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Consciousness and Contradiction: a study of student protest in Zambia

I

The underlying question which has guided studies of student protest may be formulated as follows: why, given the ostensible purpose of the university as an institution for the pursuit of research, teaching and learning, does it so frequently become the focus of 'oppositional' political activity? Why are students, whose defining activity is 'studying', so easily politicized? The thesis of this paper is that the university performs not just a single function but a multiplicity of functions and it is the relationship among these functions that determines, at the structural level, the propensity to engage in political activity. Second, the political consciousness of the institution's members is determined not merely by their roles within the university but by other roles they held in the past, hold in the present or anticipate occupying in the future. Third, the outbreak of student protest must therefore be understood as the outcome of the interaction of a specific student consciousness and the structural contradictions which inhere in the functions of the university.

Two broad orientations thread the literature on student protest which reflect the duality of 'structure' and 'consciousness'. The first searches for origins and determinants of variations in student consciousness over time and among different populations. Typical of this approach are the numerous background and attitude studies, which frequently offer social psychological schemes as their main focus of interpretation.¹ Few writers in this category fail to include the 'generational revolt' and the development of a generational consciousness in their explanatory frameworks, while some present them as their major theme.² The second orientation stresses the 'structural' or 'ideological' conflict between university and wider society. Thus, Ashby considers the hostile social and political climate which universities may encounter on being transplanted from one society to another.³ Ben-David and Collins⁴ argue that conflict is more likely where the university exists to train an élite for the purposes of reforming an incumbent leadership and providing qualified people that do not already exist in the country. Lipset

and Altbach⁵ write that 'in developing countries there is an intrinsic conflict between the university and the society, thereby creating fertile ground for student political awareness and participation'. Finally there are studies which continually move from one orientation to the other. A list of factors, associated with student protest, is presented but little attempt is made either to examine the relationships among factors or to point to those which are the most significant.⁶

My objective here is to demonstrate the importance of disentangling those factors which relate to the structural position of the university from those which relate to the political consciousness of students. Only after considering each separately can we turn to the question of their combination and articulation. To facilitate the development of this framework I propose to analyse a single case of a confrontation between university and government in Zambia. This is recounted in the following section. In the third section I examine the multiplicity of functions of the university and the contradictory relations among them, while the fourth section is devoted to student consciousness and its determinants. In the fifth section I consider the dynamics of the interaction between student consciousness and the structural contradictions in which the university finds itself. Finally I discuss the implications of this single study for the analysis of student protest in other countries.

II

Student demonstrations, since the inception of the University of Zambia in 1966, had been invariably in support of government policy. Particularly prominent in these demonstrations had been the expression of hostility towards Britain for her implicit or explicit recognition of regimes to Zambia's south—Rhodesia and South Africa. Protest outside the British High Commission had become an annual event in which students ritually affirmed their solidarity with the nation's political leadership. July 1971 saw a slight, but as it turned out significant, modification of this tradition. Students protested outside the French Embassy, situated in the middle of Lusaka (the capital of Zambia), over the rights granted to South Africa to manufacture Mirage jet fighters.

The police were patently unprepared for the demonstration. Initially, weak in numbers, they could only watch students march on the embassy and hurl bricks through the glass building. In the riot between students and police which ensued, behaviour on both sides was disorganized. Tear gas shells were fired haphazardly into buildings and at milling students. As a result the centre of the city was strewn with tear gas shells and gaseous fumes. At one point the commanding officer, unable to disperse the students, fired his revolver at a fleeing student, wounding him in the thigh. This was significant, as never before had the police felt it necessary to use firearms on the occasion of a student demonstration.

By the end of the day, of the thousand or more students who partook in the demonstration, over fifty had been arrested, a number badly beaten up and one lay in hospital with a bullet lodged in his thigh. The police had sustained no casualties.

Popular feeling, as expressed in the two national daily newspapers, was enthusiastically behind the students. They were portrayed as national heroes while the police were condemned for their 'senseless' behaviour. 'Politically and physically our policemen need some re-education in the best way to handle an innocent demonstration by unarmed students' (*Times of Zambia*, 8 July 1971). Only the President failed to congratulate the students for 'their show of indignation at the French action . . . shared not only by the Cabinet but by many citizens of this country' (*Times of Zambia*, 8 July 1971). When he made a statement three days later not only did President Kenneth Kaunda fail to offer 'crowning glory' for the protestors but demanded that in the future matters of foreign policy 'should be left in his hands'.

Piqued at the rebuff from the head of state, the executive of the student union signed an open letter to President Kaunda, accusing him of 'hypocrisy' and 'inconsistency' over his conduct of relations with South Africa. They attacked him for 'communicating with the enemy' and that 'it was not fair for one man, how great he may be, to bear the responsibility of fighting this injustice. We feel this is a people's fight.' Despite midnight meetings with the Vice Chancellor, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Home Affairs, the student leadership insisted that the letter be published and refused to retract it. Such an open assault on the integrity of the President from a section of Zambian society was an unprecedented act and, not surprisingly, led to unprecedented events. On the following day, the publication of the letter precipitated a nation wide mobilization of the party apparatus. It was incumbent on party officials at all levels of the ruling United National Independence Party to stage a massive demonstration of solidarity behind the President. In all parts of the country men and women came out to participate in 'massive demonstrations against the students'. As one banner headline of the *Times of Zambia* put it 'Country goes on march for KK.' (In fact news media reports on the size of the demonstrations were considerably exaggerated.)

Where before there may have been some dissenting voices, now all students were implicated and they rallied behind their leadership. UNIP Youth publicly threatened to invade the university campus. Students barricaded themselves in, in preparation for a siege. In the event a bloodbath was forestalled when the 'march on the university' was halted half a mile from the campus. A petition, handed to the Vice-Chancellor, from representatives of UNIP, demanded the closure of the university, the expulsion of the student union executive who had signed the letter to the President and the introduction of a pledge which would

commit students to their studies and their abstention from 'politics'. At 4 a.m., the following morning, the military, the para-military, riot police and ordinary police surrounded and invaded the campus. Fifteen hundred students were herded out of their rooms at gun point. The university was pronounced closed and the student leadership expelled. Students wishing to be readmitted when the university reopened would have to reapply. On being accepted, they would have to sign a pledge precluding them from political activity. The students were then ordered to pack their bags and return home.

The press referred to the students as 'gutless wonders', puppeteered by 'student demagogues'; 'what manner of adolescents are these?' (*Times of Zambia*, 15 July 1971). The tenor of the Government newspaper was different, 'One would have expected that these young men and women would have spent more time on preparing themselves to give more to the country and less on composing badly written statements insulting those who provide for them . . . And when they are forced to cease haunting the town bars because their funds have run down, a great deal of their time is spent in listening to arm-chair politicians and fifth columnists who have found their way at the university, not to teach at the university, but to preach subversion . . .' (*Daily Mail*, 15 July 1971).

Until the closure, students and party in a series of responses and counter-responses had taken all the initiatives. Apart from the Vice-Chancellor, as far as I know, no lecturer had been involved in any of the events. The President, who had remained aloof, at least publicly, now entertained negotiations with a committee from the academic staff as to the future of the university. In the days following the closure, the government attempted to legitimate its apparently unconstitutional behaviour. Stress was laid, ironically enough, on the illegality of the original student demonstration outside the French Embassy, presumably to avert any association between the insulting of the President and the closure of the university. Second, the university was portrayed as a 'hot bed of external subversion', the nation's students had been led astray. To add support to this view, the government deported two of the most popular expatriate lecturers. The academic staff, now threatened, in a public statement deplored the latest action of the government. The government press retaliated with attacks on 'those expatriates who thought they still ran the country'—'It is a government's prerogative to keep in the country only those she wants to keep. We do not think it is fair for other busybodies to tell us how to run the country.' (*Daily Mail*, 22 July 1971.)

Six weeks later when animosities had cooled, the two lecturers had been deported, the student leaders had 'apologised' (but remained suspended), the university was reopened. President Kaunda and the Minister of Education came to the campus on separate occasions to address the students. Both came with conciliatory messages. The

President urged the students to distinguish between 'criticism' and 'opposition': 'We should learn from the unhappy events of July.'

III

I will now attempt to distil from this 'social drama' and from other data, the structural contradictions which were activated by the student protest. This involves an examination of the processes of change within a small nation such as Zambia, attempting to escape from colonial hegemony, and also the tensions arising from the transplantation of an institution from one society to another.

In any country the university performs a multiplicity of functions. But in those larger nations with a long history of university education, contradictions among functions are institutionalized and therefore regulated through a variegated system of higher education, whereas in Zambia there is but a single university with only a small number of subsidiary units of higher education. A system of highly differentiated political and ideological structures is able to conceal and manage strains arising out of functional incompatibilities through diffusion and institutionalization while in Zambia a relatively monolithic political system is less suited to contain potential conflict. The paucity of relatively autonomous national institutions means that contradictions tend to converge in a single organization rather than be dissipated among a number of organizations. This is not to say that such contradictions do not occur or are not as important in Europe, America or India but that they are more visible in a country such as Zambia and therefore, for the social scientist, that much easier to analyse.

What then are the functions of the university? Starting from the assumption that the university is a component of the state and that the function of the latter is to preserve the cohesion of the entire society, I have inferred three functions of the university which are particularly emphasized in the Zambian context but which nonetheless have universal applicability. First, there is the intrinsic function according to which the university trains indigenous manpower necessary for running a modern state. Secondly, there is the symbolic function according to which the university is one of a number of institutions which signify the status of nationhood. Thirdly, there is the solidary function according to which the university performs an integrative role supporting the dominant political organs and abstaining from opposition to government positions. In Zambia there are relatively few institutions which perform these functions and therefore the university's failure to perform any one of them is likely to lead to some crisis. Furthermore, as I shall show below, these functions are also mutually incompatible which suggests that in the case of Zambia, university crises are structurally endemic. The processes through which concrete individuals become

'agents' or 'carriers' of contradictions, and thereby precipitate crises, are examined in the fourth part of the paper.

Intrinsic function

A headline in one of the newspapers during the July crisis captures the first function of the university—'We rule, you learn' (*Daily Mail*, 15 July 1971). The view that students attend the university to acquire a specific sort of knowledge and, as a Minister of Education warned students in 1965, should 'leave politics to the politicians' is not merely a political response to the actual or potential development of a student interest group. It is also grounded in the realities of a colonial heritage.

The result was that at Independence the scarcity of educated Africans in Zambia was extreme. In Zambia in 1964, there were in total just over 1,200 Africans who had obtained secondary school certificates in the country—about the same number as in Kenya in 1957, Uganda in 1955, Tanzania in 1960 and Ghana in 1943. The number of Zambian graduates at the same time was scarcely 100.⁷

Scarcity of high-level manpower results in dependence on expatriate personnel holding strategic positions in government, business and education.⁸ By 1971 the university's impact on the nation's manpower shortage was only slight. In its five years of existence the university had awarded 246 degrees and 314 diplomas, though subsequently output has considerably accelerated.

What specific adaptations has the university's intrinsic function elicited? Students are recruited at an earlier stage in their secondary school career than in other countries. Confronted with an underdeveloped school system, it was decided that a suitable performance at the Ordinary Level of the General Certificate of Education would be regarded as the normal entrance requirement. The content and structure of courses operate on an American credit system with a view to producing teachers, government administrators and more specialized professionals such as doctors, lawyers and engineers. A quota system, applying to the recipients of government bursaries, directed students to specific disciplines and upon graduation to specific jobs, to ensure congruence between output from the university and the needs of the nation. In 1970, 79 per cent of the students received government bursaries and many were forced into fields not of their own choosing.

Symbolic function

The behaviour of Cabinet ministers and other high-ranking government officials during the episodes leading up to and after the closure of the university, suggests that in many quarters there was considerable resistance to taking such drastic action. Thus, it was repeatedly reported that the Cabinet had had a serious split over whether or not to close the

university. It was only pressure brought to bear by party officials, particularly those outside government but who had considerable political influence, which made the closure inevitable. The unwillingness on the part of some senior members of government to intervene in the operation of the university was matched by an equal concern to return the university to normality once it had been reopened. The university is regarded, particularly by those senior state officials who have either had a more prolonged contact with British rule in some official capacity or had received further education in England or the United States, as a symbol of Zambia's political independence and emancipation from colonial subjugation. This symbolic function, signifying Zambia's independence (1964) and claim to international recognition, has figured prominently in the formation of the university and, because of incompatibilities with other functions, has contributed to tensions between university and society.

The Lockwood Report, whose recommendations form the basis of the University of Zambia, was founded on the conviction that the university,

. . . must combine practical service to the nation at a critical time in its life, with the fulfilment of the historic purposes of a university as a seat of learning, a treasure-house of knowledge and a creative centre for research.⁹

What the report misses is that these two functions—the symbolic and the intrinsic—are necessarily in conflict with one another. Apart from the problem of limited resources, if the university is to symbolize the nation's change of status, it cannot be so responsive to the environment that it becomes vulnerable to the charge that it is a second-rate institution. Accordingly, where the symbolic function did not *obviously* impinge on the intrinsic or manpower function, the university assumed the form of a 'Western' university. The constitution is modelled on the 'two tier' system of the British Civic University with its 'lay' council and 'academic' senate, while the organization of study follows an American system. Members of the academic community have the right to appoint their own colleagues and to decide upon what is to be taught and how. In other words, university autonomy is enshrined in the constitution and indeed in the normal functioning of the university. Lecturers, with the exception of the very few Zambians, were appointed on a contract basis. While they varied in quality, their expatriate status gave to the institution an image of 'excellence' and 'expertise.' In its physical structure the university manifests its symbolic function. It ranks along with other symbols of nationhood, such as the national assembly and airport, as an example of conspicuous consumption. The lavish architecture and spacious well-kept gardens effectively impress the onlooker. Frequently portrayed as the 'leaders of tomorrow' and 'the cream of the

nation', university students are not only testimony to the emancipation of the Zambian people but symbolize the nation's future.

We have already referred to the concessions the symbolic function has had to make to the intrinsic function over such matters as the priority of research and the content and structure of courses. With reference to West Africa, Ashby writes:

Although Africa's prime need from its universities is for the broadly educated citizen capable of manning the civil service and the schools, and for general practitioners in the professions, rather than for research-minded specialists who have concentrated upon one-subject honours courses, the aspirations of individual expatriate professors and the determination of Africans to ape practice in England have conspired to keep courses too narrow and too much oriented to research. Some African intellectuals, especially those educated in Britain, resist changes in curriculum or in pattern of courses because they confuse such changes with a lowering of standards. They are accordingly suspicious of any divergence from the British pattern.¹⁰

Ashby's somewhat impatient remarks and his narrow conception of the university as confined to the provision of manpower indicate an insensitivity to some of the implications of a colonial heritage and the consequential importance of the university's symbolic function. At the same time his observations, if not his analysis, do highlight the incompatibility of the two functions of the African university that we have considered so far.¹¹

Solidary function

We turn now to the third function of the university—to support and explicate the nation-building endeavours of the Zambian ruling class and help forge a national unity necessary for the pursuit of development objectives. Violation of this function can lead the university into confrontation with the most powerful political institutions in the country as illustrated by the changing fortunes of the students during the events of July.

Conflict between university and dominant political organs can be attributed, at the structural level, to the incompatibility of the solidary and symbolic functions. The fulfilment of the symbolic function implies the adoption of characteristic features of the university in the metropolitan country where dissension and opposition have been institutionalized in the political system. Traditionally a centre of opposition, cultivating a critical stance in national affairs, the university is transplanted to a country where the regulation of conflict and opposition is relatively underdeveloped and where, for a multitude of reasons relating to a history of subordination to colonial rule, profound tensions threaten to destroy the social fabric. In short, to the extent that the university

fulfils its symbolic function, so it will tend to undermine its solidary function. This contradiction manifests itself in a number of ways.

One particular characteristic of the British civic university which conflicts with the solidary function is the flow of influence in an upward direction within the institution itself. For a number of reasons, this feature is even more pronounced in the organization of the University of Zambia. First, since the research function has been relegated in importance and the teaching function correspondingly elevated, consideration of student interest assumes greater importance in the decision-making processes. Second, lecturers from Europe and the United States, many of whom have never taught in an African university, tend to be sensitive to student demands and expectations. Their transient status has meant the abdication of certain responsibilities that would normally arise out of commitment to the university. (There are obviously individual exceptions to this generalization.) The extent of student influence is reflected in student participation in almost all university committees including Senate. Third, within the student body itself, government is of an egalitarian nature. The small size and compactness of the residential community means that informal and formal sections of student leadership are readily observable and accessible to the entire student body. The student union executive, popularly elected each year, is responsive to the expectations and interests of the student body as a whole insofar as these are well defined. The upward flow of influence within the university stands in marked opposition to the downward flow of influence in the wider authoritarian political structure of Zambia. Whereas the leadership of a bureaucratized organization, such as the strong mineworkers' union may be coopted and controlled by the party or government apparatus,¹² in a more democratically organized body where leadership is responsive to the led co-optation is difficult. As we shall see student leaders who show any signs of being controlled from outside are usually removed from office. Thus tension is structurally inscribed in the opposed organizational forms of university and wider political system.

Finally, both the symbolic and intrinsic functions come into conflict with the solidary function in respect of the freedom granted and the élite status conferred upon students. Academic freedom and university autonomy, signifying continuity with the 'Western tradition', together with its intrinsic function as training students for incumbency in key positions in government, have themselves engendered the expression of dissatisfaction and impatience with the nation's progress and the conduct of the nation's leadership. Here again we note how the functions of the university may be contradictory and therefore lead to tension between the university and the wider society.

The literature dealing with intellectuals and students, particularly of the third world, and development studies in general frequently com-

pound and confuse two types of change. On the one hand there is processive change which affects the structure of the entire society, while on the other there is situational change experienced by individuals as they move between different sectors of that structure.¹³ Shils,¹⁴ for example, uses the dichotomy 'tradition' and 'modernity' to characterize both the movement of intellectuals between two sectors of the same society and the processive change of the structure of the entire society, without distinguishing between them. While the two types of change are necessarily related, the nature of that relationship can only be understood by analytically contrasting them and treating separately their antecedents as well as their consequences. I have just presented a structural analysis which outlines the contradictions inscribed in the functions of the university—an analysis at the level of 'empty places'. I now propose to fill those 'empty places' with concrete individuals carrying a specific consciousness, the nature and origins of which will be examined below.

IV

Observation of students active in the July events leads me to the conclusion that in first writing the letter to the President, then in insisting on its publication and finally in engaging in a confrontation with party and government, they did not expect the university to be closed; nor did they anticipate the tide of public opinion to turn against them. Indeed many insisted, after the university had been reopened, that the government had not had the support of the Zambian people in the handling of the July crisis.¹⁵ Student behaviour, on the contrary, was prompted by a student consciousness which derives, primarily, from factors other than the contradictions in which the university is enmeshed. The most important determinants of student consciousness is the physical mobility, between different subsystems of society, and social mobility they experience. Social mobility may be subdivided into the related forms of *group* mobility as in 'caste mobility', associated with national independence and the termination of colonial rule, and *individual* mobility between classes in the same society. First, however, I turn to the nature of student consciousness itself and the university's capacity to integrate the student body, reinforcing a consciousness of the student role above all other roles.

Student political consciousness

The intellectuals of the underdeveloped countries since they acquired independence, insofar as they are not in authority, do incline toward an anti-political, oppositional attitude. They are disgruntled. The form of the constitution does not please them and they are reluctant to play the constitutional game. Many of them desire to obstruct the government or give up the game of politics altogether, retiring into

a negative state of mind about all institutional politics or at least about any political regime which does not promise a 'clean sweep' of the inherited order.¹⁶

While such a portrait is not limited to intellectuals of underdeveloped countries, it does capture a prevailing orientation among Zambian students. The withdrawal and destructive negativeness Shils imputes to intellectuals are more pronounced in the Indian and West African situations. The oppositional stance adopted by Zambian students is more directly a response to their exclusion from the political system and a totalistic rejection of the contemporary order is not encountered. The promise of lucrative jobs on graduation, unlike West Africa and India, ensures a continuing stake in the existing regime.

What is the precise content of student 'oppositionalism'? It is not aimed at the premises which govern the organization of Zambian society but at the legitimacy of the nation's leadership. The night before the anticipated 'march on the university' by UNIP Youth, the entire student body assembled to discuss and prepare for the confrontation. At this meeting students gave voice to privately held views. 'It is time some of these politicians went,' said one. (The implication being that the basis for selection of national leadership should no longer be prominence in the colonial resistance movement but abilities and qualifications appropriate to governing a modern nation state.) Another referred to the President, 'He is not omnipotent, the nation has matured politically and now is the time when other bodies could be freely consulted over such issues as foreign affairs.' Another commented, 'We are not the "favoured sons and daughters"; none of us are favoured. We got here on merit. If X wants, he too can join us by sitting for the mature age examinations.' (Roars of laughter and applause, X is considered a typical UNIP politician, 'unenlightened' and poorly educated. He also led the public attack on students.) In more normal times the pages of the student weekly newspaper—*UZ*—are scattered with feature articles carrying the same oppositional tone.

Sad to imagine most African governments fail because their leaders (everyone of them Messiahs) purport to be their own country's Moses who must lead the flock to paradise—indispensable ones who insult their electorate. The insults and the despotism are tantamount to Moses hitting the stone fiercer than commanded. The leaders will stand on a hill and look yonder to see what they'll forego. This is after they've clung to their posts—nations never use their best brains since they are a challenge to the old folk. Leaders pick on the dullest brains, breed them and so the henchmen will never let go. (*UZ*, 3 May 1971.)

Zambia's officially proclaimed ideology is 'Humanism'—a variant of 'African Socialism'¹⁷—which stresses Christian virtues and appeals to

a romantic conception of village life and the 'common man'. For many students, the political leadership's propagation of Humanism is an exercise in hypocrisy. In response to the statement, 'The leaders of the Nation follow the precepts of Humanism,' 10 per cent agreed, 19 per cent were uncertain while 71 per cent disagreed (Opinion Poll Three, see footnote 15). The idiom of Fanon is adopted to condemn the 'exploitation of the common man at the hands of the native bourgeoisie', while the confidence Fanon placed in the peasant is rejected by the Zambian student. On the contrary the common man is portrayed as the innocent and helpless victim of opportunistic and self-serving politicians who must be replaced by enlightened and benign rulers. The glorification of the 'common man' or 'peasant' to be found in populist appeals of intellectuals in India and West Africa are not present among Zambian students. Rather they constitute a 'modernizing élite' attempting to cast off a recent and ever present history of colonial oppression and they associate with villages only backwardness and ignorance. That 'socialist' perspectives or even rhetoric is conspicuous by its absence, in contrast to students in other third world universities, reflects the proximity of the colonial order, a continuing intimacy with their rural roots and the availability of prestigious occupations as reflected in the persistent need for expatriate personnel.

Hostility to the ruling party is expressed by the student body's refusal to allow a minority, with connections to the party, to establish a university branch. In response to a questionnaire item; 'A branch of UNIP should be established on campus for UNZA students,' 19 per cent agreed, 9 per cent were uncertain and 72 per cent disagreed (Opinion Poll Two). The party is associated with violence and corruption. Not surprisingly students did not look forward to the declaration of a one party state. In response to the item; 'The time is now ripe for the declaration of a one party state', 11 per cent agreed, 8 per cent were uncertain and 81 per cent disagreed (Opinion Poll Three).

The integrative role of the university

Van den Berghe¹⁸ has described situations in a Nigerian university where roles deriving from the wider social structure become more salient than the student role. Ethnic divisions in Nigeria have overwhelmed and disrupted universities and divided students against one another. By contrast, in Zambia roles emanating from the wider social structure are subordinated to the student role in the university situation.¹⁹ The consolidation, homogeneity and generation of a specifically *student* political consciousness is a product of the manner in which the university brings together students from disparate ethnic, national and racial backgrounds and the strategic importance of graduates in Zambian society.²⁰

The formal structure of the university divides the students according

to year and field of study. There is no suggestion that these forms of differentiation are linked to particularistic characteristics of students. Because there are jobs for all graduates, status distinctions between disciplines are not marked. With the exception of medical students who live together some three miles away, students live on a single campus. They are, therefore, in continual interaction with one another which in turn facilitates the development of a highly homogeneous belief system. At the same time informal divisions within the student body, as in the formation of sociable groupings, do tend to take place along linguistic, racial and national lines. However, these are not rigid with students, particularly those in their senior years and more at ease with English, moving between different groups. Occasionally there is open conflict between Zambians and the few whites or Zambians and the small Rhodesian and South African contingents, but this is usually a consequence of the latter's explicit violation of student norms. Thus, Rhodesian students were attacked when they were reported in the *Zambian Mail* as having dissociated themselves from student action during the July crisis.

The role of ethnicity, race and nationality in campus life and the dominant student ideology are most clearly displayed at times of student elections. The various smear campaigns, gossip and public statements point to a pervasive egalitarianism which binds the community together. Powerful mechanisms of social control are mobilized against those who would try and exploit incipient cleavages. The result is that student politics is consensus politics in which no fundamental issues are raised which would divide the student body. Prospective candidates must appeal to the electorate on the basis of their personal abilities to represent the student interest and cement any cracks within the community. In this connection it is interesting to note the fate of the various Zambians elected to the office of President. The first was unseated by the student body for too close cooperation with government. The second, elected in 1967, was expelled by university authorities for his belligerence towards the Zambian government and in particular for publicly attacking the Minister of State for Presidential Affairs. Significantly between 1968 and 1970 the elected Presidents were non-Zambians—Rhodesians or South Africans. The Zambian President elected in 1971 was suspended along with his executive as a result of the July confrontation. In 1972 an Asian, though a Zambian citizen, was elected. An 'alien' president is less embroiled in Zambian national politics and therefore less susceptible to outside influences. Equally, as an outsider, he is less amenable to partisan pressures from within the student body. Furthermore, because he is more insecure he is also more responsive to the student interest and less eager to force a confrontation with government. As a result 'alien' presidents have tended to remain in office for longer periods.

While presidential candidates are expected to represent a common student interest, at the same time support for a candidate may be engineered by narrow partisan groups. Voting is undoubtedly affected by particularistic factors, especially when friendship circles are largely based on linguistic background. Thus, whereas ethnic voting is accepted and recognized, the appeal in public to ethnic loyalties or the deliberate mobilization of ethnic support is a violation of community norms and, because there is no one dominant linguistic group, bound to lose a candidate the election.

The predominance of a specifically *student* consciousness is not only a function of the integrating role of the university, but also a consequence of public definition which stresses the student's strategic role in Zambia's future. Equally, in confrontations with party and government students are invariably viewed as an undifferentiated group. As Jayawardena²¹ has suggested in the case of Guyanese plantation workers, so in the case of Zambian students, feelings of deprivation with regard to wealth and power and a communal paranoia lead to an elevation of individual worth and binds them to an egalitarian ideology.

Thus far I have considered the characteristics of student political consciousness and the sources of group solidarity. I turn now to the related question of the determinants of the content of student political consciousness.

Social mobility

The University of Zambia admits students from relatively low socio-economic status and four years later propels them into positions of high socio-economic status. One survey of undergraduates indicated that 33 per cent of students' fathers were 'professional' (probably referring to primary school teacher or equivalent), 26 per cent 'clerical', 5 per cent 'commercial', 15 per cent 'artisans and other manual', leaving 6 per cent 'miscellaneous'.²²

Movements from such origins into high status positions, in the context of a nation only recently emancipated from colonial rule, must be regarded as a composition of two distinct types of social mobility: individual mobility and a 'pyramidal' form of group mobility, in which the 'group' expands into many new roles at the apex of the social structure. In other words, students are socially mobile within a population which is itself mobile due to the exodus of a colonial administration and the expansion of the occupational structure.

From the above data on social origins it is clear that students are disproportionately recruited from the better educated strata within the Zambian population. Those parents whose occupations require facility in English, such as clerks, teachers, religious ministers and so on pass on to their children a considerable advantage since familiarity with the English language is necessary for success in the educational system.

Data from West Africa for the early years of independence show similar patterns of university recruitment though, as van den Berghe and Peil²³ demonstrate, in later years students are drawn increasingly from a 'broadening base', reflecting the post-colonial expansion of educational opportunity. While recruitment to the university has so far tended to reflect and consolidate the class structure of the indigenous Zambian population, at the same time the effect of group mobility has been to create a wide gap between the positions students expect to fill after graduating and the positions their parents held or hold in the social structure.

What are the consequences of this combination of individual and group mobility? A partial answer may be found in an examination of student orientation toward two broad reference groups, namely the class which he or she expects to join and the class from which he or she or the student's parent has emerged. It is in the nature of 'pyramidal' group mobility that even those in the highest socio-economic strata are inescapably bound to the poorest villagers through kinship and ethnic ties.

So it is not really a contradiction at all, but a simple statement of fact, to say that their [Makerere College students] near kin include *both* many unschooled peasants *and* more than their share of educated people of high social status.²⁴

Irrevocable ties to poorer and unschooled kinsmen conflict with student aspirations to the life style and values of an upper class and a rejection of associations with lower class traits. Structural involvement with those from whom they are trying to dissociate themselves serves to stimulate a bourgeois consciousness. This is apparent in the pages of *UZ*, in expressed sentiments and in incidents such as the strike of non-academic staff for a pay increase which they claimed to have been awarded but which did not appear in their pay cheques. Rather than expressing sympathy, students rallied behind the Vice-Chancellor and the student union executive without exception in a determined effort to break the strike by volunteering help to keep the university functioning until new employees could be recruited. Students were contemptuous of the audacity of workers to disrupt university life and of the leadership of the staff union who have 'their English corrected by students'. At the same time in their private life students and graduates frequently exhibit extraordinary self-sacrifice in supporting their poorer kinsmen.

Individual mobility poses problems of its own. Aspiring to an upper class life style, relative deprivation is fostered by a status inconsistency: while they are the most educated section of the Zambian population, students are without political or economic resources. In addition to their present circumstances, their future mobility also gives rise to anxiety. Recruitment to organizational élites is usually based on some com-

bination of experience and expertise. As Gouldner²⁵ has demonstrated, stressing one rather than the other may give rise to organizational strain. In the Zambian case an underdeveloped educational system and recent political emancipation implies the absence of individuals who combine both experience and expertise. Upward mobility is therefore founded *either* on expertise *or* on experience. Such ambiguity is in part resolved by the power and influence at the command of the contestants and in part by the nature of the position to be filled. At a more general level tension arises between those who seek mobility on the basis of expertise—epitomized by Zambian students—and those who seek mobility on the basis of experience and loyalty—epitomized by party officials. Each group attempts to expand and monopolize access to its own characteristic channels of mobility. Tension over appropriate avenues of élite recruitment and legitimate arenas of participation underlay the confrontation between students and party during the July crisis.

It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that students perceive their future careers as blocked in certain directions and obstructed in other directions. While there remain many expatriates for Zambian students to displace, there are also Zambians, particularly those who profited from the very early Zambianization schemes, who feel threatened by university graduates. In the copper industry, for example, there is a continuing tension between on the one hand expatriates or Zambians promoted on the basis of long-standing experience but with poor formal qualifications and on the other hand those recruited more recently from secondary schools.²⁶ Anticipatory socialization²⁷ leads to relative deprivation if mobility into an out-group is seen to be obstructed. This is the case for the Zambian student who perceives the environment as hostile to his or her mobility. As one cynical student put it, 'It doesn't pay to be a student.'

Physical mobility

Student political consciousness is fashioned out of relative deprivation not only with respect to anticipated status but also with respect to presently held status. Continually moving between university and the wider society, students become sensitive to the discrepancies in influence which they wield in the different contexts. Earlier I pointed out how influence within the university to some degree flows upwards and how student interests are accorded singular importance in both the formal and informal processes of decision-making. Student government is itself based on largely democratic principles with leadership responsive to led. Their active and to a certain extent effective participation within the university contrasts with their powerlessness outside the university. On the one occasion that support for a UNIP branch on campus reached a sizeable proportion of the student body (one fifth), its form-

ation was stalled by party officials. Outside the university, students frequently meet with hostility (sometimes provoked by a student's sense of self-importance) and are not awarded the status they receive within the university. Frustration in their expectations of their present role reinforces the anticipation of further frustration on graduation. In combination with a sensitivity to their own origins and to a persisting colonial heritage, both sources of relative deprivation go a long way towards explaining the characteristic features of political consciousness among Zambian students.

V

So far we have dwelt on the inter-relations among the functions of the university, student political consciousness and its structural origins. The location of the student in Zambian society generally and in the university in particular, mediated by a specific political consciousness, gave rise to collective protest. The consequences of that protest, on the other hand, are shaped by the structural contradictions implicating the university in its relationship to other organs of the state. Student protest was a response to a particular vision of Zambian society and of their role in it, but eventuated in the activation of hitherto 'latent' contradictions. But what is meant by the 'activation of contradictions'? When students attacked the President publicly, different interest groups entered the political arena, acting in accordance with their definition of the university. UNIP officials attacked the students for the latter's usurpation of the solidary function. 'We cannot allow a state within a state,' read UNIP placards. Leading ministers and university faculty defended the university's autonomy and behind the scenes attempted to prevent the closure in the name of its symbolic function. Students, who regarded themselves as a deprived incipient élite, emphasized the university's intrinsic function as grooming the 'enlightened' leaders, teachers and administrators of tomorrow. As a consequence of the violation of the 'solidary function', students compelled different groups to defend their conception of the university and in this way contradictions gave rise to conflict. The result was the imposition of a hierarchy of functions corresponding to the interests of the most powerful pressure groups. Parsons²⁸ has identified three hierarchically arranged levels of organizational control corresponding to 'technical', 'managerial', and 'institutional' or 'community' functions. The institutional function legitimates organizational goals in the wider society and takes precedence over the managerial function which in turn organizes the conditions for the performance of the technical function. For Parsons the ordering is given by the 'level of generalization' and does not appear as a problem. However, as I indicated above, the ordering of the functions of the university was not universally agreed upon. On the contrary, because of

their mutual incompatibility, the relative importance of the functions became the basis for the escalation of conflict. The hierarchy that eventually emerged, while it did correspond to levels of generalization was not the product of value consensus but was imposed through the mobilization of political power and organized force.

What attempts have been made to institutionalize such a hierarchy and thereby avoid outbreaks of conflict? Where there are adequate resources, then the expansion and differentiation of higher education diffuses and decentralizes conflict. Thus advanced capitalist nations have their 'symbolic' élite universities, their professional schools, research institutes and institutes of technology as well as teacher training colleges. In smaller countries with limited resources, such as the newly independent nations of Africa, institutionalizing or diffusing conflict is more difficult. Initially universities were granted considerable autonomy and insulated from conflicting political pressures. With the rise of 'centralist' ruling parties and the emergence of the university as an island of dissent, so there have been moves to incorporate the university under the surveillance of the dominant political organs of the state. For example, the longer Nkrumah held power in Ghana, the greater were the efforts of the ruling CPP to penetrate the university at all levels, seeking to bring the academic council, the faculty and the students under its control.²⁹ Another possibility, which has been influential in Tanzania, is the model presented by the Chinese Cultural Revolution.³⁰ Here the Chinese 'permanant revolution' is symbolized by the celebration of the oppositional function of the university which is encouraged to act as a centre for criticism of party bureaucrats. Simultaneously Chinese leaders attempted to fashion a particular type of student consciousness through the organization of mobility between different sectors of society. Students entered the fields and the factories to work alongside peasants and industrial labourers. What the consequences of this type of mobilization are for student consciousness is hard to say, nonetheless there is an implicit recognition that collective behaviour is a function of both political consciousness and structural contradictions.

What light does our framework shed on the expansion of student consciousness in Western Europe and America in the late 'sixties? One direction of research would be to examine the articulation of changes in student consciousness and the functions of the university brought about by the expansion of higher education. What changes may be discerned in the social origins and expectations of students during this period? Increases in numbers of students implies declining opportunities while increases in government spending in higher education brought the university to the centre of political decision-making. What implications did this have for the inter-relations among the functions of the university? How did such shifts articulate with changes in student consciousness?

Now that the initial flood of literature on student protest has subsided, it becomes apparent that much of the research was misguided in its formulation. While a mass of data has been collected, the attempt to develop some general theory of student political activism has failed to offer much in the way of theoretical advance. Overviews have either added up to a series of dislocated factors to be taken into consideration or reduced to social-psychological generalizations such as 'generational conflict'³¹, 'the ethos of the expanding ego and of a regime of plenitude'³² or prosaic assertions that the university is inherently 'oppositional'. The framework developed in this paper makes no attempt to provide a general theory of student protest but at best seeks to provide an agenda of questions which must be posed anew in each concrete case. The reason for studying student protest in Zambia is not to cast light on student protest in general but to illuminate the nature of the Zambian political and social structures. Because the university is enmeshed in a network of state institutions, it is forced to assume functions apart from the 'intrinsic' function for which it was ostensibly established. An examination of specific nature of these functions and their interrelationship sheds light on the structure of the Zambian state. Equally, because students orient themselves to a wide range of roles, as a result of physical and social mobility, their activities reflect a sensitivity to diverse features of the social structure. Both students and university are centrally located in their respective levels of social structure which makes student protest a unique spotlight for the investigation of societal change.

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Notes

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6. S. M. Lipset, 'University Students and Politics in Underdeveloped Countries' in S. M. Lipset (ed.), *Student Politics*, London and New York, Basic Books, 1967.

7. Government of Zambia, *Manpower Report*, Lusaka, Government Printer, 1966, p. 1.

8. M. Burawoy, *The Colour of Class on the Copper Mines: From African Advancement to Zambianization*, *Zambian Papers* No. 7, Manchester University Press for the Institute of African Studies, 1972, ch. 1.

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11. Ashby, op. cit., 1966, ch. X.

12. R. H. Bates, *Unions, Parties and Political Development*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1971.

13. J. C. Mitchell, 'Theoretical Orientations in African Urban Studies' in M. Banton (ed.), *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*, A.S.A. Monographs, London, Tavistock Press, 1966.

14. E. Shils, *The Intellectual Between Modernity and Tradition: The Indian Situation*, Supplement I, Comparative Studies in History and Society, The Hague, Mouton & Co., 1961.

15. In an opinion poll (Opinion Poll Four) taken after the university had been reopened, in response to the statement: 'The majority of the population approved of the closure of the university', 5 per cent agreed, 8 per cent were uncertain and 87 per cent disagreed and in

response to the statement: 'The Government represents the will of the people', 13 per cent agreed, 19 per cent were uncertain and 68 per cent disagreed. In later sections I shall make use of three other opinion polls conducted among students by the University of Zambia Sociological Association. Questionnaires were distributed to all students on campus and response was voluntary. Opinion Poll One was conducted between 5 May and 7 May 1970 and attracted 649 responses, a poll of 62 per cent; Opinion Poll Two was conducted between 22 and 29 October 1970 and attracted 351 responses, a poll of 33 per cent; Opinion Poll Three was conducted between 26 and 30 May 1971 and attracted 536 responses, a poll of 37 per cent; Opinion Poll Four was conducted between 28 September and 2 October 1971 and attracted 422 responses, a poll of 29 per cent. In each case the writer was responsible for directing the distribution, collection and analysis of the questionnaires. They are crude and partial indicators of student opinion but nevertheless do corroborate observations made while participating in student life.

16. E. Shils, 'The Intellectuals in the Political Development of the New States' in J. H. Kautsky (ed.), *Political Change in Underdeveloped Countries*, New York and London, John Wiley, 1967, p. 219.

17. W. H. Friedland and C. G. Rosenberg (eds.), *African Socialism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1964.

18. P. L. van den Berghe, *Power and Privilege at an African University*, Cambridge, Schenkman, 1973.

19. As far as I know the only occasion when student life was threatened with disruption and division from outside forces was in the August after the July crisis, when a new party—the United Progressive Party—was formed. It was led by the erstwhile Vice-President of Zambia who defected from UNIP. Active campaigning by rival factions supporting UNIP and UPP on the campus for a dominant position in the political vacuum left by the suspension of the union executive, divided the students. The uncertainty was brought to an end

by the departure of nine active supporters of the UPP for positions in that party which had been created by the arrest of a number of its leaders.

20. The student population was overwhelmingly Zambian (88 per cent). Of the remainder, 5 per cent were 'European', 5 per cent were black nationals from South Africa or Rhodesia and a further 2 per cent were Asian. (Figures provided by the Office of the Registrar for the academic year 1971.)

21. C. Jayawardena, 'Ideology and Conflict in Lower Class Communities', *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, vol. 10, no. 4, (1968).

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25. A. W. Gouldner, *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*, New York, Free Press, 1954; 'Organizational Analysis' in R. K. Merton, L. Broom and L. S. Cottrell (eds.), *Sociology Today—Problems and Prospects*, New York, Basic Books, 1959.

26. Burawoy, op. cit., chs 3 and 4.

27. R. K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, New York, Free Press, 1968, ch. X.

28. T. Parsons, 'Some Ingredients of a General Theory of Formal Organization' in T. Parsons, *Structure and Process in Modern Societies*, New York, Free Press, 1960.

29. Ashby, op. cit., 1966, ch. X; A. Curle, 'Nationalism and Higher Education in Ghana', *Universities Quart.*, vol. 16, no. 3 (1962); D. J. Finlay, 'Students and Politics in Ghana', *Daedalus* (Winter 1968); D. J. Finlay, R. E. Koplin and C. A. Ballard, 'Ghana' in D. K. Emerson (ed.), *Students and Politics in Developing Nations*, London, Pall Mall Press, 1968.

30. V. Nee, *The Cultural Revolution at Peking University*, New York and London, Monthly Review Press, 1971.

31. Fever, op.cit.

32. E. Shils, 'Plenitude and Scarcity', *Encounter* vol. 32 (May 1969).