UNZA's history some of the most influential academics were exiled South Africans with links to the African National Congress (ANC). Jack Simons was one of the most significant intellectuals, university teachers and political activists to emerge from South Africa in the twentieth century. Born in 1907, he studied law and government in South Africa before moving to the London School of Economics in 1932, where he completed a doctorate in social anthropology under Bronislaw Malinowski. He returned to South Africa in 1937 and taught Comparative African Government and Law at the University of Cape Town until banned from teaching in 1964. He became a member of the Communist Party in Great Britain and played a major role, with his wife, Ray Alexander, and others, in the revival of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in the late 1930s and 1940s. He was one of the leaders of the CPSA who voted for its dissolution in the face of banning under the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950. He did not join the underground South African Communist Party (SACP) on its formation in 1953, though his wife did, but they both became members of the ANC in exile in 1967.

They arrived in Lusaka in May 1965, initially given a permit to stay for only ten days. The new university was due to open in March 1966, and the Vice-Chancellor, Douglas Anglin, offered Simons, who was about to take up a visiting fellowship at Manchester University, the prospect of employment on his return to Zambia. In Manchester Jack Simons completed work on *African Women: Their Legal Status in South Africa* (1968), and Jack and Ray completed

---

4 Burawoy, 'Consciousness and Contradiction'; Balsvik, 'Student Life'; author's personal knowledge.

work together on *Class and Colour in South Africa* (1969).<sup>5</sup> Both these important books were published after Jack Simons took up his post at UNZA as a reader, later professor, in sociology, at the beginning of 1968. The Simons were to keep an open house at 250 Zambezi Road, in Roma township – not far from the university – for members of the ANC, the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and other liberation movements, as well as for numerous Zambian intellectuals, students and friends, for nearly 25 years.

Simons remained on the teaching staff at UNZA for seven years and continued to be associated with the university as an editor of *African Social Research* until 1980. Whether in Cape Town or Lusaka, or in the ANC's camps in Angola, his Socratic, questioning method of teaching had a huge impact. As his student in Cape Town, the South African jurist Albie Sachs recalled, in an obituary in 1995:

Knowledge to him was not established information laboriously imbibed. Knowledge was combat, dialogue, interaction. He was as interested in the knowledge of a poor petrol-pump attendant who had worked his way, garage by garage, from the Transkei to Cape Town, as he was in the path-breaking anthropology of his close colleague Professor Monica Wilson.<sup>6</sup>

Jack Simons did not teach Marxism in university classes, but he did teach critical thinking, and he was pleased that four sociology students were among the leaders arrested in the 1971 crisis. His influence as a teacher was in no way confined to UNZA. Soon after his arrival in Zambia he became involved in political education for UNIP and, with Ray, for the trade unions. He also played a significant role as a mediator between the ANC leadership and Chris Hani and the other signatories of the highly critical memorandum that they produced in 1969 after the failure of the ANC/ZAPU alliance's Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns. He was himself the first UNZA staff member to be detained under the terms of the President's emergency powers after a cache of AK47 assault rifles was discovered in a cottage on the Zambezi Road plot in August 1970. He was held for a week at Kabwe maximum security prison, but was released after the intervention of Oliver Tambo and other friends and colleagues.<sup>7</sup>

He also played a major part in political education within the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the ANC's armed wing, from the late 1960s onwards, and had a very strong influence on members of the Soweto generation who joined the ANC in the late 1970s. They had usually been politicised through the Black Consciousness Movement, and Simons has been credited with the inculcation of principles of Marxism and non-racialism into members of this group. In 1977–78, and again in 1979, he trained political educators and commissars within MK, spending a total of nine months in the camps in Angola and taking the oath as a member of MK in January 1979. He also played an important part in the establishment of the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (Somafo) at Morogoro in Tanzania. After his death in 1995, some of his camp diaries and political education lectures were published, in *Comrade Jack* in 2001. In his obituary notice for Simons, Albie Sachs also recalled:

His classes in the bush became so legendary that the South African military gave him the highest award any professor could ever receive, a special bomber to blast the camp where his seminars were given: an honour, I am happy to say, that he and his students received in absentia.<sup>8</sup>

5 H.J. Simons, *African Women: Their Legal Status in South Africa* (London, C. Hurst & Co., 1968); H.J. and R.E. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850–1950* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969).

6 Albie Sachs, 'Jack Simons', obituary, the *Independent* (London), 3 August 1995.

7 H. Macmillan, 'After Morogoro: The Continuing Crisis in the African National Congress (of South Africa) in Zambia, 1969–71', *Social Dynamics*, 35, 2 (2009), pp. 304–5.

8 A. Sachs, 'Obituary'.

The ANC's Novo Catengue camp was, indeed, destroyed within a week of his departure from it, along with most of its other residents, in March 1979.<sup>9</sup>

Another black South African academic, Bernard (also known as Ben) Magubane, a sociologist, spent three years from 1967 to 1970 at the university, but was compelled to leave as a result of immigration regulations, which may have been intended to reduce the number of South Africans and Rhodesians working in Zambia at a time when the government wanted to step back from confrontation with the south. An active member of the ANC, Magubane provided, with his wife, a safe house for its exile leader, Oliver Tambo. Magubane was in touch with Basil February (a Cape Town intellectual who fought under the *nom de guerre* of Paul Petersen, and was killed in action during the Wankie campaign), and with Chris Hani, both before and after that campaign. He was the only member of UNZA's staff to attend the ANC's important Morogoro conference in Tanzania in 1969.

Before his departure from UNZA for the US in January 1970, Magubane had begun to mount an influential, though flawed, critique of the practice of social anthropology, as displayed in the work of the Rhodes–Livingstone Institute (the predecessor of the Institute of African Studies), and the related Manchester School. Acknowledging the personal influence of Ronald Frankenberg, head of the sociology department, and Jack Simons, and the intellectual influence of Marx, Engels and Lenin, he criticised the tendencies of social scientists to portray Africa as static and to accept uncritically the context of colonialism and capitalist exploitation in which they worked. His critique did not endear him to Jaap van Velsen, a Dutch social anthropologist, and a later director of the Institute, who was deported from Rhodesia after UDI and joined the staff of UNZA in 1966. Van Velsen was strongly critical of Magubane's use of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* as a sociology text, but the introduction of this text may well have had a lasting influence on many students through the formation of the Frantz Fanon Club, a student society that played a part in the UNZA crisis of 1976. After South Africa's liberation, Magubane became a co-editor of the South African Democratic Education Trust's important history of the liberation struggle, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*.<sup>10</sup>

## **Drum Writers – Ezekiel Mphahlele and Lewis Nkosi**

Perhaps the most famous South African exile with ANC connections to serve on the staff in the early years was Ezekiel (later known as Es'kia) Mphahlele, the *Drum* journalist, novelist and author of the classic memoir, *Down Second Avenue*.<sup>11</sup> Mphahlele came to work in the English department at the University of Zambia in 1968 and stayed for only two years. He resigned in protest at the deportation from Zambia in 1969 of Livingstone Mqotsi, an expelled member of the Non-European Unity Movement, and Dr Kenneth Abrahams, a SWAPO refugee who had been working for four years as a doctor in Lusaka.<sup>12</sup>

Mphahlele was a semi-detached member of the ANC and became disillusioned with it and with exile politics, so much so that he earned some opprobrium, not least from fellow *Drum* journalist, and later UNZA staff member, Lewis Nkosi, for his return from the US to a job in

---

9 Marion Sparg, Jenny Schreiner and Gwen Ansell (eds), *Comrade Jack: The Political Lectures and Diary of Jack Simons* (New Doornfontein, STE Publishers, 2001), quoting Jack Simons' diary entries for 7 and 15 March 1979.

10 B. Magubane, *My Life and Times* (Pinetown, UKZN Press, 2010), pp. 140–87. See also L. Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology: Fieldwork, Networks, and the Making of Cultural Knowledge in Central Africa* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 229–31.

11 E. Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue* (London, Faber & Faber, 1959).

12 E. Mphahlele, *Afrika My Music* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1984), pp. 95–101; N. Chabani Manganyi and D. Attwell (eds), *Bury Me at the Market Place: Es'kia Mphahlele and Company, Letters 1943–2006* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2010), pp. 162–75.



the Lebowa bantustan in 1977. His views may have been influenced by his knowledge of the in-fighting within the ANC, which reached its peak in the wake of the Hani memorandum in the early months of 1969. In a later interview, he said that he found that

... tribalism was pretty rampant in the exile movement: Xhosa against Zulu against Sotho. I kept saying to myself: back home there had been so much cohesion among us. I mean, nobody ever bothered about these ethnic groupings at all. But in exile, man, the thing just emerged in bold relief.<sup>13</sup>

These views found fictional expression in his Zambian, and exile, novel, *Chirundu*, published in South Africa in 1979.<sup>14</sup> Mphahlele was equally unimpressed by UNZA and Zambia, claiming the university was run by a 'clique of retreads who have been teaching in Africa for years ...'.

In July this year [1969] an African is taking over as Vice-Chancellor from a Canadian Quaker who's quite a stinker. Most of us can hardly wait for his departure. But then because of the political climate and the tribalism in the country (more pronounced than it seemed to us from outside), I just somehow feel I've lost my zip, and couldn't care who runs the institution. Even tribalism one can tolerate if the Establishment is not always reminding one that he is a foreign native, if instead it makes you feel wanted. Talk of neo-colonialism: it is here in all its ugly and outrageous proportions.<sup>15</sup>

Lewis Nkosi, *Drum* journalist, literary critic, broadcaster, playwright and novelist, worked in the English department from 1979 to 1987, becoming a professor in 1983. He stayed longer and had a more positive attitude towards UNZA and the ANC than Mphahlele, of whom he was a stern critic. His inaugural lecture, 'In Defence of the Study of Literature', introduced poststructuralist literary theory, including the work of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, to many of his listeners, as he had earlier to his students.<sup>16</sup> He completed and published both his study of African literature, *Tasks and Masks*, and his award-winning novel, *Mating Birds*, while he was at UNZA.<sup>17</sup> He was, like Mphahlele, an independently minded supporter of the ANC and not, as he said himself, an activist, but he published poems in the movement's journal, *Sechaba*. The ANC's cultural journal, *Rixaka*, published in Lusaka from 1985 onwards, was conceived at a meeting in his apartment. He contributed a significant article, 'Black Writing in South Africa', to its first number, repeating his earlier arguments against 'struggle writing' and anticipating Albie Sachs's later plea that writers should not regard 'their books as bullets'.<sup>18</sup> Another member of the English department in the 1980s with ANC links was the poet Willie Keorapetse Kgositsile, whose wife, Baleka Mbete-Kgositsile, was herself a poet and writer, and went on to become Speaker of the national assembly in South Africa, and Deputy President in 2008–9.

## The Chikwakwa Theatre and 'Theatre for Development'

Under the leadership of John Reed, who had taught at the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland for nine years, the Department of English Language and Literature was from the

13 Interview with Mphahlele by Chabani Manganyi, first published in 1981, reproduced in Manganyi and Attwell (eds), *Bury Me at the Market Place*, p. 493.

14 E. Mphahlele, *Chirundu* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1979).

15 Mayibuye Centre, Cape Town, IDAF Papers, Box 260, E. Mphahlele to Phyllis Altman, 20 April 1969.

16 It was published in the UNZA literary journal, *Ngoma*, 1, 2 (1984), p. 65.

17 L. Nkosi, *Tasks and Masks: Themes and Styles of African Literature* (London, Longman, 1981); *Mating Birds: A Novel*. This novel, unusually, had two first editions, one published by East African Publishing House, Nairobi in 1983, and the second by St Martin's Press, New York in 1986.

18 Interview with Lewis Nkosi by Zoë Molver, 2002, reprinted in Lindy Steibel and Liz Gunner (eds), *Still Beating the Drum: Critical Perspectives on Lewis Nkosi* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2006), p. 224.

beginning one of the largest and most dynamic of the new university's departments, and became a centre for the promotion of radical, and sometimes revolutionary, ideas. Reed himself had been a founding member of the National Democratic Party, later ZAPU, and remained in close touch with its exile leaders, including James Chikerema and George Nyandoro.<sup>19</sup> Among those whom Reed recruited were Michael Etherton, who was born in Northern Rhodesia though educated in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, and an American, Andy Horn. Reed and Etherton, with the encouragement of Lalage Bown, head of the extra-mural studies department, actively promoted the 'out-reach' efforts of the university, including the travelling theatre that took plays to Mongu, Chipata and Kasama, and the Chikwakwa Theatre, a 'mud theatre', in the grounds of Reed's house near the university. Built with the help of student volunteers in 1969–70, and deliberately sited off campus with the intention of working with the wider community, this outdoor, dry-season-only theatre was a pioneering venture in 'theatre for development'. Among its first productions was an Africanised version of Mario Fratti's *Che!*, a play about Che Guevara and the insurrection in Bolivia, timed to coincide with the Non-Aligned Movement's conference in September 1970 as a gesture of solidarity with the liberation movements engaged in guerrilla wars in southern Africa. Vice-President Simon Kapwepwe attended on the opening night, and President Kaunda came to a later performance. Among the more conspicuous figures attending was Raúl Castro, brother of Fidel, and a friend of Guevara, who described Panwell Munatamba's performance in the role of Che as 'authentic'.

The next major production in July 1971 was a musical, and bi-lingual – English and chiBemba – version of Andrea Masiye's *King Kazembe and the Portuguese*. One of the two actors playing King Kazembe was John Matshikiza, the student son of Todd Matshikiza, the South African jazz pianist, composer of the musical *King Kong*, and *Drum* journalist, who had worked for Zambia Broadcasting Services (ZBS) and had died in exile in Lusaka in 1968. John graduated from UNZA with a degree in politics and economics, and, while active in the ANC in London, had a successful career as an actor on stage and screen, playing roles in, among other films, *Cry Freedom!* He also played a doctor in the classic television episode, *The Blood Donor*, with comedian Tony Hancock. On his return to South Africa in 1991 he became involved with the Market Theatre and was, latterly, a columnist on the *Mail & Guardian*. He died in Johannesburg in 2008.

## Chikwakwa and the 1971 Crisis

The opening night of the Chikwakwa Theatre's production of *King Kazembe and the Portuguese*, on 7 July 1971, coincided with the beginning of the first major crisis in UNZA's history. There was no causal connection between these events, but the later victimisation and deportation of Etherton and Horn was an indication that the government had come to believe that the English department in general, and the Chikwakwa Theatre in particular, were sources of unwelcome radical ideas. Demonstrations in Lusaka had become increasingly frequent in the years since UDI, so much so that the *Times of Zambia*'s satirical columnist Kapelwa Musonda (Wizas Phiri) dedicated an article, 'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis jolly to march', to a discussion of the tendency of people, including himself, to join demonstrations first and ask what they were for, or against, afterwards.<sup>20</sup> Student demonstrations had invariably been in support of government policy and were frequently directed against the

---

19 Most of the material in this and the subsequent three paragraphs is from M. Etherton and J. Reed, *Chikwakwa Remembered: Theatre and Politics in Zambia, 1968–72* (Dublin, Original Writing, 2011).

20 K. Musonda, *The Kapelwa Musonda File* (Lusaka, Neczam, 1973 [first published 1972]), pp. 78–80.

British High Commission. The demonstration on 7 July was a protest against the French government's decision to allow the South African government to manufacture Mirage jet fighters under licence. The demonstration became violent before it reached the French embassy. When tear gas failed to bring the students under control, the commanding officer fired a shot from his pistol, injuring one student. Fifty-one students were arrested and released on bail. The newspapers initially supported the students and criticised the police, and the following day brought a larger demonstration against the police, in which students marched to the Secretariat. There, the threat of confrontation with the police was forestalled when the head of the law department, Professor Kent, and a senior law student, Mundia Sikatana, persuaded the students to withdraw.<sup>21</sup>

On the following day, President Kaunda issued an apparently conciliatory statement in which, however, he said that foreign relations 'should be left in his hands'. The student leadership drafted a response, which was delivered to the president. It referred to Kaunda's recently published correspondence with J.B. Vorster, dating back to 1968, and suggested that in view of his recent communications with 'the enemy', he was asking too much of the students and the Zambian nation in saying 'leave it to me'.<sup>22</sup> The *Times of Zambia* published the letter on 13 July, but by then the newspapers had turned against the students. The *Zambia Daily Mail* on 15 July carried a headline, 'We rule, you learn', and a UNIP placard read, 'We cannot allow a state within a state'.<sup>23</sup>

Writing on 16 July to his daughter, Tanya, Jack Simons reported:

Lots of unpleasant excitement here, which I assume has been reported. Students stood firm on what they thought was a question of principle; the ruling UNIP decided to teach them a lesson; the students vowed they would resist; & the scene was set for what threatened to turn into a nasty & perhaps bloody battle, with students arming themselves, & setting out their cohorts in organised array. Then the government appeared to draw back; the march on the campus (by UNIP) was abandoned; & the students hailed the event as a notable victory. They were mistaken. The State struck back at 2 a.m. on Thursday, brought up the army & police, who invaded the residences, ordered the students out, & announced that the government had closed the university until the end of August, when our second semester begins. The ten members of the executive (including four of our sociology students) have been rusticated, are told they will not be allowed to resume their studies, while other students must apply for admission.

So much for the facts. Underneath is a confused story of pressure by the Party, indignation against the police, student obstinacy, & I suppose a feeling in government circles that they were getting out of hand. To take another point of view, I suppose one must conclude that the university is a new type of institution to which the society must learn to adapt; and that students have to discover they are not a powerful pressure group. Indeed, all of us, staff, administration & students have learned the hard way that our institution is exceedingly vulnerable & cannot depend on a well-established tradition of academic freedom & autonomy. All that is left us is to negotiate on behalf of the students for modifications of the severe penalties ...<sup>24</sup>

In saying that the students had to learn that they did not constitute a strong pressure group, Simons was reflecting his own experience as a student demonstrator in the UK in the 1930s and as a lecturer in South Africa. It was clear, as he indicated, that what had started as a demonstration over an issue of foreign policy relating to the struggle against apartheid had grown into something much more complicated – the first real test of the university's

21 Etherton and Reed, *Chikwakwa Remembered*.

22 University of Cape Town, Simons Papers, copy of letter to President Kaunda with signatures of ten members of the executive committee of the University of Zambia Students Union (UNZASU), no date. *Dear Mr. Vorster...* Details of exchanges between President Kaunda of Zambia and Prime Minister Vorster of South Africa was published by the Zambian government on 23 April 1971 after extracts of the correspondence between the two men had been released by the South African government with the clear intention of discrediting Kaunda.

23 Burawoy, 'Consciousness and Contradiction', pp. 82, 94.

24 Barben Papers, Cape Town, Jack Simons to Tanya Simons, 16 July 1971.



autonomy. Fundamental issues were raised relating to the power of the government to close the university and exclude students without reference to the university's own decision-making institutions, such as the council and senate. In a long statement to parliament, which was circulated as a pamphlet, Aaron Milner, the secretary-general to the government, and the man to whom Kaunda, the university's chancellor, had delegated control of the crisis, referred to the university as public property, which had been built by 'the sweat and toil of poor people', to the students' 'lack of respect for their elders' and to student leaders having 'fallen prey to outside influences'.<sup>25</sup> The government and the ruling party, UNIP, were in effect saying that the university was not an autonomous institution. They preferred, as Thandika Mkandawire has noted of African governments in general, that intellectuals and, by implication, students, 'confine their critical faculties to foreign powers'.<sup>26</sup>

By the time that Milner's speech was distributed on 21 July, deportation orders had been issued to Michael Etherton and Andy Horn. Although their deportation was delayed, and the vice-chancellor, Professor Lameck Goma, the Council, Senate and the academic staff showed solidarity in their support, the deportation orders were not revoked and they left Zambia on 31 July. It seems probable that the success of the Chikwakwa Theatre, their high profiles and their unusual closeness to students were the real reasons for their deportation. The ten student leaders, including Ronald Penza, a future finance minister in the first post-UNIP government, were eventually allowed to resume their studies.<sup>27</sup> John Reed submitted his resignation to the vice-chancellor the day after his colleagues' departure, but he withdrew it after receiving a personal handwritten letter from President Kaunda. He left the university two years later, in 1974.<sup>28</sup>

There were many sub-texts to the conflict between the university and the state, not only the Kaunda–Vorster correspondence, but also the tension between Kaunda and Simon Kapwepwe, who was no longer vice-president, but was still a member of the cabinet. He resigned from the government two months later to become leader of a new opposition party, the United Progressive Party (UPP), which was registered in August. Some suggested that the student executive had been encouraged to take a hard line against UNIP by Kapwepwe's supporters in the cabinet. When police arrested 70 officials of the new party in September, within days of the party's formation, Kapwepwe, who had not yet been detained, announced that 70 UNZA students had volunteered to take their places. Nine student leaders of UPP did leave to take up positions in the party. Kapwepwe was arrested in February 1972, when Kaunda announced his intention to establish a one-party state, which came into force in December 1972. On a visit to the university soon after its re-opening in 1971, President Kaunda told the students that they should distinguish between 'criticism' and 'opposition'. The university came to be seen from that time onwards as a centre of opposition. The suggestion that the students were under the influence of Kapwepwe was to be revived during the crisis in 1975–76, and the university was later one of the centres from which the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) emerged, in 1989–90.

Opinion polls conducted in 1970–71 by Michael Burawoy indicated that 72 per cent of students opposed the establishment of a UNIP branch on the campus, and 81 per cent opposed

---

25 Simons papers, University of Cape Town; Republic of Zambia, Information Services, 'Statement by the Secretary-General to the Government, to Parliament, on the closure of the University of Zambia', 21 July 1971. Milner's remarks had a surprising resemblance to the views of Kwame Nkrumah, who is quoted by Thandika Mkandawire as saying: 'We do not intend to sit idly by and see these institutions which are supported by millions of pounds produced out of the sweat and toil of common people come to be centres of anti-government activities', T. Mkandawire, 'African Intellectuals and Nationalism', in T. Mkandawire (ed.), *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development* (London, Zed Books, 2005), p. 22.

26 Mkandawire, 'African Intellectuals and Nationalism', p. 13.

27 Etherton and Reed, *Chikwakwa Remembered*.

28 *Ibid.*

the establishment of a one-party state. Student opposition on these issues became a constant factor over the next 20 years. A poll taken after the re-opening of the university in 1971 rejected overwhelmingly the proposition that the closure had the support of the majority of the population. There were, however, contradictions. A poll in October suggested that almost half the student body favoured the resumption of trade with South Africa and Rhodesia. This was, perhaps, an indication that the students as a body had stronger views on issues of internal democracy than they had about support for liberation movements.<sup>29</sup>

## The Crisis in ZANU and the Role of the UNZA Branch

The liberation movement that was best organised on the UNZA campus at this time, or probably at any time, was the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). Its leading members included several members of the academic staff, including Dzingai Mutumbuka, a lecturer in the chemistry department, later first minister of education in independent Zimbabwe; Simbi Mubako, a law lecturer, later Zimbabwe's first minister of justice; and Sam Geza, a lecturer in economics with a special interest in agriculture, from 1981–87 director of land resettlement. Fay Chung, a Zimbabwean of Chinese parentage, joined the English department as Etherton and Horn left; she took over responsibility for Chikwakwa and the travelling theatre. Politically unaffiliated on her arrival at UNZA in 1971, Chung in 1973 joined the campus branch of ZANU. As well as her formal dramatic work for UNZA, Chung helped to organise a ZANU drama group, which brought together students and freedom fighters. These included Teurai Ropa, later wife of Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA – ZANU's military wing) commander Rex Nhongo, and better known as Joyce Majuru, vice-president of Zimbabwe from 2005.<sup>30</sup>

The impact of the Arab–Israeli War and the subsequent oil price crisis in 1973, taken together with the revolution in Portugal in 1974 and the prospect of independence for Mozambique and Angola, created a new climate in which South Africa and Zambia found a common interest in the settlement of the outstanding regional issues of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and South West Africa/Namibia. The Zambian strategy was to separate John Vorster from Ian Smith. At an UNZA graduation ceremony in October 1974, President Kaunda, who had been engaged for some months in secret talks with South Africa through emissaries, including Mark Chona, hailed recent statements by Vorster as representing 'at last, the voice of reason' in southern Africa. Kaunda's speech heralded the release in the following month of Zimbabwean nationalist leaders Joshua Nkomo, Robert Mugabe and Ndabaningi Sithole, and their flight to Lusaka for talks at State House with leaders of the front-line states, including President Nyerere of Tanzania. Pressure from the Zambian government on ZANU helped to precipitate internal conflict and the assassination in Lusaka in February 1975 of the movement's leader, Herbert Chitepo. The assassination of Chitepo was followed by the arrest in Zambia, or flight to Mozambique, of almost all the top leadership of ZANU. One of the most prominent, Josiah Tongogara, escaped to Mozambique, but was sent back to Zambia for trial on charges of complicity in the murder of Chitepo.

In this situation, Chung and other members of ZANU's UNZA branch, including Dzingai Mutumbuka and Sam Geza, had to assume leadership roles. While ZANU-aligned

29 Burawoy, 'Consciousness and Contradiction', p. 89. The statistics on student views on the opening of the border are presumably from the same poll, but were published in the *Rhodesia Herald*.

30 Most of the material in this and the subsequent paragraphs comes from Fay Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga* (Harare, Weaver Press, 2006), with additional background material from Luise White, *The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo: Texts and Politics in Zimbabwe* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003).

businessmen in Lusaka assumed responsibility for maintaining supplies to 300 fighters in the field in Rhodesia, Mutumbuka and Chung assumed responsibility for propaganda and mobilising an international campaign for the release from prison of the leadership and from detention at Mboroma camp of at least 1,000 rank-and-file members of the movement. They are credited by some with compiling the document, 'Kaunda's Role in Détente', a devastating critique of his dealings with the south. They also produced a newsletter and had the help of Lionel Cliffe, a member of the political science department, and his wife, Doris, in getting it out of the country. By August 1975 there was the danger of serious violence between the Mugabe and Sithole factions of ZANU in Lusaka. Fay Chung decided to leave the country in a hurry when she found a radio transmitter and traces of explosives in the boot of her car after it had been used for several days by ZANU members.

If there was, at least until 1975, a strong ZANU branch at UNZA, there is no indication that ZAPU was so well represented among the students. Given the emergence of an ethnic/linguistic split between the two parties, and the identification of ZAPU with Ndebele-speakers, ZAPU supporters probably would have comprised a minority of the Zimbabwean students at the university. Apart from John Reed, ZAPU members of the academic staff included Phineas Makhurane and Sikhanyiso Ndlovu. Makhurane, a lecturer in the physics department, was later the founding vice-chancellor of the National University of Science and Technology. Ndlovu became head of the correspondence school at UNZA in the mid 1970s, and was involved in the establishment of schools in the ZAPU camps near Lusaka, for girls at Victory camp, and for boys at JZ camp. He became minister of higher education in Zimbabwe after the establishment of a unity government in 1987. Mary Krug, a Canadian-born lecturer in the School of Education, was the wife of Edward Ndlovu, a leading member of ZAPU.<sup>31</sup>

## **Student Reaction to Zambia's Support for UNITA in Angola**

The UNZA crisis of 1976 related to – and was provoked by – President Kaunda's involvement in détente with the south and his controversial support for Jonas Savimbi and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), as opposed to the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), in Angola. Kaunda's meeting with Vorster on the Victoria Falls bridge in August 1975 marked the climax of détente. Fay Chung felt that the ZANU crisis contributed to a build-up of tension on the campus over détente. This culminated on 15 January 1976 in a relatively small demonstration by about 300 students in support of the MPLA. The UNZA students' union (UNZASU) described Zambia's support for UNITA as 'opportunist, *hypocritical*, imperialist and impossible ...' It described Savimbi as 'the bearded quisling' and 'pseudo-revolutionary professional traitor', and concluded:

It is indisputable that the Zambian government supports UNITA a movement whose long standing treachery has been made explicit. This compels us to charge the Zambian ruling clique headed by Dr. Kaunda '*our beloved President*' with CRIMINAL TREACHERY.<sup>32</sup>

The debate on campus had begun at the time of Angola's independence in November with the anonymous posting of huge posters in the central dining hall, which analysed the ideological premises and sources of aid for the rival parties in the Angolan civil war. They were designed and posted by Y.G-M. Lulat, a staff development fellow and a former president of

31 E-mail communication from Mary Krug, 23 June 2010.

32 UNZASU statement on Angola reproduced in M. Hamalengwa, *Thoughts Are Free: Prison Experience and Reflections on Law and Politics in General* (Toronto, Africa in Canada Press, 1991), pp. 59–62. An original copy of this leaflet is in the Simons papers, University of Cape Town.

UNZASU.<sup>33</sup> The January episode might have blown over if it had not been for an intervention by a member of the UNIP central committee, Frank Chitambala, who suggested that a group of 'misguided Marxist lecturers' were leading the students astray on the question of Angola. This prompted a strongly worded response from UNZASU that cast doubt on the government's revolutionary credentials and warned, presciently, that 'it won't be long before Zambia looks like a fool over the Angolan question'.<sup>34</sup> President Kaunda then made a broadcast invoking the full powers of the state of emergency. In a wide-ranging speech, he compared Portuguese colonialism to Soviet and Cuban 'social imperialism':

In Angola we have witnessed the grave phenomenon of foreign intervention in African affairs by foreign powers. We have witnessed imperialism at work in all its manifestations. Africa has fought and driven out the ravenous wolves of colonialism, racism and fascism through the front door. But a plundering tiger with its deadly cubs is now coming in through the back door. The effects of foreign intervention are now being felt in Zambia.

In what was seen as a reference to the university, he said: 'Some of our institutions of learning have been infiltrated. Some student groups are like an orchestra with an invisible conductor on the pay roll of a socialist imperialist power'.<sup>35</sup>

On 31 January, Lionel Cliffe was arrested and detained under the emergency powers. A meeting of the students on 3 February, attended by the vast majority of the student body, voted for a strike. In a subsequent statement UNZASU made it clear that a major objective of the strike was the removal of two members of the academic staff, Professor Eyo Ndem, the Nigerian dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Kasuka Mutukwa, a prominent Zambian member of the department of political and administrative studies and the leader of an informal 'Zambian caucus'. They were thought to be opposed to the introduction of a social science foundation course with radical content, and were held responsible by the students for the detention of Cliffe.<sup>36</sup> The statement continued:

These lecturers are bent on subverting the integrity of this University for their own personal gains. They are not only interfering in what is taught in other courses but through intrigue and treachery are exposing fellow lecturers to the dangers of being labeled by the Government as subversives, (as has already happened in the case of one lecturer). These lecturers are enemies of the true spirit of Academic freedom.<sup>37</sup>

The vice-chancellor, Professor Lameck Goma, thought by some to have been out of touch with events on the campus, addressed the students and promised that a special committee of the council would be set up to consider the positions of Ndem and Mutukwa, but he had little to say about the detention of Cliffe. Goma addressed a meeting of academic staff in the afternoon, but he still had no explanation for Cliffe's detention. On the following day, a peaceful meeting of students resolved to end the strike on 10 February. The circulation of a document alleging that the strike had been orchestrated by foreign staff provoked disturbances, and the riot police arrived on the campus on 7 February. They forcibly removed the student body from the campus two days later.

33 Lulat, 'Determinants of Third World Student Political Activism', p. 259, and e-mail communications from Lulat, July 2012.

34 'Open Letter to You, Comrade Frank Chitambala, Member of the Central Committee, Chairman of the Rural Development Subcommittee of the Same', 27 January 1976, reproduced in Hamalengwa, *Thoughts Are Free*, pp. 70–73.

35 Kenneth Kaunda, 'Invocation of the Full Powers of the State of Emergency', 27 January 1976, reproduced in Hamalengwa, *Thoughts Are Free*, pp. 76–83.

36 UNZASU, 'Statement on the General Strike Today: 5 February 1976', reproduced in Hamalengwa, *Thoughts Are Free*, pp. 85–8; 'The Ndem–Mutukwa Axis', the *Vanguard* (student newspaper), 5 February 1976, reproduced in Hamalengwa, *Thoughts Are Free*, pp. 83–5.

37 UNZASU, 'Statement on the General Strike'.

By one account, 37 students were detained, including members of the UNZASU executive, editors of student newspapers and committee members of the Frantz Fanon Club, but the Minister of Home Affairs, Aaron Milner, announced on 13 February that 17 students had been detained. A Dutch lecturer in Engineering, George Siemensma, was detained on 7 February and two further lecturers, Robert Molteno, a South African lecturer in Political and Administrative Studies, and Dario Longhi, an Italian/American lecturer in Social Development Studies, were detained on 9 February. Both had written memoranda to the dean, Professor Ndem, about the detention of Lionel Cliffe, and it was presumed that these memoranda had been supplied by him to the police and press. Y.G-M. Lulat, an organiser of the student protest on Angola, was detained a few days later.<sup>38</sup>

Robert Molteno recalls that in interrogation sessions, which lasted for up to 24 hours, he was pressed on alleged, but baseless, links with the embassies of the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union. His interrogators also showed great interest in the activities of Jack Simons.<sup>39</sup> As the students had predicted, the Zambian government was soon forced to recognise the MPLA government in Angola, and Kaunda was soon making conciliatory noises in relation to the Soviet Union. All but one of the academic staff detainees were released and deported at the end of March. Cliffe – who had shared a cell with Josiah Chimurenga, a member of the ZANU high command – and Molteno both went on to join the committee campaigning in the UK for the release of ZANU detainees. There was also a short-lived campaign to discourage academics from taking jobs at UNZA.

No reasons were given for the detention and deportation of expatriate staff members, but what they had in common was excellence as teachers, closeness to the student body, and – in the cases of both Cliffe, who had been close to ZANU, and Molteno, who was close to the ANC – their involvement with liberation movements.

## **The Soweto Uprising and an ANC Influx**

As had happened in 1971, a university crisis, which had begun over an issue relating to the liberation of southern Africa, raised issues of academic freedom and the relationship between university, students and government. Soon after this crisis, in June 1976, South African school students took to the streets and launched the Soweto uprising, which had a transformative impact on the South African political situation. In the following year or two, an exodus of student refugees brought many new recruits to the ANC in Zambia, Tanzania and Angola, and also had an impact on UNZA, which had already produced a number of South African graduates who went on to have distinguished careers. Walter Msimang (Mavuso) came to UNZA as a young veteran of MK and the Luthuli detachment. After doing a number of United Nations jobs, he eventually became director-general in South Africa's Ministry of Home Affairs, and retired in 2008. Barbara Masekela, sister of the more famous Hugh, was a student in the English department in the late 1960s, and, after studying and working in the US, became head of the ANC's department of arts and culture in Lusaka in the 1980s, and was latterly South African ambassador to the USA.

Among people who left South Africa in the wake of the Soweto uprising and studied at UNZA were at least two women who became ministers in the government after liberation. Brigitte Mabandla studied law and went on to become minister of justice, and Sankie Mthembi-Mahanyele (known in exile and at UNZA as Rebecca Matlou) studied at UNZA for

---

38 Klaus van den Berg was detained later, while visiting Siemensma, for allegedly attempting to smuggle a note from him out of the prison.

39 Author's conversation with Robert Molteno, Oxford, 2 July 2012.



an MA in English Literature and went on to become minister of housing. She is currently deputy secretary-general of the ANC. Ralph Mgijima, who had been a student with Steve Biko at the University of Natal's Black Medical School, and a founder member of the South African Students Organisation (SASO), completed his medical studies at UNZA and went on to work for some years at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka. On his return to South Africa he became superintendent-general of health services in Gauteng province, and was for ten years chairman of the Public Service Commission. Another successful medical student was Thandi Ndhlovu (known in exile as Mavis Nhlapo), who had served as a commissar in the camps in Angola. She became a prominent member of the ANC women's section, and became a businesswoman on her return to South Africa. Manala Manzini had a career in intelligence, becoming director-general of the National Intelligence Agency in 2006; Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini became prominent in the ANC's women's section in exile, and then in the ANC's Women's League in South Africa, became a member of parliament, and has more recently been South Africa's ambassador in Namibia; Masiphula Mbongwa, who worked in the ANC's economics department in exile, went on to become director-general in the South African ministry of agriculture, a job that was also done by another UNZA graduate, Bongiwe Njobe.<sup>40</sup>

As well as students, a number of people with ANC connections joined the academic staff in the late 1970s and 1980s. They included Anna Attridge in French, Patrick Magapatona and Neva Seidman Makgetla in economics, Zarina Carim (whose husband, Mac Maharaj, was a member of the national executive of the ANC from the mid 1980s, and first minister of transport in liberated South Africa) in computer services; Tessa Marcus in sociology; and Claire Bless in psychology, a Swiss national who went on to play a part in the integration of MK with the South African National Defence Force, retiring as brigadier-general.

There was never an UNZA branch of the ANC, but there was a Roma branch to which students belonged, which usually met on the campus. It was only after the Soweto influx that a pressure group was set up on the campus to mobilise support for liberation movements – the Zambia Association for the Liberation of Southern Africa (ZALSA). Although based on the campus, it was a national organisation which flourished in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It organised a march, in which students and some staff participated, from the Freedom Statue to State House on Nelson Mandela's seventieth birthday in 1978, as well as a march to State House in protest against the bombing of key bridges in Zambia by Rhodesian forces in 1979. It also organised meetings on the campus addressed by members of the liberation movements. The ANC seems to have been somewhat wary of ZALSA, fearing that there might be conflict between it and UNIP, though it was also addressed by UNIP leaders, such as Reuben Kamanga, who supported the liberation movements in general and the ANC in particular.<sup>41</sup>

## The Liberation of Zimbabwe and Internal Democracy

The liberation of Zimbabwe and the return home of ZAPU's freedom fighters in 1980 did not bring the anticipated 'liberation dividend' for Zambia that might have been expected, and was followed within a few months by a coup attempt – associated with the name of Edward Shamwana, a prominent lawyer (and making use of Katangese *gendarmes*) – curfews and more severe shortages of essential commodities. Multi-party elections in Zimbabwe and the victory of Robert Mugabe and ZANU – Zambia had backed Nkomo and ZAPU – drew attention to the essential contradiction between Zambia's support for liberation movements

<sup>40</sup> Author's personal knowledge.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

abroad and the perpetuation of the one-party state and the denial of democracy at home. The next crisis at UNZA coincided in April 1982 with the treason trial arising from the earlier Shamwana coup attempt. It resulted from the student reaction to an event that Thandika Mkandawire cited as an example of the tendency of African leaders to rely on ‘foreign mentors, admirers or psychofants [*sic*] for intellectual inspiration or affirmation’ rather than on indigenous intellectuals, and of the penchant of African leaders to adopt the role of ‘philosopher-king’.<sup>42</sup> This was the inauguration of an Institute of Human Relations, to promote Kaunda’s philosophy of Humanism, under the direction of a British Labour Party politician and member of the House of Lords, John Hatch, a man who had given support to African nationalists, including Kaunda in the 1950s. The crisis resulted in the removal from the university, though not the actual deportation, of four members of staff, including Ed Steinhart from the history department, and Sean Morrow from education/history.

Writing to Robert and Marion Molteno, Jack Simons recalled the crisis of 1976, offered an account of current events, and reflected on the generational cycle in relations between the students and the government:

As UNZA’s latest crisis erupts into closure, expulsions and detentions, our thoughts cannot but turn to the grossly unjust treatment meted out to you colleagues & students in 1976. The wheel has turned full circle. Yesterday paratroopers invaded the campus to evict students from residences while policemen raided some staff houses and detained up to a dozen lecturers – all white expats! Like the old days?

On this occasion the spark that lit the fuse was domestic, wholly internal, & ironically started by the official opening of the new Institute for Human Relations, directed by Lord Hatch, a ceremony confined to the elite without student or even staff participation. What a breach of humanist human relations that we have witnessed – involving the shutting of the university on the eve of examinations, a breakdown of relations with the students, & the use of force to contain a simple non-violent criticism by students.

They circulated a leaflet attacking the Institute, Lord Hatch, Humanism, UNIP & ‘its’ government, in rather intemperate, coarse & abusive language, which should have been dismissed with a simple reprimand. We understand that Freedom House [UNIP headquarters] demanded much more. The administration gave way & expelled four members of the UNZASU executive, 15 others being suspended until the beginning of the 1983 academic year. Students, coming back for the short break, during which the punitive measures were taken, reacted by boycotting classes. The university authorities made a big concession to heal the breach, but the students stood firm & demanded all or nothing. So they got nothing.

Every new generation of students in the five-yearly cycle seems bound to experience a traumatic break with the authorities, party & government. The gap grows – though students generally integrate readily enough into the system after graduation for the sake of jobs, income & material benefits.

In another draft, he wrote:

There are important differences between this outbreak & that of 1976, but the reaction of the authorities is not notably different. Each generation of students displays alienation from the party & government, who in despair use force to contain the revolt, thereby widening the gap.<sup>43</sup>

## **Towards the End of the Liberation Struggle**

The contradiction between Zambia’s support for liberation movements and the denial of democracy at home was brought out even more forcefully in 1990, with the release of Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC, the point at which I began this essay. After the

42 Mkandawire, ‘African Intellectuals and Nationalism’, pp. 23–4.

43 Simons papers, University of Cape Town, Jack Simons to Robert and Marion Molteno, 22 April 1982, two drafts.

meeting between ANC leaders and representatives of the Anglo American Corporation and other business interests, hosted by President Kaunda at Mfuwe in September 1985, there had been a rush of visits to Lusaka by other South African interest groups, including the universities. There was some contact between UNZA's administration and representatives of the Universities of Cape Town and of the Western Cape in September 1986, and then of the University of Natal in 1988, but there was no contact with the academic staff or students. When white students from the University of Stellenbosch visited the ANC in April 1989, they did so as the guests of President Kaunda and the UNIP Youth League, but they do not appear to have visited UNZA, which then had no students union, because UNZASU had been banned.<sup>44</sup>

In January 1986 Oliver Tambo appointed Jack Simons to chair a committee to draw up constitutional guidelines for a 'new South Africa', which should take the Freedom Charter as its starting point. Bringing together a number of the ANC's legal experts, including Albie Sachs and Kader Asmal, the committee drew up a blueprint for a non-racial and multi-party democratic constitution, which was completed at a seminar held on the UNZA campus in August 1988. This document would have a significant influence on the later constitution of South Africa.<sup>45</sup>

There was in 1988 a proposal that a Swedish-funded ANC project for the study of Post-Apartheid South Africa (PASA) should be based at UNZA. President Kaunda and Oliver Tambo had contact about the subject, but UNZA's senate was unenthusiastic, saying that the political content of the programme was 'disconcerting' and that the approach was not sufficiently 'academic'. The University of Zimbabwe showed more interest, and Thabo Mbeki noted in February 1990 that UNZA 'had acted too slowly'. The project was eventually based at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa.<sup>46</sup>

Proposals for a democratic South Africa would soon have an impact on Zambian politics. On 18 January 1990, even before the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela, the *Zambia Daily Mail* had carried an interview with Joe Slovo, then general secretary of the SACP, under the headline 'One Party Rule out for S. Africa'. In his pamphlet, *Has Socialism Failed?*, which was discussed in this interview, he stated, in bold print:

And we have had sufficient experience of one-party rule in various parts of the world to conclude that the 'mission' to promote real democracy under a one-party system is not just difficult but, in the long run, impossible.<sup>47</sup>

The ANC's rejection of the one-party state, taken together with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of one-party states in Eastern Europe, may help to explain the disappointment of the students on the forum in March 1990, at Mandela's polite thanks to Kaunda and UNIP for their hospitality and support. Generations of students at UNZA had rejected Kaunda's justification for the one-party state – that the liberties of Zambians should be sacrificed in the interests of the struggle for the liberation of southern Africa – and former students, including some who had been expelled during the university crises of the 1970s, played an important part in the emergence of the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD), which took

44 See various articles in *Die Matie* (University of Stellenbosch student newspaper), 13 April 1989.

45 [ANC], 'Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa', August 1985, in G.M. Gerhart and C.L. Glaser, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882–1990, Volume 6: Challenge and Victory, 1980–90* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 654–8.

46 T. Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa*, Volume 2 (Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002), p. 807.

47 J. Slovo, *Has Socialism Failed?* (Umsebenzi Discussion Pamphlet, Inkululeko Publications, London, no date [1990]), p. 19. See also H. Macmillan, 'The African National Congress of South Africa in Zambia: The Culture of Exile and the Changing Relationship with Home', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 2 (2009), pp. 326–9; *The Lusaka Years: The African National Congress in Exile in Zambia, 1963–94* (Johannesburg, Jacana, 2013).

power from UNIP in October 1991. It is unlikely that any of the UNZA students who decided in June 1990 to take their protest over food prices ‘to the people’ anticipated the consequences of their action. But these included the end of the one-party state and the resolution of the long-standing contradiction between support for liberation abroad and the lack of democracy at home.

HUGH MACMILLAN

*Research Associate, African Studies Centre, Oxford University, 13 Bevington Road, Oxford OX2 6LH, UK; Extraordinary Researcher, Department of History, University of the Western Cape, Robert Sobukwe Road, Bellville, 7535, South Africa. E-mail: [hughmacm@gmail.com](mailto:hughmacm@gmail.com)*

Copyright of Journal of Southern African Studies is the property of Routledge and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.