CHAPTER FOUR

OBSTACLES TO ZAMBIANIZATION: SUCCESSION IN A RIGID ORGANIZATION

There are a number of factors which determine the outcome of a particular succession. In this chapter I shall discuss three general features. First, I shall consider the legitimacy of the succession at different levels in the organization before it actually takes place. Legitimacy derives from the expectation that a particular set of interests will be protected or a set of demands fulfilled. The second factor determining the outcome of a succession relates to the first. What are the demands of the supporters of succession and the defences deployed by those resisting it? Finally, and crucially, what access does the successor have to organizational controls to cope with resistance and conflicting demands?

LEGITIMACY OF THE SUCCESSION

Within the same organization, groups will accord a particular succession lesser or greater legitimacy according to the anticipated consequences for their own interests. An interesting case is Gouldner's study of a gypsum plant where, prior to the succession of a new manager, the organization was characterized by what is referred to as an 'indulgency pattern' (Gouldner, 1968). The indulgency pattern represents a lax enforcement or relative absence of bureaucratic rules and controls over worker effort.[1] The new manager, Peel, faced with a demand to increase efficiency, introduced a punishment-centre bureaucracy to intensify worker effort for the same remuneration. For this reason the succession proved unacceptable to the workers. A study by Guest (1962) of succession in an automobile plant illustrates a different case where prior to the succession there was dissatisfaction amongst the workers owing to the pre-existing punishment-centred bureaucracy. In expressing dissatisfaction with the existing system the workers accorded the succession considerable legitimacy in the hope that the rate of remuneration for effort might increase. This the new manager, Cooley, was able to achieve, not by increasing remuneration but by relaxing the controls of the punishment-centred bureaucracy, equivalent to a reduction in effort.

The successor, assessed as an individual, will inevitably enter into the evaluation of the succession. In the case of the gypsum plant the old manager had established close informal ties with his employees both

outside work and on the plant, and the arrival of Peel, an outsider, was not welcomed. His predecessor had left behind him a set of faithful lieutenants, strongly opposed to the succession, whom Peel replaced with his 'own men'. In Guest's study Cooley's predecessor had been very unpopular and virtually any replacement would have been more acceptable.

Gouldner considers the reactions of four groups to the succession: top management, the plant supervisors, the surface workers and the workers underground. Of these only the top management considered the succession as legitimate. In Guest's study it appears that all groups saw Cooley's succession as advantageous. In the case of Zambianization one can also delineate a number of groups differentially affected by the replacement of white by black. We have already seen how white line management tended to regard Zambianization as a threat to its own job security and therefore as an illegitimate succession. This feeling was intensified and rationalized by regarding the Zambian as promoted above his level of competence. Whereas lower levels of white management see Zambianization as an immediate threat, higher levels are threatened less directly. The latter claim to be more concerned about the effect of Zambianization on production and profits. They too will often not accord Zambianization more than a grudging legitimacy, as is reflected in the organizational changes which have accompanied Zambianization.

The black subordinates of the successor tend to regard the *succession* as legitimate but, because they have been passed over in the competition for promotion, will often deny legitimacy to the *successor*. Thus blacks will speak to outsiders, including whites, about the inadequacies of their black supervisors in a relatively free manner. Indeed, why should they not complain about their black supervisor just because he is black? In subsequent chapters we shall examine the legitimacy perceptions of top management, the Government, the trade union and the lowest level of workers. In each case the attitudes will reflect the perceived interests of the particular group.

SUPPORT AND RESISTANCE

According to whether a particular interest group grants the succession legitimacy or not, so will it assist or obstruct the successor in performing his new task. In Gouldner's study there was resistance, particularly from the favoured lieutenants of the old regime, to the ascendancy of Peel and his 'strategic replacements'. On the other hand, Cooley was able to elicit co-operation from his subordinates when he became manager of the automobile plant.

Those who feel their jobs threatened by Zambianization are likely to offer overt forms of resistance to the new successor. As a supervisor or colleague, an expatriate can easily make the task of the Zambian very difficult by simply withdrawing from contact with him. Those higher up in management might be expected to extend to the Zambian successor all the assistance possible. In practice this is unusual because of the prevailing assumptions that the Zambian is inadequately equipped for the job. The managers withdraw some discretionary powers and responsibility from the Zambian, treat him differently from his white colleague and in the process incur his resentment while undermining his self-confidence and security. In this way the expatriate makes it more difficult for the successor to establish himself as a legitimate heir amongst his subordinates, who consequently regard him as second-rate. Here, therefore, we have an admirable example of the 'self-fulfilling prophecy'.[2] Working on the assumption that the Zambian is not capable of performing his new task, management creates conditions which make it impossible for him to perform his new task effectively.

Those who have been passed over in selection for promotion may also frustrate the one who has been successful. In an organization where there is only a single channel of communication and where each level therefore represents a vital link in the chain of command, there are many ways in which the subordinate can frustrate the successor through non-co-operation. Where this in fact happens, the Zambian successor appears even less competent in the eyes of his white supervisor, who thus feels justified in withdrawing more authority. This in turn leads to the exacerbation of the successor's difficulties with his subordinates.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL AND THE DISPENSATION OF REWARDS AND PENALTIES

To extricate himself from such an escalation of resistance and vanishing legitimacy the successor must have access to the dispensation of rewards and penalties. Both Peel and Cooley did have access to such a system of rewards and penalties and through this were able to evoke co-operation from those with whom they had to work. In the account of the Zambianization of the personnel department I noted the defence mechanisms the Personnel Manager was able to adopt to protect his position. But, as with Peel, the Personnel Manager, being regarded as an illegitimate successor, looked upon succession as a threat rather than an opportunity. This determined the manner in which he deployed the authority he derived from his status in the organization. Rather than secure the co-operation and support of his personnel officers, community affairs officers, etc., he chose to defend his position as if he were

under siege, with the inevitable costs of increasing tensions, conflict and turnover of staff.

The considerable discretionary powers extended to the Personnel Manager over his subordinates are the exception rather than the rule in Zambianization. Usually Zambianization affects only a single position at a time, not an entire department—and the successor in such circumstances has little opportunity to manipulate the bureaucratic organization in his favour or recruit a group of lieutenants as loyal supporters. His position may be likened to the radical Cabinet Minister faced with conservative civil servants determined to preserve the *status quo*. It is frequently the complaint of Labour governments in England that the conservative civil servants have resisted and even sabotaged policy changes.[3] In his study of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Government of Saskatchewan Lipset devotes some considerable space to the resistance of incumbents of bureaucratic positions to socialist governments.

> In recent times, persons who have served in or studied socialist governments have suggested that one crucial reason for their failure to proceed more vigorously towards the attainment of their goals has been the 'bureaucratic conservatism' of old civil servants.[4]

Lipset himself quotes a political scientist's analysis of the experiences of George Lansbury, a member of the 1929–31 Labour Government:

> . . . But Treasury representatives always found reasons why Ministerial proposals could not be carried out. Lansbury soon came to feel the futility of his position and concluded that if a socialist government was to succeed, dependence could not be placed on civil servants who were not socialist.[5]

The significance of these observations for the study of Zambianization lies in the potentiality for the incumbents of bureaucratic positions, as distinct from the nature of bureaucratic organization itself, to resist change. But as we have seen from Gouldner's study and from our own of the personnel department, such resistance can be offset by the manipulation of both the formal and the informal organization. This is a factor which Lipset probably considers beyond the bounds of possibility, since the civil service is not controlled by the Cabinet Minister but by the civil servants themselves. In the same way the Zambian successor does not normally have the power to make organizational changes to counter resistance to change, particularly if his superiors within the department are all white, as is usually the case. The following discussion will focus on the contradictions between the nature of the present organization and the objectives of Zambianization.

MINING ORGANIZATION

Studies have shown that 'responsible autonomy', the 'self-regulating work group' and little or no formal division of labour characterize the majority of systems of mining.[6] Some have gone so far as to expound a form of technological determinism,[7] suggesting that the very nature of underground mining, its uncertainty, danger and unpleasant working conditions present formidable if not insurmountable barriers to bureaucratization.[8]

Prior to mechanization British coal mining was based on the 'single-place tradition' involving a self-selected work group which shares the same pay note. In some coal fields a process of 'cavilling' ensures that the work places are distributed at random to prevent any favouritism. Management has no direct control over the workers except through the wage system. The group is 'autonomous' and the 'deputy' (supervisor) is there to provide a service and to ensure safety; he does not regulate the work process. When mechanization was introduced at the coal face the single-place tradition was replaced by a system known as 'long wall' mining. In its conventional form this introduced a formal division of labour, requiring an 'outsider' or supervisor to co-ordinate and regulate the work process. In practice the system proved unworkable.

> Long-wall systems, because of their greater degree of differentiation, require much more integration than single place systems; but the con-ventional pattern of organization has broken up the traditional, self-regulating cycle group into a number of segregated single task groups each bound within its own concerns. These groups depend entirely on external control in order to carry out the indivisible primary task of completing the cycle. The existing pattern of management through the wages system can only partially supply this control. *Full control would require either a degree of coercion which would be both impracticable and un-acceptable or a degree of self regulation which implies a different organizational pattern.*[9]

Having shown the inappropriateness of the 'conventional long wall'[10] pattern of organization, the writers show how the application of the principles of the traditional organization of mining to the mechanized faces is both acceptable and efficient. The study shows that, despite mechanization, the autonomous, self-regulating work group controlled by the wage system is still the most effective form of long-wall mining organization.

The Zambian copper mines provide an interesting contrast to the conventional mining organization, challenging the view that mining cannot be organized on bureaucratic lines with an intensive division of labour and strict discipline as an integrative mechanism. To some

extent the deviance of copper mining may be due to the differing technologies and the capital-intensive methods adopted, but it may equally well be traced to the nature of the labour force. The early recruitment of unskilled labour of rural origin and for the most part unaccustomed to the discipline of industrial work necessitated an ex-treme division of labour which minimized the chances of mistakes being made but at the same time eliminated the possibility of worker initiative and discretion. The intensive division of labour and the in-experience of workers required the coercive integrative mechanisms of close supervision and harsh discipline. Unquestioned obedience to the supervisor was the only way in which mining with extreme division of labour could cope with the risks inherent in the work. Such discipline was made possible, and indeed was encouraged, by the social distance between the black unskilled workers and the white supervisor. The African worker, particularly in the early years of mining, had no chance to apply sanctions to his supervisor in order to temper the treatment he received. So weak was the African's position, and so strong the white's, that excessively brutal control was exercised over and above what the circumstances demanded. Evidence submitted to the Russell Commission of 1935 amply illustrates the type of treatment the African was subjected to.

> At Mufulira the compound manager customarily boxed the ears of Africans, a punishment which occasionally caused his victims per-manently to lose their ability to hear . . . Whites insulted and demon-strated the depths of their contempt (some would call it fear) in innumer-able harsh ways.[11]

A young African is quoted as saying,

> Even though the African is educated [he] is . . . like a monkey to the Europeans. All the Africans who are at work at [the] mines are treated like this: when an African is carrying a heavy load, and a European is coming behind him without the notice of an African, the European kicks him. When the African says 'What's the matter, Bwana?' now the Bwana says, 'Shut up, get away,' and gives the African a very hard blow. When the African wants to know the reason why he is beaten, the Bwana takes [his] number . . . so an African will have to be fined for nothing . . . Englishmen are thrifty like a python which swallows the animal without leaving anything out.[12]

Over the years the more extreme forms of coercion have disap-peared in the wake of an increasingly powerful African trade union and demands for racial equality, supported by the Colonial Office in London. After Independence the Europeans were politically insecure and were no longer in a position to enforce strict discipline, and the

Africans would certainly not tolerate harsh treatment from their fellow Africans who had been promoted to supervisory positions. The expansion of educational opportunities meant that the labour force was becoming increasingly literate, and many were already second-generation miners. They had accepted industrial discipline, were accustomed to industrial work and were likely to resent the division of labour to which they were subjected.

Yet changes in the manning structure which management introduced in 1964 as a means to effective Zambianization embodied further fragmentation. African advancement agreements had always involved the fragmentation of jobs, and in 1964 management, fearing that Zambianization would have adverse consequences on efficiency, introduced extra layers of supervision and increased the number of supervisors in existing layers. At a time when, in many countries, management is considering 'job enlargement', the Zambian copper industry is continuing with job fragmentation.

Under mining conditions the intensive division of labour, as we have seen, requires close supervision, with strict discipline and little individual autonomy. But such a requirement is incompatible with the more humane treatment of subordinates who are also better educated and accustomed to industrial labour. There have been attempts to maintain strict discipline by formalizing procedures and making them more equitable. But in actual practice, as the Heron report suggests, disciplinary procedures have to a certain extent failed to keep up with the control requirements of job fragmentation.

> Experience varied from one mine or plant to another, but it was generally recognized that both Zambian and expatriate supervisors were faced with greater problems in the maintenance of discipline as it related to safety than had been the case before Independence.[13]

Turner reports:

> The reason for this fall in labour efficiency seems to be basically that the colonial system of labour discipline has broken down and nothing has yet developed to take its place. It is for instance very unusual—in several sectors at least—for anybody who has a job to be dismissed because of incompetence or irresponsibility (or even prolonged unexplained absence).[14]

There is therefore an incongruity between the continuing, if not intensifying, division of labour on the one hand and a relaxation of the disciplinary system on the other. To restore the balance one can either try to transform the organizational structure or attempt to re-introduce a more severe disciplinary system. The various Government reports

such as those of Turner and Heron have recommended an intensification of the disciplinary procedure, i.e. a return to colonial discipline, and the President, too, has been at pains ever since Independence to emphasize the necessity for increased discipline. Rarely does the President make a speech without hammering home the importance of discipline. For example, in his opening address to the second National Convention on Rural Development, Incomes, Wages and Prices he said,

> My government is prepared to support the right of an employer to discipline or dismiss any employee for failure to perform his job adequately. We will not allow interference in such a case by any political party or anyone not directly connected with the industrial situation.[15]

Yet the degree of discipline imposed, even now, on the mine workers would, in other countries with a different past, be regarded as unacceptable. It is only that the discipline does not match the requirements of the extreme division of labour inherited from the period of early industrialization. Progressive ideas of attempting to change the organizational structure are not to be found in the literature or in the speeches of Government officials. The closest approximation to such reform is the policy to encourage 'participatory democracy', particularly worker participation in management.[16] Though it would seem that such participation would give more discretion to the worker and more meaning to the job, in fact such reforms rarely have the desired consequences, unless accompanied by structural changes.[17] Participation in works councils or on boards of directors fails to attack the organizational structure and is often an artificial imposition giving nothing more than an impression of participation.

Without support from the top the organizational changes suited to the Zambian successor—that is, a relaxation of the division of labour, the delegation of authority, greater autonomy and an upward flow of communication—will not be introduced. Ultimately the Zambian successor's problems may be reduced to one factor, the continuing lack of confidence and trust in the Zambian which makes support from above and organizational changes unlikely. Management views the relaxation of controls and the delegation of greater responsibility and autonomy with serious misgivings, based on its own view of the Zambian worker as lacking initiative, wanting in responsibility and uncommitted to his work. Management sees the worker as 'leisure-oriented' rather than 'work-oriented'. Though such observations are peculiarly common to most management thinking,[18] nevertheless in the context of Zambianization these views have an added significance.

NOTES

1 For the use of the concept of effort see Baldamus (1961).
2 For an illuminating chapter on the self-fulfilling prophecy see Merton (1968), chapter XIII.
3 See, for example, Kingsley (1944), pp. 287–305, and Balogh (1968), particularly pp. 38–43.
4 Lipset (1968), p. 310.
5 *Ibid.*, p. 311.
6 Trist *et al.* (1963), chapter IV, and Gouldner (1968), part three.
7 For a general exposition of the view that manufacturing organizations are determined to a greater or lesser extent by the nature of technology they utilize see Woodward (1958).
8 See Gouldner (1968), chapter VIII.
9 Trist *et al.* (1963), pp. 66–7. My italics.
10 For an account of the problems of coercive control through supervision in mining organizations see Goldthorpe (1959).
11 Rotberg (1967), p. 160.
12 *Ibid.*
13 Heron (1968), para. 7.3, p. 9.
14 International Labour Office (1969), pp. 14–15. The report was written by Professor H. A. Turner and will be referred to as the Turner report.
15 Government of Zambia (1969), p. 14.
16 See, for example, Kaunda (1971).
17 See, for example, Clegg (1960).
18 See, for example, Bendix (1963), and Hammond and Hammond (1925).

CHAPTER FIVE

ZAMBIANIZATION AND ANOMIE: THE QUESTION OF WINDOW-DRESSING

So far our discussion has been confined to bureaucratic succession, but Zambianization has far wider significance in the context of the social structure. As a form of rapid social mobility, Zambianization has created a *nouveau riche* class referred to by some writers as the 'new elite' or 'national bourgeoisie'. Fanon, for example, expresses his outrage at the 'anti-national' sentiments exhibited by the 'native bourgeoisie':

> The bourgeoisie, expressing its mediocrity in its profits, its achievements and in its thought, tries to hide this mediocrity by buildings which have prestige value and at the individual level by chromium plating on big American cars, by holidays on the Riviera and weekends in neon-lit night clubs.[1]

> In the underdeveloped countries we have seen that no true bourgeoisie exists; there is only a sort of little greedy caste, avid and voracious, with the mind of a huckster, only too glad to accept the dividends that the former colonial power hands out to it. This get-rich-quick middle class shows itself incapable of great ideas or of great inventiveness. It remembers what it has read in European textbooks and imperceptibly it becomes not even the replica of Europe, but its caricature.[2]

Dumont, who writes in a more moderate tone, but is equally critical, comments,

> Massive departure of the French resulted in a high rate of promotion of subordinate African civil servants, who thus earn even more now than before, for the same qualifications. The student returning from France is appointed director if he is the only African technician or graduate in his field.[3]

> Too many African elites have interpreted Independence as simply meaning that they could move into the jobs and enjoy the privileges of Europeans. Along with high salaries often go beautiful houses, completely furnished, sometimes palaces for Governors and a large domestic staff, on the expense account, and cars usually with chauffeurs. After Independence, the '403' car was succeeded by Chevrolets in Abidjan and Mercedes in Yaounde . . .[4]

> Jackets and ties have become the new symbols of prestige. Ministers and Cabinet members keep them on even when the heat makes them insufferable, which also justifies the expense of installing air-conditioning.