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REVIEW ARTICLE

ZAMBIA AT 50: THE REDISCOVERY OF LIBERALISM

Harri Englund

JAN-BART GEWALD, MARJA HINFELAAR and GIACOMO MACOLA (eds), *One Zambia, Many Histories: toward a history of post-colonial Zambia*. Leiden: Brill (pb €44 – 978 9 00416 594 6). 2008, 304 pp.

JAN-BART GEWALD, MARJA HINFELAAR and GIACOMO MACOLA (eds), *Living the End of Empire: politics and society in late-colonial Zambia*. Leiden: Brill (pb €43 – 978 9 00420 986 2). 2011, 333 pp.

DAVID M. GORDON, *Invisible Agents: spirits in a Central African history*. Athens OH: Ohio University Press (pb $32.95 – 978 0 82142 024 9). 2012, 304 pp.

MILES LARMER, *Rethinking African Politics: a history of opposition in Zambia*. Farnham: Ashgate (hb £70 – 978 1 40940 627 3). 2011, 321 pp.

GIACOMO MACOLA, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa: a biography of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula*. New York NY: Palgrave Macmillan (hb £66 – 978 0 23062 274 4). 2010, 224 pp.

BIZECK JUBE PHIRI, *A Political History of Zambia: from the colonial period to the third republic*. Trenton NJ: Africa World Press (pb $29.95 – 1 59221 308 1). 2006, 286 pp.

Zambia stands out in African Studies as a country that has attracted an unusual degree of scholarly attention. From the establishment of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in 1937 to the present, research in Zambia has significantly influenced academic and policy debates well beyond its borders. Relatively rapid urban growth on the Copperbelt, for example, occasioned not only pioneering studies in urban anthropology (Epstein 1958) but also debates about ethnic, national and class identities – studies whose foundational impact continues to be felt in the twenty-first century (Gluckman 1961; Magubane 1971; Mitchell 1956; see also Ferguson 2002;

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Kapferer 1995). Having provided field sites for the towering figures of Audrey Richards (1939), Victor Turner (1957) and Max Gluckman (1955), among many other anthropologists of their generation, Zambia also became associated with groundbreaking work on topics such as ritual and law. For the discipline of anthropology, Zambia commands a special status in its conceptual and methodological development. Zambia was among the first countries where the limits of structural-functionalism were transcended by recognizing wider political-economic processes beyond the village and by introducing novel methods to capture that complexity, such as situational analysis, social drama and the extended-case method (van Velsen 1967; Werbner 1984). This methodological legacy continues to be rediscovered in anthropology, often as a useful reminder that some contemporary theoretical concerns are best pursued with this legacy in mind (Evens and Handelman 2006).

Independence in 1964 did not put an end to this intellectual ferment, but it gradually lost its momentum as the economy declined sharply from the 1970s onwards, largely but not only as a result of plummeting world prices for copper. Expatriate scholars had proceeded to distinguished careers elsewhere, and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute went through various phases of change under African directors and different names (Schumaker 2001: 229). Economic decline gave rise to new influential anthropological studies, such as James Ferguson's (1999) on the Copperbelt's crushed expectations and Karen Tranberg Hansen's (2000) on local and trans-national aspects of the sudden boom in second-hand clothing. Zambia's capacity to be a trendsetter in policy and politics, even if with detrimental consequences for the welfare of the majority, was affirmed by its particularly vigorous campaign to comply with its structural adjustment programme and its equally notable role in spearheading the transition to multi-partyism in Africa. These political-economic transformations have naturally aroused the curiosity of several social scientists (see Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Fraser and Larmer 2011; Rakner 2003; Sichone and Chikulo 1996). Zambia's past and present gifts to scholarship have not, however, involved two kinds of researchers as much as might be expected. One is Zambia's own cohorts of social scientists, some of whom came to play a crucial, if largely unacknowledged, role in the work produced by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute and its subsequent institutional forms (Schumaker 2001). The other is historians who, despite the very high standards for researching pre-colonial history set by Andrew Roberts's monumental *A History of the Bemba* (1973), hardly figured in the intellectual ferment described above.

The set of books under review here changes this landscape of disciplinary emphases in the scholarship on Zambia. They herald the arrival of historians as authors of new scholarly discussions, and although expatriates still dominate, the number of Zambian scholars contributing to these discussions is unprecedented. The editors of *Living the End of Empire*, a book dedicated to Roberts, set the tone for much of this work by paying their respects to earlier generations of anthropologists while identifying lacunae they wish to fill. The editors are well aware of anthropologists' pioneering work on labour migration and urbanization,

but they also regret that 'the politics of African nationalism or of settler assertiveness must have seemed somewhat unworthy of sustained analysis' (p. 5). Previous historical and political studies uncovered the nationalist movement as a coalition of interests rather than as a unified body. It analysed the path of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) to the stewardship of a one-party state, with Kenneth Kaunda's brand of Humanism all too reminiscent of the authoritarianism among his less benevolent-looking peers in the region (Gertzel 1984; Tordoff 1974). For current historical scholarship, the challenge is to go beyond UNIP- and Kaunda-centred studies in order to recover the perspectives and experiences of a wider set of agents, whether those of other nationalists (Larmer, Macola), multiracial activists (Phiri) or prophets and spirits (Gordon).

To the extent that these books advocate revisionist history of nationalism, the study of Zambia, for once, follows rather than sets a trend. Compared to successive waves of lively revisionist history of nationalism in Zimbabwe (see, for example, Kriger 1992; Ranger 1985, 2004), the hiatus in Zambian historical research is surprising. Some of the authors here give glimpses of the difficulties they faced when they first proposed unorthodox topics. When Bizeck Phiri carried out his doctoral research in the late 1980s, he received a letter from Terence Ranger advising him that 'there was not much point in researching Capricorn' (p. 59), a movement for multiracialism founded in 1949. Giacomo Macola, the author of the book on the pioneering nationalist Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, does not name 'the early student of Zambian nationalism' (p. 157) who posed the rhetorical question, 'Does Harry really merit a biography' (p. 2)? Personal and political as much as intellectual commitments gave rise to such strictures. It would be a pity if the previous generation's quarrels were carried over to the evaluation of new work, as when a reviewer of Macola's book found it necessary to take a swipe at 'the patronizing obsequiousness characteristic of those authors now belatedly insisting that they were never nationalist historians but always historians of nationalism' (Phimister 2010: 267). What such comments may obscure is the shifting of the terms of debate that the books under review here seek to achieve.

Rather than lamenting the relatively late arrival of revisionist history in Zambia, I can more profitably identify in these books a set of interests that may once again prove Zambia's inspiration for future research well beyond its borders. Those interests can be seen to coalesce around the possibility and nature of liberalism in Africa, particularly in its political and social dimensions. From its complicity in maintaining the status quo in colonial Africa to its association with neo-liberal economics more recently, liberal thought has long been anathema to progressive scholarship. Liberal civic virtues and ideas of justice also disappeared from view with the theoretical turn to post-colonial *commandement* in which subjects 'internalized authoritarian epistemology to the point where they reproduce[d] it themselves in all the minor circumstances of everyday life' (Mbembe 2001: 128). Although the authors here differ in the extent to which they endorse liberal democracy as a model for Zambia, they all

present their work as a critique of authoritarianism in colonial and post-colonial Zambia. Politics as a domain of inquiry dominates, followed by the economic and the legal. A central question in evaluating these studies is whether this division of domains serves their authors well in recognizing the actual diversity of intellectual and moral commitments on the ground. Another question is whether the authors' own anti-authoritarian sensibilities are reliable guides to what the liberal values of freedom and equality might mean under Zambia's historical conditions. This review article proceeds, therefore, from the conventional to the increasingly unorthodox domains of inquiry in the search for alternatives in the scholarship on Zambia and indeed Africa.

WHITE OR MULTIRACIAL LIBERALISM?

Bizeck Phiri, a loyal member of the University of Zambia, chose, as mentioned, an unfashionable topic for his PhD research in the 1980s. From its inception as a white-led pressure group in 1949 to its demise in 1963, the Capricorn African Society irritated African nationalists, much as it attempted to offer an alternative to the racially defined colonial rule. Phiri chronicles in his book the shift from the initial common cause between white liberals and African nationalists to their separation after the formation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953. He argues that while liberals 'made a serious political error when they supported the Federation', 'the Capricorn African Society genuinely sought to preserve and consolidate the crucial elements of liberal democracy' (p. 233). Phiri's intent is to show how African nationalists' well-grounded fears of white supremacy prevented them from taking seriously this alternative to what nationalism was becoming in the 1950s. In particular, he relates the origins of this tension to radical nationalists' insistence on a unified movement for national independence and to the political pluralism advocated by the Capricorn liberals. Towards the end of his book, he compares Zambia to South Africa and points out how in both countries liberals were at the receiving end of abuse from white and African nationalists alike. Liberals' call for guarantees for all individuals and minorities fell on deaf ears when their approach appeared far too gradual and conciliatory to nationalists on either side.

Southern Rhodesian in origin, Capricorn adopted Central Africa as the site of its operations. Its support for the Federation was consistent with this broader regional vision but, as mentioned, ill-advised as a strategy to garner genuinely inter-racial approval for its objectives. Capricornists found themselves shunned by African nationalists and Federal authorities alike, because the latter did not see a role for the pressure group in winning African confidence in the Federation. The period between 1954 and 1957 saw Capricorn rethinking its approach and principles, with two branches established in colonial Zambia and the Constitution Party launched in 1957. Copperbelt Capricornists, for example, built inter-racial social clubs, but recruitment to their cause faced considerable obstacles as civil

servants were prohibited from all activities deemed political and the African National Congress (ANC), the first African nationalist party in Zambia, engaged in propaganda against Capricorn. Among other things, the ANC was instrumental in encouraging a perception of Capricornists as *banyama*, vampire men (Musambachime 1988). The Constitution Party fared little better, its only experiment in electoral politics having registered negligible support in the 1958 federal elections. In Phiri's words, the Party 'rejected extremism' and 'advocated a qualitative franchise rather than universal adult suffrage' (p. 72). Divisions within the Capricorn leadership coincided with the loss of its membership and the realization that non-racialism had few prospects of winning hearts and minds as long as full franchise and Africans' aspirations for advancement were not addressed. Both Capricorn and the Party petered out as the dawn of independence became ever more perceptible.

Phiri's book is not just an attempt to recover Capricorn from the dustbin of Zambian history, but so marginal is the society to other authors' views of the country's political history that the chapters devoted to it would hardly appear in their volumes. Phiri offers his book as a chronological account of the territory's beginnings under British South Africa Company rule, its experiences during the colonial and federal eras, and the characteristics of the three 'republics' in independent Zambia. The reason why Capricorn, and 'liberal politics' more broadly, merit two of the book's seven chapters is apparent throughout the book's effort to debunk 'the commonly believed myth that liberal democracy [is] ill-suited for Africa' (p. 162). Capricorn appears, in this account, as a pioneer in both political and economic liberalism in Zambia, but the much better-known triumph of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) in 1991 comes to crystallize Phiri's faith in liberalism as an African possibility. Although he acknowledges its origins in the activism of business and labour leaders, intellectuals and politicians, he pours unqualified praise on 'the informal sector producers, peasants and lumpen-proletariat who formed the all-powerful social movements with the objective of ushering in a multiparty political system' (p. 168). The chapters on the transition and its aftermath in the Third Republic were written at different points in time, but Phiri's early optimism that 'Zambia [had] reached a stage whereby a "political society" capable of sustaining liberal democracy [did] exist' (p. 163) seems to have waned only a little when confronted with the economic mismanagement and the disappointing third-term bid during Frederick Chiluba's regime. Phiri salutes the events in 1991 and beyond as 'a revival of liberal democracy, without the restrictions suggested by liberals in the 1960s' (p. 236).

Such is Phiri's faith in 'social movements' and 'civil society' that he identifies them as Zambia's most trusted guardians of liberal democracy. In a striking analogy, he argues that 'unlike liberals in colonial Zambia who lost to militant nationalists, the anti-third term campaigners aided by student demonstrations and civil society kept mobocracy in check' (p. 239). To suggest a parallel between militant nationalists in colonial Zambia and mobocracy in the Third Republic is revisionist history at

its provocative best, but the analysis leading up to it builds on entirely conventional ideas of what civil society is. Phiri's is not a history of local politics and the complications it might pose to the concept of a civil society separate from 'high politics' (Bayart 1993). Such a history beckons, however, when reasons are sought for Zambia's avoidance of widespread violence despite its intensely contested political field. Phiri emphasizes the importance of urbanization, inter-ethnic marriages and the consequent generations of Zambians whose attachments to rural 'homes' are either weak or too fractured to warrant a single ethnic identity. Copperbelt and other towns become, in this perspective, the catalysts for the local appropriations of the high-political slogan 'One Zambia, One Nation'. 'Cross-cultural contact', Phiri explains, 'helped to build a culture of mutual acceptance' (p. 199). Phiri's emphasis on Zambians' loyalty to the idea of the nation leaves secessionist tendencies in Western Province unaddressed and plays down Bemba dominance in high politics, now again apparent under Michael Sata's presidency. Above all, his account provides few insights into the lived experience of Zambian liberalism.

HISTORIES OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION

Here is where Macola's biography of Nkumbula takes revisionist history further. While admitting that the subject of his work represents high politics, Macola promises to 'ponder over [the] points of intersection' (p. 6) across the different scales of political culture. Although it is not the only theme in this richly documented history, the oxymoron 'liberal nationalism' describes well Nkumbula's apparently inconsistent projects of liberalism, nationalism and ethnic-regional affiliation. One point of intersection emerges when it is recognized that Tonga-speaking peasants in Southern and Central provinces continued to support Nkumbula's ANC long after its lack of capacity to access state resources had become apparent. Macola presents his contribution as an argument for taking ideology seriously in the study of African politics. Against the notion that the post-independence period saw Africans wilfully submitting themselves to increasingly authoritarian ruling parties in order to satisfy their economic interests, Macola emphasizes 'a reservoir of civic thought' that 'placed a premium on individual initiative, achievement, and competition' (p. 7). He therefore both recognizes and seeks to go beyond a simple correlation between Nkumbula's free-market agenda and cash-crop producers' aversion to UNIP's state-led socio-economic development programmes. As a biography, *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa* does not begin in 1964, the onset of Nkumbula's determination 'to defend the prerogatives of parliamentary opposition and the viability of the multiparty dispensation' (p. 101). It is, however, in his account of the post-independence years that Macola most effectively addresses the paradoxical combination of liberal thought with ethno-regional politics.

Macola's prose does not lack passion elsewhere in the book, but it becomes particularly spirited when he attacks the 'stereotypes' (p. 119) that have littered both journalistic and academic descriptions of the ANC's power base in independent Zambia. Its supporters in Southern and Central provinces could be dismissed as isolated and unsophisticated when UNIP's offers of access to state resources did not translate into political loyalty. Those offers included, in particular, credit facilities for agricultural cooperatives, key instruments in UNIP's attempts at rural development. Collective farming was at variance with the way in which Tonga-speakers had organized their social and economic life, revolving as it did around the household as the nodal point in ever-expanding social networks (see Colson 1962). In Macola's interpretation, 'having been brought into being, not by the labor of the peasant household, but by the unearned largesse from above, state resources did not elicit the same commitment as autonomously acquired property' (p. 199). Lest these peasants' defence of private property is seen to assume almost *neo*-liberal proportions, Macola could have drawn here on previous scholarship on the moral economy of agricultural practices and their relation to state power, not least in Zambia itself (Gould 2010; Moore and Vaughan 1994; see also Moore 2005; Scott 1985). He does make use, albeit briefly, of the concept of moral ethnicity (Lonsdale 1992) to account for the ideological and moral relationship between the ANC and its rural support base. He also lends his support to Richard Werbner's (2004) campaign against 'Afropessimism' but points out that his is a 'far more substantive challenge' than Werbner's, who based his argument about Botswana's Kalanga elites on 'potentially unrepresentative technocrats free from the problem of mobilizing electoral consensus' (p. 6).

Beyond the intriguing observations on liberalism and moral ethnicity, Macola traces the history of Zambian nationalism through Nkumbula's Methodist upbringing, early literary experiments, studies in London in the 1940s, anti-Federation crusade after his return to colonial Zambia and the UNIP–ANC competition of the early 1960s that exposed both the authoritarianism of UNIP-led nationalism and Nkumbula's own ambiguity about political violence during these intense years. Throughout the book, Macola adopts a tone that is passionate about getting the record straight on competing nationalisms in Zambia and empathizes with Nkumbula's trials and tribulations and those of his closest lieutenants, particularly Mungoni Liso, almost to the point of being oblivious to earlier criticisms of 'the autocratic manner in which Nkumbula ran the ANC' (Tordoff and Scott 1974: 136). *Liberal Nationalism in Central Africa* is, however, the finest example of revisionist history among the books reviewed here: not only is it based on meticulous research, notably on Nkumbula's personal papers and the newly opened archives of UNIP, but it also carries a serious message about the importance of attending to the ideological and moral commitments among African leaders and their followers. He denies that his objective is to rehabilitate Nkumbula as 'an unrecognized Central African John Stuart Mill' (p. 6), but his attention to 'homespun historians', a term he coined with Derek Peterson (see Peterson and Macola 2009), attributes genuine intellectual work to people like

Nkumbula (who is reported to have read Mill and other classic political philosophers).

In *Rethinking African Politics*, Miles Larmer follows Macola's lead with his own contribution to the revisionist history of Zambia, albeit with a greater range of themes and agents than in Macola's book. What unites the two books is the contention, as previously argued by Frederick Cooper (2002) for African decolonization more generally, that only a particular kind of nationalism came to be seen by observers as the inevitable consequence of anti-colonial agitation. Mindful of how important the idea of 'African initiatives' was to the students of proto-nationalists (Ranger 1968), Larmer sums up the current wisdom as an attempt 'not to suggest a lack of African agency in challenging and resisting oppression or exploitation, but rather to argue that such initiatives did not logically take a "nationalist" form' (p. 50). As in Phiri's book, the aim is to offer a broadly chronological account of Zambia's transitions to independence and to the Third Republic, with chapters devoted to divisions within the UNIP and the one-party state, the armed rebellion led by Adamson Mushala in North-Western Province in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the role of elites in the 1980 coup attempt, the Kaunda regime's attitude to South Africa and the role of the church and labour organizations in the 1980s and 1990s.

Central to Larmer's diverse examples is a distinction between nationalist leaders and social movements. Surviving the onset of independence, this distinction comes to describe various forms of opposition in the one-party state. However, Larmer's account is no more attuned to the internal dynamics and debates of social movements than is Phiri's; both authors, in so far as they draw our attention to anyone in particular within social movements, end up writing about a handful of leaders. Larmer quite rightly seeks to historicize the donor and activist preoccupation with 'civil society' that accompanied democratic transitions in Zambia and elsewhere, noting that 'the ideologically constructed form of "civil society" masked the roots and continuities of social movement activism over the previous 40 years or more' (p. 229). On the basis of others' primary research and his own perusal of *Times of Zambia*, Larmer describes how, from the mid-1970s onwards, 'myriad local struggles and protests took place over particular state initiatives' (p. 248). The examples range from protests and strikes by unionized workers to riots and looting by urban dwellers, along with notes on the Watchtower movement. The upshot here reveals why *Rethinking African Politics* does not merit its grandiose title. Not only is the analysis empirically constricted, it is also conceptually conservative. The concept of 'social movement' is deployed as a proxy for local or popular politics, 'a vital link between the educated elite leaders of nationalist movements and the mass population they sought to mobilise' (p. 18). 'Grassroots popular opposition' (p. 19) is not a phrase that heralds fresh insights into the complexity of African politics but an abstraction that glosses over a range of moral, intellectual and spiritual commitments among workers, peasants and Christians, not to mention 'women', another category frequently used in this analysis.

Rather than remaining under the influence of Bayart, Cooper and other standard authors on African history and politics, with a smattering of subaltern studies (p. 279), Larmer could have rethought liberalism in Zambia more effectively had he attended, for example, to the literature on the public sphere. This body of literature, critically engaged with Jürgen Habermas's (1989) thesis on the conditions of democratic deliberation, comes to mind when reading Larmer's account of the Zambian technocratic elite's involvement in the 1980 coup attempt. Although Habermas has been taken to task for ignoring the fundamentally exclusionary constitution of the democratic public sphere in the eighteenth-century Europe he wrote about (see, for example, Calhoun 1992), his perspective on institutions such as coffee houses and saloons made it possible to study deliberation outside the more conventional domains of political discourse. What Werbner (2004), in the above-mentioned study of Kalanga elites in Botswana, calls 'forum as process' could be used to Africanize this interest in deliberation, now carried out not so much in coffee houses as in courts (Gulbrandsen 2012: 227–54), over the airwaves (Brisset-Foucault 2013; Englund 2011a) and, as in Larmer's account, in various social clubs frequented by senior civil servants and managers as well as liberal lawyers and journalists.

After independence, some of these technocrats participated in regular discussions in the so-called Wednesday Lunch Club at the Lusaka Hotel and the Greenfield Hotel, and Larmer's narrative also takes us to the Lusaka Golf Club and the Lusaka Flying Club. While such sites do little to allay my concerns about differentiating 'grassroots popular opposition', they come closest in this book to providing fresh, empirically grounded insights into a range of aspirations in post-colonial Zambia. Larmer focuses his narrative on Valentine Musakanya, who became Zambia's first secretary to the cabinet and head of the civil service. Larmer outlines his early career in colonial administration on the Copperbelt and his friendship with the Greek-Cypriot businessman Andrew Sardanis, who helped him to make acquaintance with other liberal white businessmen and educated Africans. After detailing his education in and out of colonial Zambia, Larmer describes how Musakanya and like-minded technocrats became increasingly disillusioned with Zambian politics and started to deliberate on alternatives to increasing authoritarianism, cooperative projects in agricultural development and the apparently Africanist philosophy of Humanism. Their emphasis on individual rights and parliamentary democracy gave the Wednesday Lunch Club an unmistakably liberal outlook, and Larmer repeatedly refers to its participants as 'Westernized' Zambians. Despite his commendable work on collecting and editing Musakanya's papers, Larmer gives only one snippet of what a conversation between these men might have been like (p. 177), based on Musakanya's own recollection. Sources may prove insufficient for a thorough analysis of deliberation here, but a sense of a missed opportunity arises when Larmer proceeds to devote the rest of his chapter to the unsuccessful coup attempt and its aftermath. His effort to investigate the facts of the coup preparations will no doubt be welcomed by many who are interested in Zambia's political history, but it

leaves the nuances of liberal aspirations among this cohort of technocrats unexamined. It remains unclear whether Musakanya's papers or Larmer's own interviews could have given more insight into how they debated their growing disillusionment with Zambia's direction and their alternatives to it.

TOWARDS A GREATER DIVERSITY

It turns out that the authors who are modest about their analytical ambitions may have more to contribute to rethinking Zambian (and African) politics than those who set out to do so. Despite presenting a compelling case of dialogue between liberal thought and moral ethnicity, Macola wants his readers to believe that he uses the term ' "liberalism" in a conventional sense' (p. 158). In a similar vein, the editors of *One Zambia, Many Histories* concede that the notion of politics in their volume is 'entirely conventional' (p. 13). Yet it and its sequel *Living the End of Empire* contain chapters that challenge conventional analytical categories, notably 'civil society', 'social movements' and 'state sovereignty', even as they seek to explore Zambian expressions of liberalism.

One Zambia, Many Histories begins with chapters on revisionist history, including Macola's and Larmer's on topics familiar from their own books, and continues with clusters of chapters on religion, the economy and the Third Republic. Karen Tranberg Hansen, for example, provides a welcome perspective on the economy to qualify the current focus on the political and by so doing adds considerable nuance to the abstract use of 'civil society' and 'social movements'. She begins with the paradox that while Zambia embraced the ideology of the free market in the early 1990s and removed restrictions on foreign investment, the actual markets in the country's urban centres have become sites of confrontation between market traders and local and state authorities. She explains that the paradox may be more apparent than real, because urban retail space has been redefined by investors and authorities as the domain of capital-intensive shopping malls, with a notable presence of South African and Chinese firms. The confrontations between authorities and Zambian market traders and street vendors have been sparked by efforts to clear up public space for these projects of the 'free market'. Additional justifications have included concerns over sanitation, public health and safety. Aided by studies conducted under the auspices of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute and its successors, Hansen deftly historicizes these developments, concluding that the so-called informal economy has witnessed massive expansion, particularly in Lusaka, with gender and age differences revealing major divisions in society more generally. Young people find it particularly difficult to enter profitable businesses and may become employed by large-scale investments at substandard wages and under piecework conditions. Despite recent moves to strengthen market associations, Hansen offers a sobering reflection to those who would see in these struggles the workings of a 'social movement'. 'The struggles of

Lusaka's street vendors and market traders', she writes, 'have been episodic and disjointed, by and large concerned with immediate survival issues' (p. 238).

Beyond the 'immediate survival issues', Hansen's emphasis on efforts to sustain households indicates that the aspirations and challenges 'are not only, or exclusively, about economic processes' (p. 238). Perhaps somewhat akin to Macola's interpretation of the value that Tonga-speaking peasants placed on their households, this perspective on livelihoods suggests a kind of liberalism that the neo-liberal ideology of the free market can only undermine. Expanding the purview from the economy and the political to the legal as the third key domain in Zambia's transitions, Jeremy Gould returns the focus to intellectual elites but also interrogates conventional ideas of liberalism. His term for Zambia's subservience to foreign investors and creditors is 'subsidiary sovereignty'. In line with Hansen's conclusions, he describes the Third Republic as 'a unique and curious concoction of ultra-liberalism coupled with deep subsidiarity' (p. 279). The focus of his chapter is the Oasis Forum, a coalition formed to campaign against Chiluba's third-term bid in 2001. The key figures in the coalition came from the Law Association of Zambia, the national Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical church bodies, and the umbrella organ of women's organizations. Although the campaign was successful, Gould critiques the Oasis's future prospects, particularly in the light of its frequent recourse to the legal domain in activism and rhetoric. Gould regards its strategic plan for the years following the successful anti-third term campaign as 'astonishingly immodest' (p. 284) and queries the mandate the Oasis had given itself. He argues that its 'legalist liberalism' (p. 285) is little different from the technocratic emphasis on development whose institutional parameters perpetuate Zambia's subsidiarity. Indeed, despite their contribution to defining a progressive agenda for Zambia's political culture, Oasis leaders have been silent on issues relevant to its subsidiary sovereignty. Their faith in the law has made Zambia seem the sole author of its destiny.

Refreshingly among the studies reviewed here, Gould's intellectual resources are not confined to canonical works on African politics. He draws on, for example, the above-mentioned thesis by Habermas on the public sphere, although he largely ignores the criticism it has received. He combines this perspective with reflections on class in Zambia, with a particular focus on the Oasis leaders as an intermediary class between the ruling faction of its own middle or 'bourgeoisie' class and the people the Oasis claim to represent. Gould comes to grapple with issues that conventional Marxist class analysis would leave him ill-equipped to confront, such as the 'imaginary' basis of Oasis leaders' class position and their efforts 'to constitute a public sympathetic to its agenda' (p. 291). The constitution of publics would deserve a richer analysis than he offers here, confined as he is to Habermas's own emphasis on 'critical-rational debate' (p. 284) as the crux of the public sphere. Gould's critique of subsidiary sovereignty could have introduced a wider set of publics to explore had he not defined the sources of Oasis's inspiration rather dismissively as 'statutory law, religious dogma and orthodox development

discourse' (p. 293). None of them may be conducive to critical-rational debate in the sense preferred by Habermas, but as recent work on religious counter-publics from elsewhere has indicated, critique and politically consequential ethical reflection may not be alien to them (see, for example, Hirschkind 2006; see also Englund 2011b; Meyer and Moors 2006).

What the search for new perspectives on liberalism in Zambia requires, in other words, is an openness to domains of empirical inquiry that do not all belong to the categories of the political, the economic and the legal. *Living the End of Empire* begins to address this challenge by providing insights into 'the bewilderingly diverse historical trajectories of neglected social groups, individuals and institutions' (p. 14). It contains chapters on chiefly and religious experiences as well as on Zambia's European and Asian minorities. The period in focus is the late-colonial era, particularly the 1950s, the decade that has recently been criticized for being overly dominant in the historical study of Africa (see Reid 2011). These chapters demonstrate, however, how much remains to be properly investigated in what may have been an especially long decade. Andrew Roberts, the doyen of Zambian historiography, outlines the extent of our current ignorance by suggesting neglected topics for future research, among them the media for expressing African opinions. Apart from the African Representative Council established in 1946, he identifies African-language newspapers and, above all, radio broadcasting as particularly poorly covered in the historical, social and political studies of Zambia. Roberts's observation is poignantly pertinent when the sources of virtually all the books reviewed here are considered. The overwhelming impression is of English-speaking Zambians and expatriates addressing other English-speaking Zambians and expatriates. Larmer's decision to cite in *Rethinking African Politics* only an English-language Catholic publication, despite mentioning the existence of the Bemba-language magazine *Icengelo* (p. 240), is not an atypical example.

In *Living the End of Empire*, Walima Kalusa touches on related issues when he provides a careful analysis of the Chewa chief Kalonga Gawa Undi X's manoeuvres with nationalists and the subjects he represented. Kalusa points out that the chief, along with many other traditional authorities in late-colonial Zambia, became indispensable to nationalists whose 'inability to speak local languages' (p. 88) risked alienating them from rural populations. Kalonga Gawa Undi X emerges in this analysis as a skilled translator between the nationalist agenda and local grievances, 'conversant with local political rhetoric, intrigue and idioms' (p. 88). Regrettably, Kalusa does not offer actual examples of this rhetoric and idiom to enrich historical scholarship, but his overall argument about the role of traditional authority in nationalism and post-colonial politics is a useful contribution to an expanding literature (see Buur and Kyed 2007; Nyamnjoh 2003; Oomen 2005). Kalusa describes the early antagonism between the chief and Nkumbula's ANC less as a simple confrontation between a 'Native Authority' loyal to his colonial masters and a group of nationalist iconoclasts than as the first indication of a series of negotiations. Always marked by tension and discord, the chief's relationship with nationalists improved in the late 1950s, but Kalusa's

argument emphasizes parallels between colonial and nationalist collaboration. Just as Kalonga Gawa Undi X and many other chiefs sought to retain a degree of judicial and administrative autonomy under colonialism, so too did they enter alliances with nationalists as astute strategists with the same aim in mind. Despite winning the promise from Kaunda to establish the House of Chiefs in independent Zambia, chiefs' inability to provide an effective counter-force to the authoritarianism that ensued adds a sobering conclusion to Kalusa's argument.

Living the End of Empire also stands out as the volume that carries forward Phiri's recognition of multiracialism as one feature of Zambian liberalism. The five chapters placed under the section entitled 'The Unsettled World of Settlers' highlight considerable diversity among Zambia's European and Asian populations and, above all, treat them as worthy subjects of study in their own right. From the Copperbelt's white miners to Livingstone's Hindu community, the chapters show how cultural and gender dynamics intersected with economic and political aspirations in late-colonial Zambia. The chapter by Jan-Bart Gewald, however, reveals the unspeakable racism among some white settlers that Phiri's emphasis on white liberals may obscure. Gewald's topic is the 'fears and fantasies' expressed through rumours among both whites and Africans in the context of African opposition to the Federation and the insurgency in Kenya. Apart from indicating diversity among white views on the possibility of national independence, Gewald makes good use of Gluckman's early insistence on regarding black and white as aspects of one society. It allows him to avoid, on one hand, reifying 'African epistemologies' (Ellis and ter Haar 2004) in rumours about the occult and, on the other, the smug relativism of discovering irrationality everywhere (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999). Above all, Gewald's contribution shows the dialogic constitution of the political and moral imagination and the limits of relying on the Habermasian thesis on critical-rational deliberation as the benchmark of the liberal public sphere.

SPIRITS AND LIBERALISM

At first sight, David Gordon's book is more radical than any other under review here in its assault on the critical-rational conventions of liberal thought. Once again, a broadly chronological account of Zambia's political history is on offer, but where Phiri and Larmer focus on topics and agents that, however neglected by previous scholarship, fit well into the institutional framework favoured by political scientists, Gordon sets out to rewrite the same history through the agency of spirits, prophets, witches and millenarian movements. He builds on recent insights into such topics both by de-emphasizing their exotic value and by refusing to reduce them to mere reflections, symbols or metaphors of putatively more real structures and processes. Spirits are, in this argument, 'more likely to offer alternative paths to power than to legitimize the status quo' (p. 198) and, as such, politics and religion are to be understood as inextricably

entwined with one another. The argument develops, in a chronological order, through a consideration of spiritual powers in a pre-colonial Bemba chieftaincy, witch-cleansing movements in colonial and missionary encounters, the Watchtower movement in colonial Copperbelt towns, Alice Lenshina's Lumpa Church, popular nationalism and its debt to Christian ideas of a new dawn, Kaunda's Humanism as a philosophy of governance and the growth of Pentecostalism in the Third Republic.

Such a broad remit is bound to be circumscribed by the author's finite capacities to generate new primary research and to master the inter-disciplinary literature that pertains to his ambitious analytical objectives. Gordon is on the firmest ground when he reports from his archival and field research on the Lumpa Church, with his account of violence between it and UNIP a particularly valuable contribution to revisionist history. He also provides insights into the variable meanings of 'freedom' that any consideration of liberalism in Zambia should recognize. For example, Gordon suggests a parallel between the Bemba concept of freedom as the cutting off of exploitative ties and Christian and nationalist ideas, as he does between certain aspects of secular and millenarian freedoms advocated by various agents in Zambia's political history. However, just as the 'Central Africa' in the book's title turns out to be a rather smaller area than might be expected, 'roughly falling within northern Zambia' (p. 9), so too is the analytical agenda less innovative than initially announced. Unlike Gewald, whose study brought the interaction and mutual influence between black and white preoccupations into an integrated framework, Gordon insists on the particular spirituality of African agents, whether as members of millenarian movements or as advocates of state ideologies. His entire project is presented as though it offered a step closer to African ideas of power. As such, it shares uncanny affinity with those apparently sympathetic constructions of Africa that end up rendering the continent irredeemably alien. In *Invisible Agents*, this effect is in no small measure a consequence of Gordon's use of the concept of belief.

Although he rejects the category of superstition, Gordon leaves the particular Protestant roots of 'belief' and 'believer' unexamined. Few students of comparative religion can ignore these roots as identified by historians of religion (Smith 1977; see also Asad 2001) and anthropologists (Ruel 1997; see also Gable 2002; Good 1994; Kirsch 2004). Relevant to this review are 'belief' as a propositional attitude and 'believer' as someone who inhabits a distinct identity. Gordon's largely dismissive opinion of early anthropological work on topics related to his own project illustrates his oversight. Rather than seeing in E. E. Evans-Pritchard's (1937) foundational work on witchcraft an invitation to consider the multiple ways in which the same people come to experience their world (see Kapferer 2002), Gordon denounces it as functionalism and proceeds to represent spirit beliefs as though they were propositional statements. Nor does Audrey Richards's (1935) equally pioneering study of witch finders in the midst of political and economic change escape the charge of functionalism. Yet such sharp appraisals do not prevent Gordon from attributing a timeless quality to belief as a marker of identity.

Much as spirits have been involved, according to this political history, in a long sequence of events and processes, Zambians' 'belief in spirits' survives them all. It is not necessary to evoke past anthropologists to bring scholarship back to the future. A contemporary historian can do the same, as when Terence Ranger complained in this journal that Africa had become 'the home of the occult' (2007: 275) in several recent studies. The responses that some authors of these studies prefer 'religion' to 'occult' as an analytical category (ter Haar and Ellis 2009) and, in Gordon's own words, that Ranger could not see past 'strange superstitions' (p. 4) hardly address the crux of the criticism. Why, and with what consequences, is 'belief in spirits' singled out as the mainstay of African political thought and practice?

The shortcomings of functionalism, criticised *ad nauseam* by anthropologists themselves, should not obscure the value of attending to the multiple material and moral registers through which Africans, like everyone else, live and make sense of their lives. In the study of Zambia alone, scholars can find a trove of insights into ritual as simultaneously constitutive of and constituted by social relations in Victor Turner's (1968) work, rather curtly deployed by Gordon as an example of reducing belief to symbolism. The cost of such cursory comments becomes particularly apparent in his chapter on Pentecostalism, a chapter that is, incidentally, also the least grounded in primary research, whether by Gordon or others. As the final chapter, it aims to provide a perspective on the Third Republic through Chiluba's declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. Gordon wishes to go further than historicizing the political elite's avowed commitment to Christianity. He identifies a correlation between the inceasing appeal of Pentecostalism and Zambia's embrace of the free market ideology. By conflating Pentecostalism with the prosperity gospel, Gordon adds little to the views put forward by journalists and some academics writing about the globe-trotting, English-speaking pastors heading mega-churches and transnational ministries (Maxwell 2000). He takes us no closer to recognizing what Pentecostalism might entail among the majority of its African adherents: impoverished rural (Jones 2005) and peri-urban (Englund 2007) populations and struggling middle classes (Haynes 2012). Instead, he offers spurious parallels between Pentecostalism's alleged emphasis on individual salvation and neo-liberal economics. With his concept of 'the neoliberal Holy Spirit' (p. 23), the literature on Pentecostalism remains mired in the kind of shallowness that would hardly be acceptable in studying other forms of religiosity.

What the chapter on Pentecostalism illustrates is how a mere correlation between religious and economic processes can become a way of subsuming one under the other unless their mutual constitution is conceptualized from the outset. It is striking, for example, how little Zambia's sharp economic decline from the 1970s until recent years figures in Gordon's account. He repeatedly contrasts his perspective to the relative absence of religion in James Ferguson's (1999) study of Copperbelt towns after the collapse in copper prices, but he may have pushed the pendulum too far in the opposite direction. Poverty earns a mention as a concern in earlier

studies, such as the Marxist dependency theory, not as an existential and moral quandary at the heart of the materiality of religion. In other words, much as the topic of Gordon's book is to be applauded as a welcome and distinct contribution to the new moment in the scholarship on Zambia, it also shows some of the perils of isolating religious and spiritual domains as perspectives on political history. At its best, as in the chapters on the Lumpa Church, *Invisible Agents* achieves a subtle sense of multiple moral and intellectual commitments rather as Macola's book does. Yet it also risks making the liberal aspirations described in the other books reviewed here look unduly incompatible with spiritually inspired reason.

CONCLUSION

Although a latecomer to the revisionist history of nationalism, scholarship on Zambia continues to generate debate of great comparative significance. Colonial and post-colonial authoritarianism no longer serves as an excuse to ignore marginalized histories but comes to be recast through a myriad domains and agents that have received insufficient attention in previous scholarship. Much as this new debate benefits from the increasing participation of historians, it is vital to recognize its inter-disciplinary nature. In this regard, it is unfortunate that, for example, the knowledge of anthropology displayed by the editors of *Living the End of Empire* is not replicated in the works by other young historians. 'The structural functionalism of Max Gluckman' in Gordon's book (p. 19) sums up a series of analytical innovations as poorly as does Larmer's association of James Ferguson with 'the reification of diversity and locality' (p. 9). Inaccuracies about a cognate discipline's contribution to the study of Zambia do not augur well for appreciating intellectual resources further afield.

The importance of knowing other disciplines' contributions lies in the high stakes of this new moment in scholarship. The promise of these books is to move revisionism from the celebration of agency and resistance to harder questions about the place that the liberal values of equality and freedom might have both among the instances being studied and in scholars' own commitments. As this review has tried to indicate, the new scholarship on Zambia addresses those questions with varying degrees of clarity and with variable answers. For it to rise to the challenge of its own findings, this scholarship will have to recognize liberal thought not only as an African possibility but also as a source of ideas whose provenance in European history must keep scholars alert to spurious analogies. The rediscovery of liberalism in Zambia remains partial as long as such vigilance is not exercised. Gone, in any case, is the stifling adherence to the post-colonial *commandement*, with its mutual zombification of subjects and rulers (Mbembe 2001), as the only analytical alternative to the rhetorics of autocrats and their foreign creditors. It remains to be seen if the analytical transition spearheaded by these historians will become philosophically as astute as the theoretical construct it renders obsolete.

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