

# *Teachers' Strike, 1970: A Chapter in Zambia's Labour History\**

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## I. — INTRODUCTION

Employer resistance to workers' demands for better economic and social conditions often leads to strike action. This article will discuss conditions and events surrounding a strike organized by the Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT) which occurred in two phases: May-June 1968, and June 1970. The first phase lasted for five days, affected certain schools only in Copperbelt Province, and was resolved through persuasion from the ZNUT leadership following an undertaking by the Ministry of Education to meet the teachers' grievances. This phase will be discussed briefly to show how eventually it culminated in a countrywide strike in June 1970 involving about 20,000 teachers. This second phase which lasted for three weeks, had a wider impact and caused a political rift between the Ministry of Education, as the direct employer of the teachers, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Services, which is responsible for arbitrating labour disputes. The strained relations between two government ministries, in fact, pointed to deeper political strife in the ruling party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP). Political cohesion in the country waned because opposition to the UNIP increased, and open support from other labour organizations for the ZNUT pointed to the possibility of worsening political instability. Simultaneously, the inherited colonial class relations were being restructured through the "nationalization" of the mining industry in August 1969. Thus, the teachers' strike took place at a critical time when the state bureaucrats took political action to expand conditions essential to the rise of an indigenous capital-owning class.

The 1970 strike was the subject of a government board of inquiry chaired by Hosea J. Soko,<sup>1</sup> whose report provides much of the evidence in

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<sup>1</sup> H. J. Soko, chairman, *Report of the Board of Inquiry Appointed to Look into the Causes and Circumstances Leading to the Existence of a Trade Dispute Between Zambia National Union of Teachers and the Ministry of Education* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1970). Hereafter *Soko Board of Inquiry*.

this paper. The board received written submissions from the ZNUT, the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), while the Ministry of Education reluctantly submitted oral evidence. The board of inquiry was circumvented in its investigations because the ZNUT banned its members from giving individual evidence, which forced the board to confine itself to Lusaka rather than tour the whole country. The prohibition was meant to give the ZNUT leadership direct access to the evidence about the teachers' grievances, and to avoid possibilities of dividing the union as its president had been appointed to sit on the board despite ZNUT's objections. To protest against what they saw as government designs to manipulate the teachers, the ZNUT suspended their president. This restriction undermined the credibility of the board's report as a source of evidence for scholarly data. In order to overcome this bias, the writer interviewed some ZNUT leaders who were at the centre of the negotiations that ended the strike.<sup>2</sup> The interviews were informal but thematically structured in the hope of increasing control over the evidence. Arrangements to interview a larger number of teachers were unsuccessful as many of them did not respond, while the others referred the writer to the ZNUT leaders. This source was broadened by the use of newspapers in which views of junior ZNUT leaders and ordinary members were reported. Although the data on which this study is based are incomplete and fragmentary, the very significant economic and political changes taking place in Zambia at that time justify an initial study of the only group in the public sector which was unionized before 1970.

Hitherto, research on workers' struggles in Zambia has focused solely on the Mineworkers' Union of Zambia (MUZ).<sup>3</sup> Studies of the MUZ have examined the relationships between the MUZ and the employers of mine-workers, the nationalist movement in Zambia, and the state. Three major characteristics of these relationships have been identified. First, workers pioneered methods of mass confrontation against employers and the colonial administration before the emergence of nationalist parties in future Zambia. Second, such confrontation aimed at improving the welfare of workers and initially lacked a formal union structure. Third, when trade unions were formed, workers sought and defended their autonomy from political organizations and the state before and after Zambia's political independence. This behaviour of organized labour reflected the general

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with B.P.S. Kapini, ZNUT Headquarters, Lusaka, 15 November 1975; Newstead Zimba, ZCTU Headquarters, Kitwe, 8 August 1979.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, several articles by I. HENDERSON, "Pre-nationalist Resistance to Colonial Rule in Zambia", *African Social Research*, 9 (June 1970): 669-87; "Wage-earners and Political Protest in Colonial Africa: The Case of the Copperbelt", *African Affairs*, 72 (July 1973): 288-99; "The Economic Origins of Decolonization in Zambia, 1940-45", *Rhodesian History*, 5 (1975): 49-67; "Early African Leadership: The Copperbelt Disturbances of 1935 and 1940", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 2 (1975): 83-97; "The Origins of Nationalism in East and Central Africa: The Zambian Case", *Journal of African History*, 11 (1970): 591-603; R. H. BATES, *Unionisation, Parties and Political Development: A Study of Mineworkers in Zambia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); *Party-Union Relations in the Copperbelt of Zambia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, n.d.); and M. BURAWOY, "Another Look at the Mineworker", *African Social Research*, 14: 239-87.

philosophy on which trade unions among African workers were created by colonial administrations in African-British colonies. Our understanding of the changing perspectives of the relationship between the workers and the state, and among the workers in Zambia, will be enhanced by extending beyond the mining studies to other industrial and white-collar workers.

This article on the teachers is intended to fill some of these gaps. It might be objected that teachers as part of the intellectual élite are not workers *per se*, in the sense that they do not produce commodities. As wage-earners, the teachers who form the subject of this article sold their labour power for their own and their children's subsistence and could well have been the first completely proletarianized section of the indigenous work-force in Zambia. They had six to ten years of formal education and two to four years of professional training. They also constituted the bottom end of the teaching profession; their wages and working conditions were comparable to the semi-skilled and skilled workers who have received considerable academic attention in Africa.

Generally, labour studies in other parts of Africa have been part of a growing scholarly interest in the distinctive role which wage-earners in general played in the nationalist resistance, or narrowly as a process of labour protest exhibiting class consciousness. The initial studies from the 1950s to the 1960s saw wage-earners as part of an urban élite which had pioneered anti-colonial resistance.<sup>4</sup> Scholars who focused on post-colonial conflict between trade unions and ruling political parties stressed that workers and their trade unions had been politically uninvolved and continued to be unresponsive to the demands of the general African population and were basically concerned with the articulation of their corporate interest in the wider political system. Articulation of corporate interest in this discussion is adapted from Philippe C. Schmitter<sup>5</sup> to refer to the ZNUT's institutional relationship with the authoritative decision-making institutions represented by the system of government in Zambia. This relationship involves different structures of power and influence, and each unit (here referring to the ZNUT and the government) makes an effort to attain its interests. This relationship has found its clearest formulation in the concept of "labour aristocracy" systematically treated by Giovanni Arrighi and John S. Saul.<sup>6</sup> Drawing their evidence from East and Central Africa, they point out that the labour aristocracy comprised high income wage-earners who, on account of the security offered by their high wages, have become stabilized in urban areas and have severed ties with the peasantry. The labour aristocracy enjoyed an income three to five times higher

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, J. WODDIS, *Africa: The Lion Awakes* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1961); R. SANDBROOK and R. COHEN, eds, *The Development of an African Working Class: Studies in Class Formation and Action* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), pp. 17-19.

<sup>5</sup> P. C. SCHMITTER, "Still the Century of Corporatism", *The Review of Politics*, 36 (January 1974): 85-91.

<sup>6</sup> G. ARRIGHI and J. S. SAUL, *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House Ltd, 1974), pp. 17-23, 116-26.

than the casual or migrant unskilled workers and the peasants. The discretionary consumption of this élite absorbed a significant proportion of the surplus produced by the peasants and unskilled workers, which militated against increased investment and production in the peasant economy. Arrighi and Saul locate the rapid growth of the labour aristocracy in the period immediately before and after the attainment of independence, as a result of accelerated economic expansion and the localization of the bureaucracy in the light of new political imperatives. The most provocative, and also probably the most discredited, element in the labour aristocracy thesis is their postulate that, through dependence on their socio-economic position and use of trade unions, this group identifies upward with the ruling élite and foreign capital owners in a process where the indigenous "élite" and "sub-élite" are polarized at one end against the unskilled workers and the peasantry, instead of the usual relations between workers and the bourgeoisie.

In relating these assertions against the evidence from the teachers' strike, we shall bear in mind some of Adrian Peace's strong objections to the labour aristocracy thesis, which compelled John Saul to submit a reconsideration of the first formulation.<sup>7</sup> The teachers' strike shows, as Peace argues for Lagos workers,<sup>8</sup> that they had an organizational capacity and class consciousness that operated in a competitive capacity against the ruling élites to gain wage increments. The strike was designed to promote their distinct interest, an issue not clearly pointed out by Peace, rather than necessarily being a means of identifying upwards. This was essentially economic corporatism in line with the general policy and objectives of their organization to promote and protect the interests of the members. Peace also rejects the concept of "labour aristocracy" by showing that worker protest in Lagos had a populist impact on the larger society.<sup>9</sup> Any populism, as in the teachers' strike, came from other workers, not from the peasantry. The populism among the workers took the form of worker solidarity and this reflected the workers' common position, whose continued articulation led to class polarization not allowed for by Arrighi and Saul. Unlike Peace's "populist and militant" workers, the nature of the service withheld by the teachers through strike action precluded populist reaction beyond the expression of worker solidarity, because the larger society was penalized through denial of education to pupils. Indeed, the teachers earned incomes several times higher than the peasantry and casual workers and did not identify downwards in the sense of championing the cause of these sections of society. This is not a mark of aristocracy because it is common in Zambia, under the extended family system, for workers to invest in their peasant relatives' means of production or provide for relatives who are casual workers. There is an insignificant number of wage-earners who have completely severed ties with the

<sup>7</sup> A. PEACE, "The Lagos Proletariat: Labour Aristocracy or Populist Militants", in *The Development*, eds: SANDBROOK and COHEN, pp. 281-302; J. S. SAUL, "The 'Labour Aristocracy' Thesis Reconsidered", in *ibid.*, pp. 303-10.

<sup>8</sup> PEACE, "The Lagos Proletariat", p. 298.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 290, 297.

rural peasant. However, given the fact that the concept of labour aristocracy was originally formulated to enlist strategies that would alter the neo-colonial structure of domination, the labour aristocracy thesis has explanatory value, as Saul emphasized in the reply to Peace. He asserted:

The 'structures of domination' in contemporary Africa are such that only revolutionary solutions to the development problem seem promising and viable ones. Therefore, the main point of interest concerning the role of the working-class (and concerning the trade unions which claim to institutionalise that class's presence in economic and political arenas) must be the extent to which the role so played either facilitates or cuts against a radical challenge to the *status quo* of underdevelopment and neo-colonial domination.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, if this brings out the main element in the reformulated labour aristocracy thesis, it has value for pointing out, as we shall see for the ZNUT strike, that wage-earners lack a revolutionary ideology, and this missing link obstructs the creation of alliances between the minority wage-earners on the one hand, and the casual workers and peasantry on the other.

Thus, up to the end of the 1960s, labour was studied in the context of its corporate interest representation and in relation to political parties and élites. In 1975 and 1978, Gutkind, Cohen and Sandbrook edited two works by scholars with an interest in African labour history which made a significant advance in synthesizing earlier trends in academic research on African workers. In them, labour protest is treated as a history of a continuing process in which worker action reflects a conscious effort on the part of the wage-earners which demonstrates their solidarity in defence of their class interest, and this action at the same time has political impact. It is a history of protest over "conditions of life and work, and the life of producers vis-a-vis managers and owners".<sup>11</sup> By stretching labour history to the beginning of imperial intrusion into Africa, they make the important point that class consciousness among African workers developed as imperialist industrial activity created wage-earners. They also argue that labour protest has existed even where political parties were ineffective, such as during periods of military rule and where nationalist parties are proscribed (as in South Africa). They have thus extended the horizon both in time perspective and scope of the linkage theory from where early researchers had left it in the 1960s. They point out that their focus is on "worker-directed perspective" in order to establish, through "situationally-specific" features, whether awareness of common interest constitutes a social base for radical transformation of neo-colonial states of Africa, and whether wage-earners could be agents of socio-political solidarity for dominated classes which mainly comprise the proletariat and the peasantry.<sup>12</sup> It is hoped that this study of the 1970 teachers' strike in Zambia will contribute to the concerns of a "worker-directed perspective".

<sup>10</sup> SAUL, "The 'Labour Aristocracy'", p. 301.

<sup>11</sup> P.C.W. GUTKIND et al., eds, *African Labour History* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1978), p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> SANDBROOK and COHEN, *The Development*, p. 16.

## II. — TEACHERS AND TRADE UNIONISM

Unionization of teachers at the territorial level dates back to June 1953, following the formation of the Northern Rhodesia African Teachers' Association (NORATA).<sup>13</sup> This was a merger of provincial associations which had been formed in the 1940s. NORATA's first president was Joseph Mwemba, who held the position up until the time he contested the 1964 parliamentary elections on the African National Congress (ANC) ticket.<sup>14</sup> The vice-president was John M. Mwanakatwe, the first African to teach in a secondary school in Zambia. On 5 June 1962, NORATA became the Northern Rhodesia Union of Teachers (NORUT).<sup>15</sup> The transition from association to union status fulfilled a legal requirement that "anyone [*sic*] wishing to fight for better salaries and conditions of service for its members must register as a union".<sup>16</sup>

The racial exclusiveness of the NORUT was not a mere accident. Northern Rhodesian society, like that in many settler colonies, was racially divided and Africans were discriminated against in all walks of life. African workers were subjected to an industrial colour bar which restricted them to certain jobs for inferior wages. This was a particularly controversial issue in the Copperbelt, where the labour force was concentrated in one area and thus preoccupied the government. Teachers had played a leading role in criticizing the industrial colour bar since 1947, and in 1951 co-operated with other workers to form a common front, the Northern Rhodesia Trade Union Congress (TUC).<sup>17</sup> The TUC was undermined by internal conflict over whether workers should take an active part collectively in nationalist politics. The conflict indicated a rejection of the artificial separation between labour protest and politics by a section of the workers.

The teachers organized themselves and co-operated with other workers because of unsatisfactory conditions that specifically applied to the teaching service. African teachers with the same qualifications as white colleagues received three-fifths of a European teacher's salary because in colonial thinking "Africans could not work as efficiently as Europeans".<sup>18</sup> For example, in 1962 African graduate teachers entered the service at about £80 per month compared to £134 per month for European gradua-

<sup>13</sup> NORTHERN RHODESIA GOVERNMENT, *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Stoppage of Work Among Teachers in the Western Province [now Copperbelt Province] During the Months of July and August, 1963* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1963), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> John M. Mwemba was a member of the Zambian parliament until he lost in the parliamentary elections of 1978. Between 1964 and 1972 he sat as a member of the African National Congress. From 1973 to 1978 he sat as a UNIP MP, and held the post of Junior Minister in the Ministry of Labour and Social Services.

<sup>15</sup> Interviews, Kapini, 22 January 1977; Zimba, 19 July 1979; John M. Mwanakatwe, Elector House, Lusaka, 19 September 1979.

<sup>16</sup> B. P. S. Kapini to Steven Behrstock, 15 November 1975. This letter was shown to me by B. P. S. Kapini at the ZNUT Headquarters, Lusaka.

<sup>17</sup> R. M. MWENDAPOLE, *History of the Trade Union Movement in Zambia Up to 1968*, Communication No. 13 (Lusaka: Institute for African Studies, 1977), pp. 7, 45. This work was edited and has an introduction by R. H. PALMER and J. R. PHIMISTER.

<sup>18</sup> Interview, Mwanakatwe, 19 September 1979.

tes.<sup>19</sup> This racist wage distribution, which applied to all sections of wage employment in the country, was a particularly upsetting condition in African secondary schools where African and European teachers taught together and where the number of African teachers had increased from the mid-1950s. Primary school teachers were spared the daily reminder of racial income disparities only because their schools did not have European teachers and, of course, Africans were not allowed to teach in European schools at either level. African heads of schools did not receive administrative allowances. At the secondary school level, the case of John M. Mwanakatwe was typical. In February 1949 he became the first African to teach in a secondary school, at Munali, which was the only African secondary school from August 1940 until the mid-1950s. He received no allowance when he became the first African headmaster at Mungwi in 1957.<sup>20</sup> The educational system was racially segregated until 1964 when the new government of independent Zambia desegregated it. However, some primary schools became fee-paying and scheduled (multi-racial) schools largely attended by the children of whites and of the African élites who could afford the high fees. The latter's children were assimilated into formerly all-white schools in a disguised perpetuation of the open discrimination practised during the colonial period.

Lacking a trade union, teachers sought close association with the nationalist movement in order to improve their working conditions and raise their professional status in relation to their European counterparts through the removal of an unjust colonial system. In contrast to other workers, such as the miners who were concentrated in a single work place, the fact that schools were scattered made it extremely difficult for African teachers to organize themselves and take concerted action. Nonetheless, such concentration and easy communication in the Copperbelt facilitated the organization of the first teachers' strike there over the colonial government's failure to provide electricity in the teachers' houses.<sup>21</sup> The difficulty of spatial dispersal in the 1950s was overcome by the widespread anti-colonial protest, and teachers thus linked their specific struggle to the broad-based nationalist movement. They saw participation in the anti-colonial resistance as the only realistic hope of improving their economic conditions, especially as nationalist protest laid emphasis on political rights and was oriented to uniting all classes within the African population. Mwanakatwe observed that "early leadership of teachers saw close association with nationalist movements as useful in raising the status of teachers".<sup>22</sup> The law prohibited all government employees from participating in any political activity either through official party membership or by using union representatives. However, African teachers defied this restriction and took part in nationalist politics "not as a co-ordinated body"<sup>23</sup> but as individuals. As such they entered politics in substantial numbers and

<sup>19</sup> NORTHERN RHODESIA, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, *African Education Circular No. 29* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1962).

<sup>20</sup> Interview, Mwanakatwe, 19 July 1979.

<sup>21</sup> Interview, Zimba, 8 August 1979.

<sup>22</sup> Interview, Mwanakatwe, 19 July 1979.

<sup>23</sup> Interview, Zimba, 8 August 1979.

have held key positions in independent Zambia, including that of head of state. Participation in national politics did not seem to the teachers to be a cause for them to form their own political party or to forge an alliance with other workers specifically for promoting and protecting workers' interests. Those who entered full-time politics did so accepting the broad programmes of the various political parties that they joined. Although we can consider the teachers' union as a structural corporate unit representing teachers' interests, the union did not operate beyond the limited framework of union "economism" as it did not take any clear political initiative. However, it should be noted that teachers in Zambia were bound to play an active, in fact, a leading role in nationalist politics. Since teaching was the principal occupation among literate African élites before independence, members of the teaching profession were accorded high social status.

Before I discuss the nature of teachers' political activity in a broad conceptual perspective, the evolution of the teachers' organization should be completed. On the eve of Zambia's political independence, the NORUT became the non-racial Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT) in March 1964.<sup>24</sup> On paper, opening its membership to European teachers meant a structural transformation which gave the organization a distinct class character. In practice, this transformation amounted to little as European teachers received the status of expatriates, i.e. non-Zambians — most of them British — working in the country. In order to induce them to continue teaching in Zambia, the government offered them better employment benefits than native teachers. With such advantages, these teachers saw no need to join the ZNUT. A further weakness was that the privileged indigenous secondary school, college, and university teachers abstained from joining the union. The ZNUT failed to realize its aspirations of becoming a professional organization for all teachers in the country in terms of its membership but remained a union for the defence and promotion of teachers' interests. At the time of the 1970 strike, the ZNUT membership was 13,000 strong out of 20,000 primary school teachers. About 12,000 secondary school teachers watched the 1970 strike without organizing support for their primary school counterparts.<sup>25</sup> Despite this, the ZNUT has carried on with its pre-independence spirit of protecting and promoting the interests of all teachers, irrespective of rank and category. This was particularly evident during the 1964-68 period which was marked by "unabated militancy" and what Mwanakatwe calls "unwarranted strike threats",<sup>26</sup> because expectations for the fruits of independence appeared far from being met. Teachers expected and sought an immediate improvement in the material conditions inherited from the colonial past. Their social status declined with the rapid increase in the zambianization of the civil service and the private sector. The more articulate, however, as part of the new political élite rose to high positions in the public and private sectors.

<sup>24</sup> J. M. MWANAKATWE, *The Growth of Education in Zambia Since Independence* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 122.

<sup>25</sup> Kapini to Behrstock, 15 November 1975.

<sup>26</sup> MWANAKATWE, *The Growth of Education*, p. 124. Interview, Mwanakatwe, 19 July 1979.



We noted earlier that despite a common organization, teachers participated in politics on an individual basis. Sandbrook and Cohen considered such political activity by unionized workers in Africa under three categories.<sup>27</sup> In their first category they place trade unions that have not developed a political consciousness committed to a wider transformation of society. While this assertion holds true for the teachers' union members in Zambia, their argument that such a situation allows top union leaders to advance themselves or their political patrons in the political structure of the state must be modified for the Zambian situation. Among the teachers who rose to high political office, the majority were ordinary members rather than union leaders.<sup>28</sup> This may largely be due to the fact that teaching was the major occupation of the few literate Africans in a country that was one of the richest British colonies but had the least developed educational system and labour market. The second category of union political activity that Sandbrook and Cohen identify relates to a situation where a trade union, as a unit in the political arena, attempts to influence government policies. It is partly in this context that the teachers' strike should be considered. The third type of political activity transcends the concern with economistic representation and focuses on wider political issues in order to seize state power. Sandbrook and Cohen assert that labour unions in Africa have always lacked this orientation. As we shall see later, the teachers' strike tends to confirm this, and the reasons for this lie in the "economistic" tradition and a general acceptance by the teachers and politicians in Zambia that trade unions are junior partners or instruments of political activity. However, their more sophisticated postulate that worker action is a continuing process of conflict between workers and "managers and owners" is a characterization that fits the events of the teachers' union discussed in this article.

### III. — TEACHERS AND THE STATE

The first phase of the strikes took place between 29 May and 2 June 1968. The strike arose from "the question of deductions of rent arrears from certain teachers' salaries"<sup>29</sup> in the Copperbelt Province. In March 1968, the regional headquarters of the Ministry of Education informed the ZNUT regional branch that since 1964 some of its members had paid insufficient rent and that the Ministry now wanted to recover the arrears. The ZNUT national executive in Lusaka intervened, asking why the issue affected only the Copperbelt Province and why the information had not

<sup>27</sup> SANDBROOK and COHEN, *The Development*, pp. 199-201.

<sup>28</sup> Since 1964 more ordinary teachers than ZNUT officials have been elected or nominated to parliament or appointed to junior political positions. However, Basil Kabwe and Christine Mulundika satisfy the Sandbrook-Cohen case. Kabwe had been a ZNUT official in the 1960s, and a ZCTU assistant secretary-general at the time of the teachers' strike: he was nominated to parliament in 1973 and was elected to parliament in 1978 from a Copperbelt constituency. Mulundika was a ZNUT branch official at the time of the strike and was appointed to a junior political post in 1973, which she has held to date. Her appointment was ostensibly on the grounds of increasing women's participation in public affairs.

<sup>29</sup> *Soko Board of Inquiry*, p. 2.

emanated from the Ministry's headquarters in Lusaka. The teachers affected were to be informed in advance if deductions were to be made. Contrary to these arrangements, deductions were made in April and May, taking the teachers and the union leaders by surprise. A series of meetings between the ZNUT and the Ministry of Education followed. At one of these meetings, held on 28 May, it was decided to appoint a committee to investigate the issue. This decision was rather belated: teachers struck work on 29 May 1968 to protest both the Ministry's disregard for a mutually made arrangement and the unfair deductions. Teachers resumed work on 3 June, when they were promised that the matter would be investigated thoroughly and resolved fairly.

The government pre-empted the investigation. On 25 June 1969, by cabinet decision, the government intervened by appointing an administrative working party chaired by Professor C. A. Rogers.<sup>30</sup> The working party was directed to consider the issue of rent and the possibility of setting up a teaching service commission independent of the Public Service Commission. The teachers welcomed this intervention as a signal that wages would increase and conditions of service improve because the government had previously set such a precedent in the handling of the miners' strike in 1966.<sup>31</sup> However, on 9 October 1968, they were confounded when the ministry withdrew recognition of the ZNUT before the working party had even completed its investigations.

The Ministry of Education explained that it took the decision because the ZNUT's actions since March 1968 had shown "a demonstrable unwillingness to co-operate with this Ministry and indeed can be interpreted only as a direct attempt to flout the authority of the government". For its part, the Ministry of Education had "punctiliously carried out its obligations to the full and this against a growing reluctance on the part of the union to co-operate".<sup>32</sup> The Ministry exculpated itself and found the ZNUT guilty of "flouting the authority of the government".

Negotiations over the rent issue ceased until the release of the Rogers Report on 30 July 1969. The government accepted most of the report's recommendations, abridged them to 147, and identified fifteen of them for immediate action. The release of the report was prefaced and underlined by a provocative remark by the Minister of Education that, since the recommendations were wide-ranging and called for a large financial outlay, "it would be folly to think that everything can be done overnight".<sup>33</sup> No

<sup>30</sup> C. A. ROGERS, chairman, *Report of the Administrative Working Party* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1969).

<sup>31</sup> GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Mining Industry* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1966).

<sup>32</sup> D. C. Mulaisho, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education to the General Secretary-Treasurer, ZNUT, 9 October 1968, in *Soko Board of Inquiry*, Appendix I, p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> ZCTU, "Submission to the Three-Man Board of Inquiry in the Dispute Between the National Union of Teachers and the Ministry of Education, 20 July 1970", in *Soko Board of Inquiry*, Appendix III (1), p. 3. The ZCTU submission gives an account of the strike, its involvement which shows its own and its affiliates' support for the ZNUT. It was the most substantial piece of evidence submitted to the Board of Inquiry.

immediate action was taken on issues such as rent and salaries that directly affected the teachers. The ZNUT began negotiations with the ministry soon after the release of the Rogers Report, culminating in a new recognition agreement signed on 5 November 1969.

The actions of the Ministry of Education and the government suggest a two-pronged strategy. The ministry adopted a confrontationist approach, which the ZNUT challenged. The ministry seems to have believed that, as an employer which was part of the government, it had absolute authority over its employees and the ZNUT leadership ought to accept this without question. This attitude might have arisen from the government's wish to bend labour unions to a development policy which entailed avoidance of strikes. The ZNUT fought firmly for the interests of its members, especially as the government had confirmed that their grievances were legitimate. On the other hand, government intervention should be seen as "crisis management". The appointment of the Rogers working party was a public relations exercise to wiggle out, via public discussion, of a worker-employer confrontation which directly affected the government. This interpretation is plausible since, soon after the publication of the Rogers Report, the government appointed a commission chaired by Reverend C. M. O'Riordan to review the salaries and conditions of service of the public service, the police, and the defence forces.<sup>34</sup> This was an attempt to find a solution to grievances that the teachers' case had shown to have general application to the entire public service. The O'Riordan Commission was a logical sequel to an administrative investigation that inflamed a controversial issue which had to be defused. Both the government and the Ministry of Education found an opportunity to delay implementing and to ignore recommendations of the Rogers Report in which the teachers were interested.

In general, governments tend to be sensitive to the grievances of their civil servants. They are highly conscious that the civil service is a government's most visible and, upon occasion, its only concrete base of support, aside from the army, as the events of the 1960s in Africa have demonstrated. At whatever cost to the economy, the civil service and the army must be kept reasonably content with working conditions, salary and fringe benefits.

A major feature of the colonial legacy was that the civil service was made to feel like the king of the professions; civil servants received better pay, housing, and holidays than did teachers, doctors, or any other segment of the population. Any actions taken by other groups that threaten the dominant position of the civil service have seldom been successful in any African country. Thus, the majority of African graduates continue to knock on the doors of the civil service while the professions, especially teaching, are in desperate need of skilled manpower. The situation could be corrected by allowing the salaries of professions, especially teachers,

<sup>34</sup> C. M. O'RIORDAN, chairman, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Review the Salaries, Salary Structure, and Conditions of Service of the Zambia Public Service (including the Zambia Police and the Defence Force)* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1971). Hereafter *O'Riordan Commission*.

to rise to attract graduates. However, for the civil service this is unthinkable. Consequently, governments have put pressure on the universities to become teacher training colleges, have bonded students into teaching for a specific number of years, and yet failed to correct an imbalance in manpower which could be partly corrected by salary adjustments.

In Zambia, the Rogers Report indicated to the government that teachers were going to have to be given greater financial rewards. If this was inevitable, then it was imperative that the civil service and army also have their salaries adjusted proportionately upward. Furthermore, a ten-percent salary rise overall, for example, is likely to cause at least an equal rise in inflation, so that very quickly the economic situation is back to exactly where it stood before the whole exercise. Usually, the government controls the buying of agricultural products from rural areas; it is only here where prices can be held below the ten-percent inflationary rise. For example, the producer price of maize (corn), a major peasant-produced commodity, rose from 3.20 Kwacha in 1970 to 5.00 Kwacha in 1975 when, during the same period, wage-earners received two substantial increments in 1972 and 1974.<sup>35</sup> At the same time the government had subsidized consumer prices for maize meal. The rural areas became poorer as a consequence. In many cases, the general salary rise for the civil service and army was slightly greater so that the privileged sectors were the only real gainers as a result of the initiatives of the teachers. However, the teachers do not seem to have been aware that they benefited from the state's extraction of surplus from the peasantry. To regard the upward identification of the teachers as a typical characteristic of the labour aristocracy would be incorrect. It would be more useful to see it as corporate economism since investigations by Rogers and O'Riordan revealed the inadequacies of the teachers' incomes and working conditions. These might have been severe given the teachers' high dependence on their wage incomes.

The causes of the 1970 strike should be sought in the conflicting reactions to the Rogers Report by the government and the Ministry of Education on the one hand, and the teachers on the other. These reactions also link the 1968 and 1970 strikes. The Ministry of Education looked upon the Rogers Report primarily as recommending improvements in the administrative structure and efficiency of the teaching service. This was confirmed by the ministry's permanent secretary who noted that "the advantages of the Report are not to be measured in terms of *Kwacha* and *Ngwee* in teachers' pockets but in an improvement in the efficiency of our education system and the status of our teachers and the quality of education our children will receive."<sup>36</sup> Its priority was to improve the administrative structure and it swiftly created the Teaching Service Commission independent of the public service. The commission began opera-

<sup>35</sup> D. J. DODGE, *Agricultural Policy and Performance in Zambia: History, Prospects and Proposals for Change* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1977), pp. 101-2. Kwacha and Ngwee are the national currency of Zambia.

<sup>36</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 10 June 1970.

tions in January 1970. The ministry also provided first-aid kits to all schools in September 1969,<sup>37</sup> and increased the number of non-teaching and auxiliary staff in secondary schools. Almost predictably, the first impulse of the civil service was to increase its own size, which apparently did not require new budget arrangements.

The aspects of the report concerning teachers' benefits and wages were not given priority on grounds that these had to await budgetary allocations for 1970. Teachers half-heartedly accepted and welcomed the ministry's actions. They were more interested in the working party's recommendations on rent adjustments, upgrading of salaries, increased in-service training, promotion, and other general working conditions. As the report had been released one year from the appointment of the Rogers working party, teachers did not anticipate much delay in the implementation of recommendations which directly concerned them. By June 1970 this still remained a false anticipation and frustration among teachers peaked. The Lusaka branch of the ZNUT voiced this clearly in May 1970: "Teachers are tired of waiting for the implementation of the Rogers Report, particularly salaries. You can understand the frustration the ordinary teacher is feeling."<sup>38</sup> From the time the Rogers Report was released, teachers threatened strike action if implementation of government decisions was delayed. The ministry became apprehensive of increasing strike threats despite assurances to the contrary from the ZNUT leadership. At the same time the ZNUT pressed the ministry to implement the Rogers Report. Renewal of recognition on 5 November failed to improve matters.

Teachers were dissatisfied with delayed implementation of recommendations on rent and housing. The events of March-April 1968 reflected inadequate administrative performance because rent arrears had not been identified for nearly four years. In June 1970, teachers still paid rent for non-rentable accommodation, and were overcharged while others paid rent when they were housed in classrooms. The government had accepted the Rogers recommendation for refund of rent, but nothing had been done by June 1970. As a basis for fair rental charges, the government accepted the principle of basing rent on the type of accommodation provided and not as a fixed percentage of salary. This was subsequently rejected.<sup>39</sup> In general terms, accommodation was unsatisfactory. In urban areas, housing was typical of relatively inexpensive, high-density residential accommodation. Most of these homes had no electricity. Even in the Copperbelt where the miners were the best-housed workers in the country, accommodation for teachers was of comparatively inferior quality. This was particularly disturbing since teachers compared themselves to the miners who had electrified houses for very small monthly charges and a free water

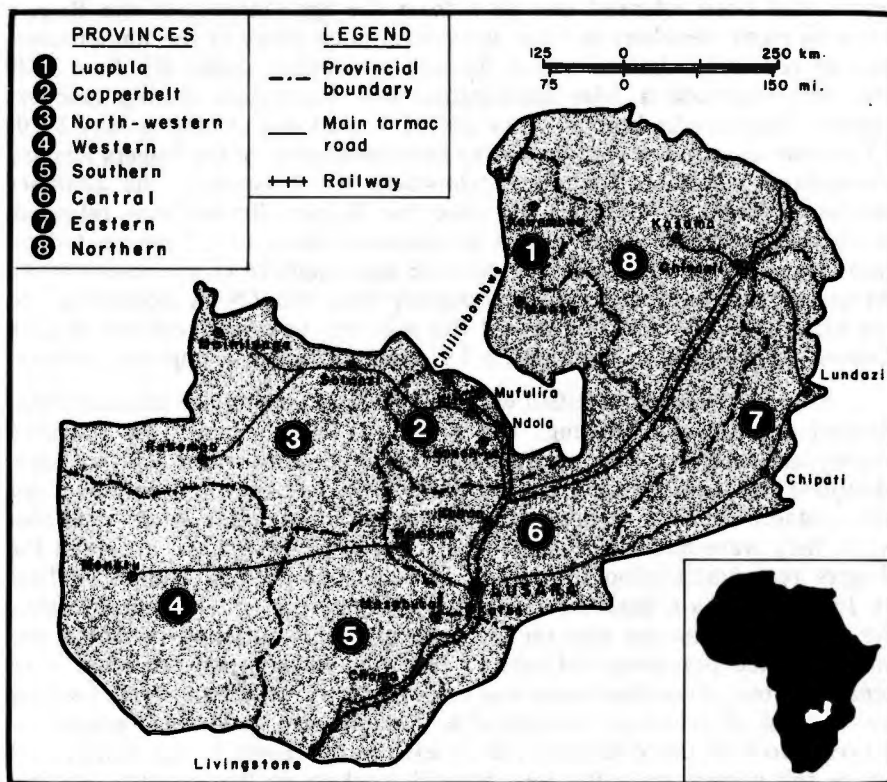
<sup>37</sup> The writer was in charge of a first-aid kit in 1969, at Chizongwe Secondary School, Chipata, unaware that the kit was a result of the suffering and struggles of the teachers.

<sup>38</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 28 May 1970; interviews with Elias Mwanza and Margaret Mwanza, Mtendere Primary School, Lusaka, 22 July 1979.

<sup>39</sup> Information in this and subsequent paragraphs is in Appendix III (2) of the *Soko Board of Inquiry*.

supply. In rural areas most teachers lived in pole-and-dagga thatched houses with a kitchen, toilet, and bathroom located outside the house. The government accepted to provide the 4AF type of house which comprises three bedrooms, a big combined living and dining-room, a kitchen, and separated bathroom and toilet inside the building, but can vary for bigger families. This was to be an improvement over the two-bedroom houses which many teachers occupied. By June 1970 this type of house had not been provided and to date accommodation remains a source of confrontation between the ZNUT and the Ministry of Education.

ZAMBIA: LOCALITIES AFFECTED BY 1968 AND 1970 TEACHERS' STRIKES.



Teachers were also anxious to see improvements such as payment for female teachers on maternity leave, payment of double-session (i.e. teaching in the morning and afternoon), substantial increments, especially for the bottom four categories on the salary scale which varied between 720 and 960 Kwacha gross per year, immediate confirmation in appointment after two years of service, training of school heads for increased responsibilities to manage their schools, regular in-service training and facilities for handicapped children with commensurate remuneration for teachers. They reacted with misgiving to the appointment of the O'Riordan Commission in

1969 because it implied delay in the realization of what they had struggled for since 1968.

As a result, the start of the new academic year in January 1970 was characterized by increased and open protest and strike threats. It was clear that a strike loomed. Between January and May 1970, the ZNUT executive and the Ministry of Education held six consultative meetings to discuss the progress made in the implementation of the Rogers Report so as to avert the threatened strike. The meetings were informal, usually unplanned and "no records for the meetings were kept".<sup>40</sup> The Soko Board of Inquiry later claimed that the decisions of these contacts were not communicated to teachers, which served to increase their frustration. On 13 May, the ZNUT pressed for periodic reports on the progress of implementation. The first report released on 29 May erred by announcing that building new houses, lowering of house rent and leave benefits would be deferred.<sup>41</sup> These issues involved money, which the teachers badly needed. The Ministry of Education was oblivious to their plight. To force the hand of the ministry and the government, the teachers struck work between 2 and 22 June 1970.

#### IV. — TEACHERS' STRIKE, JUNE 1970

Despite appeals for patience from the ZNUT leaders, the Ministry of Education's report on 29 May provoked strike threats from Chililabombwe, a town in the Copperbelt.<sup>42</sup> On 2 June teachers in twenty-two primary schools in Mwense District in Luapula Province struck work; five other schools followed on 5 June. From 11 June all teachers in the province were on strike, which immediately spread to the nearby Northern Province. The Luapula teachers submitted reasons for their strike to the Ministry of Education. Most notable among their demands were salary increments of fifty percent with effect from 1 January 1969, replacement of old houses by the type which the Rogers Report had recommended, electrification of teachers' houses, bush allowance for teachers serving in rural schools, allowance during maternity leave, remuneration for in-service training, and "no more commissions of inquiries".<sup>43</sup> The link between the 1968 and 1970 strikes is obvious as teachers in Luapula Province used the events of the former strike as their baseline. A plea from the Ministry of Education on 3 June, and a visit two days later by Newsteadimba, then acting president of the ZNUT, to Luapula Province, failed to end or avert the spread of the strike.<sup>44</sup> On 8 June, fifty-four schools involving 806 teachers and 74,000 pupils in Lusaka and Kafue in Central Province joined the strike, which spread throughout the province between 9 and 11 June, and

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 30 May 1970.

<sup>42</sup> *Soko Board of Inquiry*, Appendix III, pp. 3-4.

<sup>43</sup> Secretary, ZNUT Kawambwa Branch to Chief Education Officer, 3 June 1970, in *Soko Board of Inquiry*, Appendix IV, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> *Soko Board of Inquiry*, Appendix III, p. 3.

to Southern Province on 11 June. The strike had become endemic. Kitwe and Mufulira teachers in Copperbelt Province struck work on 9 June, and on 12 June the whole province was on strike. Western and Eastern Provinces joined the strike on 12 June, and when the strike spread to Northwestern Province on 14 June, all elementary school teachers in the country were on strike.

The strike extended to the whole country (see Map) so rapidly and bridged the geographical isolation of the teaching profession in elementary schools because of three basic factors. First, the grievances voiced by the teachers in Luapula Province were common among primary school teachers in the country, with differences of degree rather than substance, especially between rural and urban areas. Second, there seems to have been veiled contact between the national ZNUT leadership in Lusaka and the regional branches. As the Soko Board pointed out, private visits by two national ZNUT leaders to Luapula and Northwestern Provinces just before the strike there broke out may not have been "immaterial" to the strike. The ZCTU seems to have sympathized with and supported the teachers' cause right from the time their leader was appointed to sit on the Soko Board of Inquiry. Moreover, the ZNUT acting president, Newstead Zimba, was also the ZCTU president, and a few ZCTU officers were teachers. The third reason for the rapid spread of the strike might be located in the press coverage of the initial stages of the strike, statements from the ZNUT leaders and the high-handed or boisterous manner in which the Ministry of Education handled the teachers' strike threats and the actual strike. In all, the strike became the highest expression of professional and worker solidarity and a means of securing redress of their grievances.

At a press conference on 8 June the Minister of Education had called on the striking teachers to return to work because their strike was illegal.<sup>45</sup> He claimed he would consider their grievances only when they were brought to his attention through the established channels after resumption of work. The permanent secretary of the ministry repeated the message in a radio broadcast on 10 June. However, the union leaders remained convinced that the strike would engulf the whole country "as teachers everywhere have the same grievances".<sup>46</sup> At a meeting with the Ministry of Education on 10 June, which was also attended by the ZCTU and labour officials from the Ministry of Labour and Social Services, the ZNUT refused to condemn the strike. In retaliation, the next day the Ministry of Education terminated the 1969 recognition agreement "on grounds that the ZNUT has to date failed to attract to its membership significant representation from scheduled primary schools, secondary schools and teacher training colleges".<sup>47</sup> Three leaders whom the ministry had seconded to full-time jobs were also recalled and instructed to resume teaching on

<sup>45</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 9 June 1970.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> D. Bowa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education to the General Secretary, ZNUT, 11 June 1970, in *Soko Board of Inquiry*, Appendix I, pp. 7-8.



23 June. No elementary school teachers who went on strike were to be paid for the strike period.

Continued victimization made the teachers even more uncompromising and more determined to continue with the strike. This determination was summed up on 12 June by Christine Mulundika who explained that "we were prepared to return to our classrooms today but the action of the Ministry has angered us."<sup>48</sup> The teachers declined to take up the new appointments "even at gunpoint" and the ZCTU backed them.<sup>49</sup> The ZCTU secretary-general, a former MUZ official, "warned of a general strike in the country", claiming that "further victimisation of teachers would lead to a chaotic situation".<sup>50</sup> The assistant secretary-general of the ZCTU, a former teacher, informed the teachers of the decision of the ZCTU and its affiliated unions when he was reported to have said "we are putting the full weight of the Congress to your case."<sup>51</sup> This support for the ZNUT in part reflected its previous strong support for other unions. It is also significant to note that former teachers were among the leaders of a national umbrella organization for trade unions. Also, the ZNUT was numerically the second most powerful union after the MUZ, and the third financially strongest union after the MUZ and the Zambia Railway Workers Union among ZCTU affiliates. At another meeting on 14 June the ZNUT and the Ministry of Education agreed to normalize relations, end the strike within a week, and not to withdraw the seconded teachers. As a consequence, the strike ended on 22 June, with teachers convinced that their grievances would be thoroughly investigated and resolved without any further victimization. Just over a week after this compromise and a day after the strike ended, the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Education issued fresh instructions that the union leaders who had been recalled had to take up their new appointments on 24 June and that teachers would not be paid.

The ZNUT and ZCTU instructed the three teachers to ignore the ministry's directions and also persuaded teachers not to resume the strike. The three teachers were subsequently dismissed on 15 July, for "misconduct" and "refusal to obey lawful instructions".<sup>52</sup> A Minister of State in

<sup>48</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 13 June 1970.

<sup>49</sup> *Zambia News*, 14 June 1970. The ZCTU Secretary-General was Wilson Chakulya.

<sup>50</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 17 June 1970.

<sup>51</sup> *Zambia News*, 21 June 1970.

<sup>52</sup> *Soko Board of Inquiry*, p. 4. The teachers who were dismissed were M. Mubita, L. Musonda and B. P. S. Kapini. They were reinstated. In 1972 Kapini replaced Mubita as Secretary-General of the ZNUT but in August 1980 he was removed following increased suspicion among teachers that Kapini had lost his former worker militancy in the hope of getting a government appointment. Further intriguing developments include the suspension of Newstead Zimba and Frederick Chiluba from the UNIP in early 1981. In 1974, Zimba stepped down from the presidency of the ZCTU to be elected secretary-general, a position he still holds, and became a ZNUT Trustee in the ZCTU. He was elected to parliament in 1978. Chiluba was elected ZCTU President in 1974 and was re-elected in 1978. There appears to have been a prearranged understanding among the workers for the 1974 ZCTU election for which the 1970 teachers' strike sheds some light. The recent suspensions are over the union's opposition to government decision to devolve power to local institutions at district and provincial levels through a Decentralisation Bill, passed in late 1980.

the Office of the President supported the Ministry of Education but was warned by the ZNUT "not to parrot [legal] words which he did not understand".<sup>53</sup>

Acrimonious exchanges and confrontations between the Ministry of Education and the ZNUT continued until the morning of 30 July 1970, when the head of state detained the three teachers plus their acting president.<sup>54</sup> This action was taken, President Kaunda explained, after "the most careful examination of the history, conduct and motives" of the four union leaders. They had "misused the responsibilities entrusted to them and had sought to turn the union into an instrument for furthering the interests of organisations whose objectives are subversive." The teachers were also not to be paid for the strike period, apparently, as a penalty for "insubordination and indiscipline". These rationalizations can best be understood in an evaluation of the interventions from the ZCTU, the various levels of government and the head of state.

#### V. — GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Studies on the MUZ have stressed the constant friction between the MUZ and the ZCTU and between the MUZ and the UNIP.<sup>55</sup> The MUZ had resisted the ZCTU because it claimed that the latter's leadership was hand-picked and used by the ruling party to incorporate and neutralize the miners. Up to the mid-1970s the MUZ tried unsuccessfully to replace the ZCTU leaders with a leadership that would be more on the side of the workers than the existing ZCTU leaders had appeared to be. In the 1970 teachers' strike the ZCTU confronted the state in support of the teachers while the relations between the ZNUT, the ZCTU and the UNIP were of a different pattern from those of the MUZ, the ZCTU or the UNIP. The present writer is calling for a new assessment of Zambian labour history in order to advance our understanding of these relationships and to re-assess the conclusions on labour history in the country, which have been based on the study of mine-workers. In the 1970 teachers' strike the ZCTU championed the teachers' cause and through the ZCTU there was general support from other unions for the teachers. It would appear that the strike marked a watershed in inter-union relationships. From about the mid-1970s, the ZCTU enjoyed considerable support from its affiliated unions, against the background of increasing economic difficulties in the country. Such labour solidarity during the 1970 teachers' strike compelled the government not to underestimate the potential consequences of the strike.

We have seen how the state acted in the teachers' strike at three levels: ministerial, cabinet and head of state. I have examined the first two

<sup>53</sup> *Times of Zambia*, 23 June 1970.

<sup>54</sup> *Zambia News*, 31 July 1970.

<sup>55</sup> See footnote 2; R. S. SKLAR, *Corporate Power in an African State: The Political Impact of Multinational Mining Companies in Zambia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 205-6.

and what remains now is to speculate on why the head of state intervened to the extent of detaining four teachers, long after the strike had ended. One obvious reason was that heated negotiations continued after the end of the strike and another strike was likely. The state intervened to close the issue and to reduce controversial events which taxed its attention. Widespread support for the teachers frightened the state because the continuation of the teachers' unrest might "cause disorder which would be costly to control".<sup>56</sup>

The presidential intervention is better assessed when placed in the full context of the grounds the President enumerated for restricting the ZNUT leadership:

They sought to turn the union into an instrument for furthering the interests of organizations whose objectives are subversive. It was treacherous to deliberately seek to mislead the public such as the four teachers had been doing in the past. This does not serve the cause of Zambia, it serves the cause of enemies within our midst. The greatest enemy in this country is not an outsider but a Zambian himself who enables outsiders to succeed in the destruction of the nation.<sup>57</sup>

All this is difficult to accept since the President subsequently allowed the four ZNUT leaders to carry on with union work when they were released at the end of 1970 and reinstated. This was done despite the presidential directives that they would only be re-engaged as teachers after five years.<sup>58</sup>

The President's interpretation of the role of the teachers' leaders was not unusual because trade unions provide alternative bases for leadership seeking political power. Possibilities existed under the multi-party political system (Zambia became a one-party state in December 1972) that ZNUT as a unit in the political area, as we have noted earlier, might switch the support of its rank and file from the UNIP to another political party. Political parties are traditionally not the only institutional bases for power. In fact, "strikes do not have to be politically motivated to be used by politicians",<sup>59</sup> incumbents, or competitors for control of the state apparatus. These interpretations should be judged against the background that the teachers' strike took place during a period of intense factionalism within the UNIP, the party that has held the reins of state power in Zambia since independence in 1964. Political anxiety was widespread in the country.

A brief discussion of the developments contemporaneous with the strike will clarify its significance and place government reaction in a more informed context.<sup>60</sup> The first part of the strike took place at a time when

<sup>56</sup> S. D. SACIKA, "The Role of the State in Industrial Relations", in *Some Aspects of Zambian Labour Relations*, ed.: E. R. KALULA, 1, 1 (Lusaka: University of Zambia, 1975), p. 57. There was only one publication of this work despite its promising start in an important area of contemporary change in Zambia.

<sup>57</sup> *Zambia News*, 31 July 1970.

<sup>58</sup> Interview, Zimba, 8 August 1979.

<sup>59</sup> C. GERTZEL, "Labour and the State", in *Some Aspects*, ed.: KALULA, p. 142.

<sup>60</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this theme see, for example, A. MARTIN, *Minding Their Own Business: Zambia's Struggle Against Western Control* (London: Hutchinson, 1972), pp. 109-11.

the UNIP as the dominant party in Zambia faced growing opposition from the African National Congress (ANC), UNIP's pre-independence parent and long-time opponent, and the United Party which had been formed in 1966 by Nalumino Mundia, a previous UNIP lieutenant.<sup>61</sup> The resignation of Simon Kapwepwe from the vice-presidency of the UNIP and the state in August 1969, and the UNIP altogether late in 1970 and his formation of the United Progressive Party in 1971 was a particularly disturbing challenge to the UNIP. This was a major event in Zambia's political history because two leading national politicians (Kaunda and Kapwepwe) who were close personal friends and political allies parted ways. Kapwepwe's resignation and speculation that he was forming a new party in 1969 and 1970 influenced government reaction to the strike because Kapwepwe was thought to have a good following in Copperbelt and Northern Provinces.<sup>62</sup> According to Newstead Zimba, the teachers, especially in the Copperbelt, had been suspected of supporting the new party. The waning support of the UNIP was reflected in the defeat of many of its candidates during the general elections of December 1968 and local government elections in August 1970 in areas where the party had usually enjoyed strong support.

Meanwhile the state's acquisition of fifty-one percent of the foreign-owned mining industry in August 1969 marked a significant restructuring of power and class relations in the country just as the teachers were pressing hard for improvement in wages and conditions of service. Government participation in the private sector which had begun in 1968 created conditions for the emergence of a local capital-owning class as appointments from the top levels of the political and administrative structures to supervise government shares allowed those appointed to acquire private property.<sup>63</sup> There was therefore congruence of interest between the emergent local capital-owning class with the political and administrative élite, as their origin and initial consolidation depended on stable ties with those in the top echelons of the party and government and stable industrial relations. In order that the new developments should become firmly rooted, the government imposed a wage freeze and a ban on strikes. The months following

<sup>61</sup> Mundia's party was banned in 1968. He joined the ANC, the official opposition in parliament until the formation of a one-party state in 1972. He returned to the UNIP when the ANC joined the former in order to make way for a one-party state. Under the new political order, he became a member of UNIP's Central Committee, which is formally the party's highest administrative and policy-formulating organ. The President appointed Mundia Prime Minister on 18 February 1981.

<sup>62</sup> Kapwepwe died of a stroke on 24 January 1980. See his obituary: "How right was Kapwepwe?", in *Times of Zambia*, 26 January 1980. "It will be difficult not to acknowledge that Kapwepwe, whatever his faults in later political life, played a pivotal role in the development of Zambia, both as vice-president and as a cabinet minister. What will not be easy to decide is whether he was right or wrong in breaking off from UNIP, only seven years after the country's independence."

<sup>63</sup> See, for example, K. ERICKSEN, "Zambia-Class Formation and Detente", *Review of African Political Economy*, 9 (May-August 1978): 18-24; T. SOUTHALL, "Zambia: Class Formation and Government Policy in the 1970s", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7, 1 (October 1980): 91-108.

these restrictions witnessed increasing strike threats among the teachers. It became common to identify the growing militancy among teachers with the growing political opposition to the UNIP. The campaign for local government elections held in August 1970 brought to the surface in sharper terms the competition within and against the UNIP so that labour disturbances were not to be treated sympathetically. It is in this context that we can understand why the government harshly penalized the teachers' leadership.

The ability of the head of state to end the teachers' strike and the quiet submission of the teachers appear puzzling on first sight. Nonetheless, it has been a general phenomenon in Africa that governing parties have sought to make opposition to themselves appear subversive to the state and linked with external forces. On account of the delicate overall geopolitical situation in Zambia arising from the war on most of her borders since 1964, the Zambian government and people have been particularly prone to the acceptance and validity of such an argument. It must also be remembered that no national wants to be thought disloyal and subversive but governments have made strenuous efforts to confuse the airing of genuine grievances with disloyalty and subversion. In some states, Zambia included, civil servants and ministers can be and have been attacked while the head of state is considered above criticism. The assumption has been that he represents the state, is benevolent and cares for the welfare of his people, but often is misinformed by corrupt and self-seeking advisers. Thus, public protest serves to draw the attention of the head of state to the grievances of a section of the people. It is hoped at least that conditions will be improved, at most that ministers will be removed and the cabinet reshuffled.

However, more often than not, heads of states inherit the legacy that the authority of government must be respected at all times. This legacy is reinforced by the legitimacy which ruling parties in Africa draw from the fact that they ended colonial rule. Furthermore, rectifying one wrong for one group encourages other groups to agitate for and articulate their grievances. Finally, the head of state cannot meet the grievances of the teachers without affronting the prestige and paramount status of the civil service or the army. The usual procedure is the one taken by the Zambian head of state. The teachers' leaders are slapped down hard, a commission reports, and many of the teachers' grievances are met. For African governments, this has the advantage of creating the impression that they have not been forced into concessions.

Finally, it should be stated briefly that the O'Riordan Commission recommended and the government implemented a salary increase from between twenty and fifty percent, the upper percentage affecting the lower salary scales and the lower applying to the upper brackets in the teaching profession, civil service, police, and the army. This was an important gesture which seemingly narrowed the gap between junior and senior government employees. However, it was careful not to interfere with the prestige ranking of teachers *vis-à-vis* the other public workers and therefore did not help in any significant way to meet Zambia's pressing need to

attract more teachers.<sup>64</sup> Among the options open to those qualified, teaching was still underpaid. Although we do not have the figures for inflation, it seems likely that it wiped out the advantages of the salary increases even before they were paid.

## VI. — CONCLUSION

We have examined the social and economic factors which were responsible for the strike organized by the ZNUT, the only labour union in Zambia's public sector before 1970. The specific grievances of the teachers related to patterns of remuneration and general conditions of their employment. Strike action, in a bid to secure redress of their grievances, brought out worker consciousness. The common feeling that united scattered workers transcended a professional consciousness. The labour aristocracy thesis would have us believe that the strike was an economic affair, bearing a mark of an upward identification. This would be a crude conclusion because the strike represented a real process of polarization between the wage-earners and the nascent local bourgeoisie firmly located, at the time of the strike, in the political and administrative structures of the state. This transitional stage of the emergent bourgeoisie is the key in understanding the ruthless manner in which the strike was brought to an end. There were no vestiges of common professional feeling between the teachers who struck work in 1970 and the former teachers who were in bureaucratic positions which they would use to become full members of the bourgeoisie.

Admittedly this event lacked a revolutionary orientation. It did not develop a clearly defined political goal, but it induced a political solution. Further, no attempt was made to seek alliance with the peasantry (another dominated class) or to alter the structure of domination and surplus accumulation in Zambia, which should not detract us from appreciating what the strike did. It was a pole around which worker support and solidarity crystallized. Inter-union sympathy and support, and reduced conflict between the ZCTU and its affiliated unions, characterized the strike and has remained an instructive feature of the post-1970 period in inter-union relationship.

<sup>64</sup> The teaching profession has dismally failed to attract large numbers of teachers. Primary schools are seriously understaffed. It has been estimated that about thirty to fifty percent of teacher graduates from the University of Zambia take up secondary school teaching. For example, 40 out of 122 teacher graduates in 1979 joined the teaching profession. See *Times of Zambia*, 25 November 1979, Alifeyo Mbuzi to Editor.

## RÉSUMÉ.

*Nous nous proposons de faire valoir les motifs qui ont incité les instituteurs de Zambie à se mettre en grève en mai-juin 1968 et en juin 1970, et, en outre, les moyens mis en œuvre par le pouvoir politique pour mettre fin au conflit. Les instituteurs ont eu recours à la grève dans l'espoir d'obtenir des hausses de salaire et de meilleures conditions de travail. Le pouvoir a d'abord tenté de résoudre le conflit en noyant les commissions officielles chargées d'enquêter sur les griefs des instituteurs. Ces manœuvres ayant échoué lors de la grève de 1970, le pouvoir réagit à un climat politique fort difficile en réduisant brutalement au silence les chefs du syndicat des instituteurs, qu'il fit arrêter. Nous situons enfin notre démarche dans le cadre général du débat sur l'élite ouvrière dans l'Afrique contemporaine.*