

## The Livingstone Museum and its role in postcolonial Zambia, 1964–2006

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### Introduction

This article is a follow-up to a previous contribution to *Historia*, entitled “The Livingstone Museum and its Role in Colonial Zambia, 1934–1964.”<sup>1</sup> In that article I examined the factors that led to the establishment of the Livingstone Museum and the role it played in propagating a government agenda from 1934, when it was established, to 1964 when Zambia, then called Northern Rhodesia, achieved political independence. I attempted to show that contrary to the stated aim for the establishment of the Museum, namely “to make a collection of the material culture of the various ethnic groups in the territory for study and preservation, as it was fast dying out due to colonial mass-factory produced goods”,<sup>2</sup> it was established to achieve the colonial agenda of perpetuating colonial rule in the country.

The Museum was expected to produce knowledge on the African ways of life in order to reduce conflicts brought about by the meeting of two different cultures (the African and European cultures) while European settlers and colonial government officials exploited the territory’s natural resources. The Museum presented a space to exhibit the African material culture in order to prove to the rest of the world the superiority of European culture compared to that of Africans. In conclusion, I indicated that in reality, the Museum was established for the purpose of legitimising colonial rule in the territory, which colonial authorities saw as necessary if the “civilising” effect of European culture was to save Africans from their “primitive” ways of life.

This article picks up on the same theme and examines the role the Livingstone Museum played in postcolonial Zambia from 1964 to 2006. With the aid of temporary and permanent exhibitions mounted during the study period, the article argues that just like the colonial administration, the postcolonial government has also used the Museum as a tool to promote its political agenda. The post-1964 regime’s main objective was to reverse the negative image that Zambian culture and history received during the colonial era. This was done in order to promote national unity which had been severely compromised during the colonial period. In so doing, emphasis was placed on the glorification of the African people and their culture at the expense of other racial groups that had emerged following colonial rule, notably the Europeans and Indians. The essay concludes by contending that by putting up presentations that were mainly Afrocentric in character, those who ran the postcolonial Museum, like their counterparts in the colonial era and their Eurocentric exhibitions, were also guilty of racial prejudice.

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1. F. Mufuzi, “Establishment of the Livingstone Museum and its Role in Colonial Zambia, 1934–1964”, *Historia*, 56, 1, May 2011, pp 26–41.
2. National Archives of Zambia (hereafter NAZ), Northern Rhodesia Government, Legislative Council (hereafter Legco) Debates, Second Session of the Third Council, 7 March to 1 April 1930, cols. 166–167; NAZ, District Notebook Series (hereafter KDB) 1/5/6: Secretary for Native Affairs (hereafter SNA) to Chief Secretary (hereafter CS), Livingstone, 2 December 1931; NAZ, KDB 1/5/6: SNA, Livingstone, to Provincial Commissioner (hereafter PC) Mazabuka, 10 May 1833; and *National Museums of Northern Rhodesia, the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum, 1934–1951* (Government Printer, Lusaka, 1951), p 4.

## Exhibitions in the postcolonial period, 1964–2006

Whilst the Livingstone Museum exhibitions during the colonial period emphasised displays that advanced the supremacy of the white race and the backwardness of Africans, those mounted during the postcolonial period sought to redress the situation. They reflected the African leaders' desire to build a country based on the diversity of the different people's cultural and historical background. Thus, during this period, the Museum was expected to be an educational centre in which people could learn about the cultural heritage and the history of the country.<sup>3</sup> The exhibitions endeavoured to improve the negative image of Zambian culture and history that had been inculcated by the authorities in the colonial era.<sup>4</sup>

To underscore the new role the Museum was expected to play, in 1964 the year the country achieved her political independence, an exhibition on Zambian culture, in which the Museum played an important part, was held in Lusaka from 19 October to 30 November. On display were objects showcasing Zambian music; musical instruments; art pieces such as *makishi* masks, *mbusa* objects (related to Bemba girls' initiation ceremonies); woodcarving and beadwork. Also included were pottery objects; basketry and mats; ivory and horn carvings; metal work; stone work; skin and bark cloth work and traditional paintings. Most of the objects were collected by the Livingstone Museum from different parts of the country.<sup>5</sup>

The exhibition was the first of its kind in Zambia and was designed to show the wide range of the country's cultural heritage not only to the country's citizens but also to the many foreign guests who had come to witness and celebrate the birth of independent Zambia on 24 October 1964. Speaking of the exhibition, Simon M. Kapwepwe, a former freedom fighter in Zambia and advocate of the promotion and propagation of African culture in general and Zambian culture in particular, noted:

Each nation has its own cultural and artistic heritage and all these cultures are part of the story of man's endeavours on this earth. Zambia's day has dawned; and just as we now reveal our own political and economic personality so must we show that our own cultural heritage will add colour and vitality to the rich tapestry of mankind's achievements ... In this exhibition ... we have made an impressive start in revealing our cultural heritage. Let us now go forward into our future bearing these gifts from the past and let us draw inspiration from them so that we can make a continuing contribution to the history of the world's art and culture.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, in a country where the indigenous people's culture had previously been despised and Africans were made to explore their history through the eyes of European settlers, the exhibition demonstrated the importance of appreciating one's own cultural heritage and its significance in the promotion of national unity and identity through cultural diversity. The exhibition was also, as suggested by Kapwepwe, a contribution to the world's cultural heritage. It was also incorporated as part of the "International Art Exhibition", held in Lusaka from 19 August to 30 October 1964 as part of Zambia's independence

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3. Livingstone Museum Archives (hereafter LMA), Government of the Republic of Zambia hereafter GRZ) Annual Report for the period 1 January to 31 December, 1964, p 6; Museum Development Plans and Appeals, "Livingstone Museum: Five Years' Development Plan, 1972–1976", p 2.
  4. See LMA, GRZ, Rhodes-Livingstone Museum, Annual Report for the period 1 January to 31 December 1964, p 6; and LMA, Museum Development Plans and Appeals, "Livingstone Museum: Five Years' Development Plan, 1972–1976", p 2.
  5. See, LMA, *Exhibition of Zambian Culture*, Lusaka, 19 October to 30 November 1964 (n.p., n.d.).
  6. LMA, *Exhibition of Zambian Culture*, p 7.

celebrations. Kapwepwe, who emphasised that “culture is the backbone of a nation”,<sup>7</sup> spearheaded the exhibition.

A similar exhibition, “Exhibition of Modern Zambian Sculptural Art” was held in Lusaka from 15 to 28 August 1966. The exhibition included old pieces, but focused on contemporary Zambian sculpture based on traditional style but incorporating new concepts and mass-produced tourist art.<sup>8</sup> The exhibition was significant in that it disseminated information that shed light on the past material culture of the Zambian people and how traditional cultures and technology have evolved overtime. It was therefore an invaluable source of information on the development and history of sculpture in Zambia.

In the same year, Zambia participated in the “First World Festival of Negro Arts” that was held in Senegal. Most of the Zambian exhibits came from the Livingstone Museum.<sup>9</sup> In 1970, the Museum mounted a similar exhibition which it named “Treasures of Zambian Traditional Art”. This was held at the Mulungushi Hall in Lusaka during the Third Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries.<sup>10</sup> Later in the year, it participated in the “International Exhibition on African Sculpture” staged at the National Gallery in Washington.<sup>11</sup>

Arising from the above, in contrast to the negative way Zambian cultural heritage had been presented in the colonial era, during the postcolonial period the Museum promoted it nationally and internationally, thereby contributing to the understanding and appreciation of world culture and history.

As noted earlier, the Museum’s permanent exhibitions in the colonial era were Eurocentric. Consequently, as soon as the country gained its independence, the research staff was strengthened by the appointment of Zambian researchers. In 1965, Kafungulwa Mubitana was appointed in the Department of Ethnography; and in 1967, Maud Muntemba took up employment in the History Department. The Zambian research staff spearheaded research aimed at restoring the negative image that had been bestowed on Zambian culture and history during the colonial period. In the field of history, in 1969 Muntemba collected historical data from the Eastern, Central and Southern Provinces for inclusion in the new History Gallery. Data from other parts of the country were provided by scholars like Mutumba Bull, Harry Langworthy, Robbin Fielder and Robert Shecker.<sup>12</sup> Various historical artefacts were collected from the Zambian and British governments with the help of Simon Kapwepwe. Several Ministries and some of the people who had participated in the Second World War provided some of their personal war memorabilia.<sup>13</sup>

On 9 September, 1971, the History Gallery that housed a new permanent History Exhibition, was officially opened. The exhibition highlighted pre-colonial history, focusing on centralised and amorphous states; colonial history (with the focus on the struggle for

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7. LMA, *International Art Exhibition*, Lusaka, 19 October to 30 November 1964.

8. LMA, Index No. H1/38, Acc. No. 9173/1296, *Exhibition of Modern Zambian Sculptural Art*, Lusaka, 15–28 August 1966.

9. LMA, *First World Festival of Negro Arts: Art and Dances from Zambia* (Government Printer, Lusaka, 1966).

10. LMA, GRZ, The National Museums Board Annual Report, 1 January to 31 December 1970, p 7.

11. LMA, GRZ, The National Museums Board Annual Report, 1 January to 31 December 1970, p 7.

12. LMA, GRZ, The National Museums Board Annual Report, 1 January to 31 December 1969, p 7.

13. LMA, GRZ, The National Museums Board Annual Report, 1 January to 31 December 1969, p 7.

independence); and postcolonial history, where the emphasis was on the achievements since independence.<sup>14</sup>

In presenting its exhibitions, the Museum was expected to be objective. This was underscored by Jack Shamwana, chairman of the National Museums Board, in his address at the opening of the permanent History Exhibition in 1971. Shamwana gave a brief treatise on history, which he said comprised factual information. He went on to say that the interpretation of this information and the way it was constructed, differed from country to country and even from one person to another. He stressed that the Livingstone Museum's interest was not in the different interpretations but in "the presentation of actual facts" embedded in the exhibits regardless of whether they were of a controversial nature or not. He hoped that the Zambian people and government would understand and appreciate the dilemma the Museum faced in its endeavour to present the truth through its collection.<sup>15</sup> However, a glance at the exhibits mounted revealed that they were almost exclusively Afrocentric.

Thus, during the postcolonial period, the Livingstone Museum exhibitions witnessed a paradigm shift from Eurocentric to Afrocentric. However, the Museum enjoyed more autonomy from the government than had been the case during the colonial period when the focus was expected to be an "exposé" of research findings of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. Indeed, the Institute had been mandated by the government to find ways, through its research activities, of reducing the tension purportedly caused by cultural misunderstandings between European settlers and the African people in the country.<sup>16</sup>

As had been the case in the History Department, changes were made to the Museum's Archaeology and Ethnography exhibitions.<sup>17</sup> For instance, the Archaeology exhibition displayed the prehistory of Zambia, and this was divided into two epochs, the Stone Age and Iron Age. The display on the Stone Age period illustrated the development of man as he underwent evolutionary physical changes and adaptations to his environment which transformed him from the primitive man-ape *Homo habilis* to modern *Homo sapiens*.<sup>18</sup> The advances in Stone Age technology were also exhibited, among them tools such as the hand axe or cleaver before the development of more specialised implements such as scrapers, microliths, arrowheads and spearpoints; bone and wooden tools as well as grass and other fibres that were used for cordage and matting.<sup>19</sup>

The displays on the Iron Age featured maps showing the migration of people from the Middle East 3 000 years ago down the Nile River; along the Mediterranean coast; across the Sahara trade routes into West Africa; and into the Democratic Republic of

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14. LMA, M/T/5, "Opening of New Galleries, 1969", Speech by chairman of the NMB at the opening of the new History Gallery, 9 September 1971; and GRZ, The National Museums Board Annual Report, 1 January to 31 December 1969, pp 6–7.
  15. LMA, M/T/5, "Opening of New Galleries, 1969", Speech by chairman of the NMB at opening of the new History Gallery, 9 September 1971, p 1.
  16. NAZ, Hansard No. 28, 26 June 1937, cols. 11–12; and NAZ, Records of the Crown Series (hereafter RC) 1384, Letter to secretary, Rhodes-Livingstone Museum Institute of Trustees, 18 August 1939.
  17. LMA, GRZ, National Museums Board Annual Report, 1 January to 31 December 1969, pp 6–7; GM, "New Look Museum", *Z Magazine*, October 1969, p 8; and M.N. Chellah, "The National Museum of Zambia, Livingstone", *Museum*, 35, 2 (UNESCO, Paris, 1983), pp 128–129.
  18. LMA, J.O. Vogel, "The Archaeology", in J.O. Vogel (ed.), *A Guide to the Livingstone Museum* (Livingstone Museum, Livingstone, 1975), p 13; and R. Nsakanya, "Guide to the Livingstone Museum", Paper at the SADCC Museums Conference, Livingstone, 13–17 June 1988, p 3.
  19. LMA, Vogel, "The Archaeology", p. 13; and Nsakanya, "Guide to the Livingstone Museum", p 3.

Congo Basin as far as Zambia in the first millennium A.D. Iron Age tools were also exhibited. The revolutionary changes the Iron Age people introduced into Zambia such as food production and metal working, which replaced the Wilton culture hunter gatherers, were also highlighted. Other displays included the Broken Hill Man; the Mosi-oa-tunya and Nachikufu caves; rock paintings; and artefacts excavated from Ingombe Ilede, such as the Ingombe Ilede woman's skeleton. Iron Age trade implements and their significance to the understanding of the cultural and economic life of early man in Zambia were also on display.<sup>20</sup>

The exhibits in the History Gallery endeavoured to give a general view of historical events in the country through the medium of historical documents, maps and photographs. It also featured information and materials used by prominent figures and details on important events in Zambian history.<sup>21</sup> The first section explored the origins of the various peoples of Zambia, tracing their history back to the Early Iron Age and showing the expansion of the Bantu-speaking peoples. Maps and brief texts were used to illustrate this section. Objects that denoted the leaders of traditional society illustrated the traditional Zambian concept of polity. These included weapons of local manufacture, ceremonial axes, copper ingots, double gongs, elaborate bow stands, rare animal skins, ivory, shell beads and fly-switches. These symbols of traditional authority served to remind visitors that contrary to colonial thinking, as revealed in the exhibitions mounted at the Museum during that era, traditional Zambia was a highly organised society with a typical African political structure.<sup>22</sup>

Other exhibits included a variety of ancient European maps that illustrated old ideas of the geography of the African continent and European exploration in Africa. Notable among these was a collection of information on David Livingstone, the missionary-explorer, including his original letters and possessions. John Cecil Rhodes and the British South African Company (BSAC) were also featured, as were missionaries and their activities; colonial rule; and the struggle for independence. Another interesting item was the original Zambian national flag believed to have been hoisted on the first Independence Day in Lusaka, and the British flag that was taken down on the same day. The timeline of exhibits in the History Gallery ended with the First World War.<sup>23</sup>

The new Ethnography and Art Gallery endeavoured to show the material and spiritual culture of the people of Zambia. It provided a general view of the traditional art, architecture, belief and religious artefacts and various forms of indigenous technology. The exhibits were presented on a cross-cultural plane rather than on a selective and "tribal" basis, as was the case with previous arrangements during the colonial era. Commenting on the reasons for the change of concept regarding presentation, W.W Chakanika, the then Keeper of Ethnography, noted:

... the authors of the new Gallery see the development of material culture as being directly or indirectly related to man's endeavour to come to terms with his environment whether this be social, physical or spiritual. As such, the problem of appreciation of the material culture of the people of Zambia cannot adequately be understood in terms of the cultural advances of individual groupings or "tribes". Rather, the new Gallery attempts to present a generalised

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20. LMA, Vogel, "The Archaeology", p 13; and Nsakanya, "Guide to the Livingstone Museum", p 2.

21. N.S.L. Mataa, "The History Gallery", in Vogel, (ed.), *A Guide to the Livingstone Museum*, pp 33–36; and Nsakanya, "Guide to the Livingstone Museum", p 3.

22. Mataa, "The History Gallery", pp 33–36; and Nsakanya, "Guide to the Livingstone Museum", p 3.

23. Mataa, "The History Gallery", pp 33–36; Nsakanya, "Guide to the Livingstone Museum", p 3.

but integrative view of the traditional arts, architecture and technology of the people of Zambia.<sup>24</sup>

The new exhibits reflected this conceptual change. Various artefacts on display included traditional handicrafts; different forms of traditional technology; indigenous architecture; works of art; and items related to religious beliefs. The exhibition in this gallery featured chiefs' stools; ornamental objects; masks and costumes; plastic arts. It also traced the life cycle of mankind (including the passage of rites, namely birth, initiation, marriage and death); the development of cloth from trees, skin and natural cotton; traditional weapons; witchcraft; the slave trade; fishing and trapping methods; and Zambian staple crops. The ethnography exhibition ended with a model of a Zambian village.<sup>25</sup>

Commenting on these exhibitions, William Muzala Chipango, the first African mayor of Livingstone, noted that they were highly educative for the African people in areas of history and culture compared to those mounted during colonial times, which denied indigenous people of their history, making them see themselves through the eyes of white settlers. Chipango further noted that some people, particularly those with Western education, even denounced Zambian culture as primitive as compared to the Western way of life. The exhibitions therefore tried to restore the image of Zambian culture and history that had been distorted by the long period of colonial rule.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, Chipango applauded the various temporary exhibitions that the Museum staged on different aspects of Zambian art, noting that they enhanced acceptance and confidence in the way Zambians saw their culture and themselves. In addition, he noted that displays on the Stone and Iron Age Man, African Kingdoms and the people's struggle against foreign rule, provided information that served to educate audiences on the way of life and history of the Zambian people.<sup>27</sup>

Harischandra B. Oza echoed Chipango's observations on the educative role of the new exhibitions on indigenous Zambian culture and history. However, he noted that the exhibits tended to overemphasise African culture at the expense of other cultures that existed side by side in Zambia. In his view, they were as racially segregative as the colonial exhibitions had been. He noted that although Indians were accorded a higher status in the racialised, compartmentalised colonial society in Zambia compared to Africans, on the whole, just like Africans, Indians faced social, economic and political discrimination from European settlers. He sombrely noted that it was for this reason that some Indians like himself, had identified with African nationalism during the struggle for independence. He identified other Indians, such as R.V. Nayee, Bimsih J. Devalia (in Livingstone); Rambhai D. Patel, who was popularly known as "Kanjombe" (in Lusaka) and T.L. Desai (in Ndola), all of whom had been closely involved in the liberation of Zambia from the colonial yoke. And yet displays on Indian culture and history in Zambia were not reflected in the Museum, exactly as had been the case during the colonial period.<sup>28</sup>

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24. LMA, RNA, W.W. Chakanika, "Ethnography and Art Gallery", in Vogel, (ed.), *A Guide to the Livingstone Museum*, p 25.

25. Chakanika, "Ethnography and Art Gallery", p 25; and Nsakanya, "Guide to the Livingstone Museum", p 2.

26. Interview with Muzala Chipango, Livingstone, 7 May 2007.

27. Interview with Chipango, Livingstone, 7 May 2007.

28. Interview with Harishchandra. B. Oza, Lusaka, 6 July 2002.

George Grubb concurred with Oza’s sentiments.<sup>29</sup> He noted that where the activities of the white people were displayed, the exhibitions emphasised the nefarious aspects of colonial rule, thereby rendering the whites as objects of ridicule, yet the new leaders were claiming to build a country where all people, regardless of race, tribe, creed, or religion, could live harmoniously in accordance with the principle of “one Zambia, one Nation.”<sup>30</sup> J.R. Nayee and R.S. Nayee echoed Oza and Grubb’s observations.<sup>31</sup>

Arising from the foregoing, it can safely be said that in its effort to redress the negative way in which indigenous people were portrayed in colonial presentations, the Museum, which by this time had a predominantly Zambian research staff, had become overzealous and produced exhibitions that projected an overtly Africanist image, thereby making them racially segregative in the eyes of minority racial groups.

### History exhibitions, 1994–2003

Because of financial constraints that the Museum faced, it was not until almost a quarter of a century later, in 1994, that the permanent history exhibition was overhauled.<sup>32</sup> The main theme in the gallery was: “Follow the Steps in Zambia’s History”. The changes effected were designed to improve the presentation of materials and update the exhibition by adding new information. The exhibition was laid out in chronological order and presented a concise account of the history of Zambia from the precolonial period to the advent of the Third Republic, about 1990.

In the old exhibition, the display on missionary activities focused on David Livingstone. The new one was broadened to include other missionaries and their mission stations. The display, labelled “The Double Face of Colonialism”, portrayed the missionary as an agent of colonialism and took the form of a painting showing a missionary holding a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other.

Other notable displays were those on the slave trade; the Lenshina Uprising; political developments during President Kaunda’s rule; the Mushala Rebellion; attempted military coups against Kenneth D. Kaunda’s government; food riots; and events leading to the Third Republic government under Frederick T.J. Chiluba.<sup>33</sup>

Commenting favourably on the Museum’s exhibits in 1995, Douglas McArthur noted that:

The Museum raises questions ... about European colonisation of the country. A section on the “Double Face of Colonialism” leads off with a painting of a man holding a Bible in his left hand and a gun in his right. “Colonialism brought wheeled transport, a cash economy, commercial agriculture, Western education, English law and urbanisation”, says one descriptive panel. “But for Africans, it also meant loss of productive land, racial discrimination in institutions, a different pricing system and a lack of exposure to public office.”<sup>34</sup>

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29. Interview with George Grubb, Livingstone, 9 May 2007.

30. Interview with George Grubb, Livingstone, 9 May 2007.

31. Interviews with J.R. Nayee, Livingstone, 12 May 2007; and R.S. Nayee, Livingstone, 14 May 2007.

32. LMA, GRZ, *National Museums Board Annual Report 1994* (National Museums Board, Livingstone), p 8.

33. For details, see LMA, F.M. Mizinga, Storyline for the exhibition, “Follow the Steps in Zambia’s History.”

34. D. McArthur, “Colonialism Assailed at the Museum”, *The Globe and Mail Travel*, 26 July 1995, p D.

McArthur appears to have been fascinated by the Museum's history displays. Regarding the exhibit on the slave trade, he noted:

Exhibits trace the practice of slavery in Africa from its introduction by Arab traders in the 10th century through its adoption by Europeans in the 1400s. Britain abandoned slavery in its territories in 1807, but in practice it continued until 1900.<sup>35</sup>

Concerning the displays on the struggle for independence (which incidentally was also included in the permanent History exhibition mounted in 2004), McArthur observed:

The museum traces the political struggle that led to Zambia's independence in October 1964. The spirit of the day is captured by a model of a bare-chested black man, a triumphant look on his face, uplifting his arms as he breaks free from the chain.<sup>36</sup> (See Figure 1)

**Figure 1:** Model of the Zambian Freedom Statue – symbolises the end of colonialism in Zambia. Source: Livingstone Museum History Gallery.



However, McArthur was disappointed that the Museum did not include some tragic events such as the ritual murders in Livingstone that were alleged to have been fomented by Asian traders in 1995, and the food riots of June 1990 that resulted in 30 deaths.<sup>37</sup>

McArthur's observations suggest that the new permanent exhibition, just like the previous ones that were staged after the country's achievement of independence, was too

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35. McArthur, "Colonialism Assailed at the Museum", p D5.  
36. McArthur, "Colonialism Assailed at the Museum", p D5.  
37. McArthur, "Colonialism Assailed at the Museum", p D5.

subjective, indeed too Afrocentric. In addition, it avoided exhibits that presented controversial issues and the tragic side of Zambian history, particularly those incidents involving race relations. For example, as McArthur, pointed out (see above), the ritual murders using African agents in 1995 were not featured.<sup>38</sup>

### The permanent History exhibition, opened in 2004

From 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2004, all exhibitions in the Museum were overhauled so that they reflected what the Zambian society had been through over time. In fact, in 1996, Mungoni Sitali, the Keeper of Ethnography and Art at the Museum, carried out a survey in Livingstone among Zambian and foreign visitors to the Museum to find out what they would have liked to see in the displays.<sup>39</sup> The results of the survey showed that the Museum's exhibitions were out of touch with public expectations.<sup>40</sup> In part, the survey's report noted that:

The demands for information and materials on political history are many. Both groups of visitors have requested for the updating of the History Gallery where themes are not abreast with contemporary facts. The presentation of colonial history gives visitors an impression that the colonial era was an easy affair in the people's lives. Respondents expressed wishes to see amplifications of negative effects of colonialism in Zambia.<sup>41</sup>

In order to redress the situation revealed by Sitali's study, the Museum's permanent exhibitions in all galleries were organised around the theme, "The Story of Man in Zambia and his Environment." Thus, the Archaeology Gallery described and analysed the story of human evolution and cultural developments in Zambia from the Stone Age Period to Iron Age, while the History Gallery took the visitor on a fascinating journey through the history of Zambia from about 1550 to 2001. The new exhibition was broad based compared to previous exhibitions, which focused more on the political history of the country. It included other dimensions of history such as cultural, social and economic history.<sup>42</sup>

Although many people lived in towns, most people traced their origins from villages, so the Art and Ethnography exhibition was labelled "From our Village to their Town". It highlighted the characteristics of traditional life compared to modern life. The Natural History exhibition gave the visitor some insight into ecology as well as indicating the systematic and behavioural patterns in the plant and animal life in relation to Zambian society and the environment.<sup>43</sup>

For the first time in the history of the Museum, exhibits reflecting Asian contribution to the history of Zambia were displayed. A hammock (*machila*) in which colonial government administrative officials were carried during their tours of rural areas

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38. On 7 May 1996, the accused Indians were found not guilty and acquitted by the High Court in Livingstone, while the alleged African agents were found guilty and sentenced to death. See H. Nyasulo, "Two Murder Accused Acquitted and Ritual Killers to Hang", *Zambia Daily Mail*, 8 May 1996, p 1.
39. LMA, M. Sitali, "Livingstone More than a Missionary ... a Colonialist", *International Council of Museums (ICOM) Zambia Newsletter*, 1 June 1996.
40. LMA, Sitali, "Livingstone More than a Missionary", p 1.
41. LMA, Sitali, "Livingstone More than a Missionary", p 1.
42. C. Imasiku, "L/stone Museum at the Heart of Zambia's Tourism", Tourism Supplement, *The Post*, 22 September 2002, p xii.
43. S. Siachoono, "Livingstone Museum Re-opens its Doors to the Public", *Zambia Traveller Magazine*, 29 January/February 2005, pp 36-37; and Imasiku, "L/stone Museum at the Heart of Zambia's tourism", p xii.

was part of the display. There were also photographs showing colonial administrative officials, with, in some cases their spouses, being carried in the hammocks or on the back of African men. A montage showing some eminent personalities in the cultural, social, economic and political development of the country from the precolonial period to about 2001 was also on display. The socio-economic and political trends during President Chiluba's era from 1991 to 2001 were also highlighted.<sup>44</sup>

The exhibits on David Livingstone were removed from the main History Gallery to form a new section, the "David Livingstone Gallery." This gallery presented the life and works of David Livingstone in great detail. Emphasis was on his missionary and exploratory expeditions in southern and central Africa and events after his death up to his burial at Westminster Abbey in London in 1874. However, David Livingstone, particularly as he was reflected in the old exhibition, was unpopular among the local visitors and even some foreign visitors who saw him as a precursor of colonialism. This was revealed by Mungoni Sitali's opinion survey among Zambian and Foreign visitors to the exhibitions at Livingstone Museum. Regarding the David Livingstone exhibition, he noted that:

They believe that the exhibition on the late missionary-explorer is too neat, as evidence abounds that the missionary paved the way for colonialism in Africa. This, they say has been underplayed at the Livingstone Museum exhibitions ... Respondents [said that they wanted to see] ... Dr David Livingstone's role in the exposure and colonisation of this country.<sup>45</sup>

In 1995, Douglas McArthur had made similar observations. He scornfully noted that: "While recent books have questioned Livingstone's accomplishments as a missionary and explorer, his namesake museum still treats him as a hero"<sup>46</sup>.

In view of the above, the new David Livingstone exhibition included exhibits that took on board comments made by members of the public. Thus, among the exhibits was a copy of the letter Livingstone wrote in 1958 to his friend Professor Freire Sedridge in which he confided to him his ulterior imperial motives for his African explorations.<sup>47</sup> A copy of a photograph in which Livingstone is shown together with his friend, Vardom, a hunter and trader, who he first met in the 1850s, was also exhibited. Interestingly in the light of the current uproar about rhino poaching, the photograph shows the two men posing with a rhinoceros horn (see Figure 2). David Livingstone is believed to have corresponded with Vardom up to 1873, the year he died. The exhibit questioned the motive behind Livingstone's companionship with a hunter-trader for the rest of his life. However, it was left to individual members of the public to make their own interpretations.

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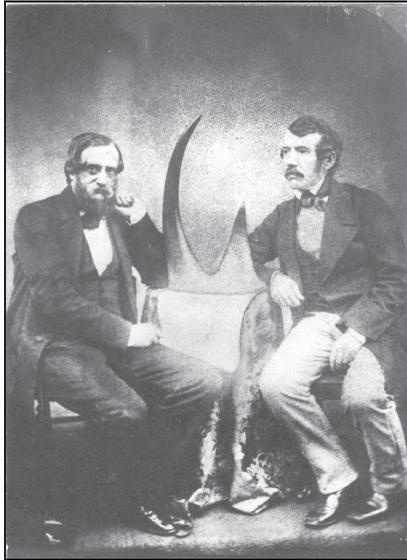
44. For details, see LMA, F. Mufuzi, Storyline for "The Story of Man in Zambia Exhibition", 2004.

45. LMA, Sitali, "Livingstone More than a Missionary", p 1.

46. McArthur, "Colonialism Assailed at the Museum", *The Globe and Mail Travel*, 26 July 1995, p D1.

47. For details see, T. Holmes (ed.), *David Livingstone Letters and Documents, 1841-1872* (James Currey, London, 1990), pp 49-50. The book was published on behalf of the Museum. It includes the Zambian Collection (housed at the Museum) which was previously unknown and unpublished.

**Figure 2:** A display of David Livingstone with Major Frank Vardon. Vardom came to hunt in the Bechuana country (now Botswana) with Steel and Murray in the 1840's. Livingstone corresponded with him almost until his death.



It is obviously too early to make a conclusive assessment of the new permanent exhibitions on the public, because the exhibits were only opened to the public in 2004 and the end of the timeframe for this study is 2006. Nonetheless, the book, *Zambia, Then and Now: Colonial Rulers and their African Successors*,<sup>48</sup> authored by William D. Grant, a historian and former colonial district commissioner in Kasempa, Northwestern Zambia provides some pointers. He visited the country in 2006, a full 48 years after his first arrival there and his book gives a glimpse of the type of reactions that can be expected from visitors to the exhibitions. In his book, Grant includes a brief analysis of the Museum's new exhibitions based on his visit on 22 July 2006. He heaps glowing praise on them and was particularly impressed with the prehistory, precolonial and the natural history exhibitions. He noted:

I found the Africans' copper mining and smelting initiatives particularly interesting ... some as early as the twelfth century. The other part of the Museum was the David Livingstone Gallery, which offered a comprehensive study of his several explorations, with facsimile copies of his letters and extracts from his journals.<sup>49</sup>

Although the new exhibitions had more information on the colonial and postcolonial eras compared to previous postcolonial period permanent exhibitions, Grant observed that information in the new exhibitions on these two eras was, in his view, "inadequate".<sup>50</sup> This criticism is perhaps understandable, particularly from a former colonial official. He

48. W.D. Grant, *Zambia, Then and Now: Colonial Rulers and their African Successors* (Routledge, London and New York, 2009).  
49. Grant, *Zambia, Then and Now*, p 269.  
50. Grant, *Zambia, Then and Now* p 269.

probably expected to see minute details of colonial activity to which he contributed as a participant in the colonial administration. He no doubt also expected to see detailed information on postcolonial development so that he could compare them to progress in the colonial period. This explains the choice of the title of his book, *Zambia, Then and Now: Colonial Rulers and their African Successors*.

A museum, particularly a national museum, is one of the places where one could expect to find the cultural and historical information of a country at a glance. Grant was therefore disappointed that the exhibitions at the Livingstone Museum could not provide him with much of the cultural and historical data on colonial and postcolonial Zambia, which he probably needed for his book. However, it is difficult for any museum, if only because of the limitation of space, to put up an exhibition that has comprehensive detail for every theme on display.

### **Conclusion**

Both the colonial and post-colonial governments used the Livingstone Museum as a tool to advance their political agendas. During the colonial period, exhibitions mounted by the Museum were guided by European needs and the thinking of the time. The exhibitions presented were thus skewed towards the projection of Africans as a backward and ahistorical people. This was done to legitimise colonial rule in the territory, on the pretext of guiding Africans away from their “primitive” way of life as evidenced by their “primitive” material culture. Similarly, exhibitions mounted by the Museum during the postcolonial period were tilted towards highlighting the government’s agenda of disseminating information on the cultural and historical heritage of the country and its idea to build a country based on national unity and development through cultural diversity.

Nevertheless, exhibitions presented by the Museum are significant in that they disseminated information relevant to an understanding of Zambian history. Thus, exhibitions during the colonial period provided information to visitors on the nature of colonial rule, particularly as regards European prejudices against Africans. Those mounted during the postcolonial period provided significant knowledge on areas such as precolonial centralised and amorphous African states; social, economic and political conditions in the country during the colonial era; the struggle for independence; postcolonial governments and cultural, social, economic and political conditions in the country up to 2006.

Additionally, collections gathered and information discovered during research expeditions and ultimately used as exhibits in the Museum provide physical evidence on different aspects of Zambia’s history and are significant in the reconstruction of Zambian history. They have provided a past in which the Zambian people can participate; they are now able to take pride in their collective memory.

### **Abstract**

The first article on the Livingstone Museum, published last year in *Historia*, demonstrated that the Museum was originally established as a tool to exhibit African material culture in order to provide evidence to the rest of the world of the superiority of European culture compared to African culture. The article argued that this was because European settlers saw the need to legitimise colonial rule in the territory; colonial officials felt that the “civilising” effect of European culture was necessary to rescue Africans from their “primitive” way of life.

This piece examines the Livingstone Museum and the role it played in independent Zambia, from 1964 to 2006. With the aid of temporary and permanent exhibitions mounted at the institution during this period, the article postulates that in the same vein as the colonial administration, the postcolonial government also used the Museum as a tool to promote its political agenda. Its main objective was to reverse the negative image that the Zambian culture and history had been accorded in the colonial period. The Museum was used as an ally by the nationalist government to promote national unity and patriotism, which had been undermined during the colonial era. In order to achieve this objective, the Museum staged exhibitions that glorified the African people and their culture at the expense of other racial groups that had emerged following colonial rule, such as Europeans and Indians. This article advances the thesis that contrary to the slogan “one Zambia one Nation”, advanced by politicians after the attainment of independence (with the aim of creating a Zambian society in which all racial groups live in harmony) the Livingstone Museum’s presentations in postcolonial Zambia were not balanced but were decidedly Afrocentric. In other words, postcolonial Livingstone Museum was also guilty of racial prejudice – the very same offence of which the colonial Museum was accused when they mounted their Eurocentric presentations. In practical terms, the Museum’s exhibitions in each period reflected the current political dispensation. They were Eurocentric in the colonial period and Afrocentric in the postcolonial period. Nevertheless, the Museum does offer a platform, an educational centre through which both Zambian and foreign visitors are able to learn the country’s culture, history, natural history and it indicates the path that the Zambian people have traversed from pre-colonial times to the present. Above all, it has kept alive the rich Zambian historical and cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** Zambia; colonialism; colonial period; postcolonial period; independence; Livingstone Museum; material culture; Afrocentric political agenda; Eurocentric racial prejudice; educational centre; one Zambia, one Nation.

### Opsomming

#### Die Livingstone Museum en sy rol in postkoloniale Zambie, 1964–2006

Die eerste artikel oor die Livingstone Museum, gepubliseer in 2011 in *Historia*, het bewys dat die museum gestig is omruimte te skep vir die uitstalling van die materiele kultuur van Afrika om sodoende bewys te lewer aan die wêreld dat die Europese kultuur meerderwaardigheid is wanneer dit met dié van Afrikane vergelyk word. Die argument in die artikel was dat dit genoodsaak was deur die Europese setlaars se behoefte om hul beheer oor die area te legitimeer. Koloniale amptenare het dit gesien as ’n noodsaaklikheid om deur die “beskawende effek” van Europesekultuur Afrikane te red van hul “primitiewe” leefwyse.

Hierdie artikel ondersoek die Livingstone Museum en die rol wat dit gespeel het in onafhanklike Zambie vanaf 1964 tot en met 2006. Met die hulp van tydelike en permanente uitstallings wat tydens die periode by die museum gemonteer is, postuleer die artikel dat net soos die koloniale owerhede voorheen, het die postkoloniale owerheid die Livingstone Museum ook gebruik as ’n medium om hul agenda te bevorder – naamlik ’n ommekeer van die negatiewe beeld wat Zambie se kultuur en geskiedenis gebuk gegaan het onder kolonialisme. Die museum is gesien as ’n bondgenoot van die nasionalistiese regering in die se strewe om patriotisme en nasionaleenheid te bevorder wat tydens die koloniale periode ondermyn was. Om die doelwit te bereik het die museum uitstallings opgerig tot die glorie

van Afrikane en hul kultuur ten koste van ander groepe soos blankes en Indiers. In hierdie artikel word daar geargumenteer dat die slagsprek “one Zambia one Nation”, wat na die verkryging van onafhanklikheid deur politici gebruik om ’n Zambiese gemeenskap waarin alle groepe in harmonie kon saamleef nie bereik is deur die postkoloniale uitstallings van die Livingstone Museum nie omdat dit uiteraard Afrosentries was. Om dié rede was die postkoloniale Livingstone Museum skuldig aan dieselfde rassevooroordeel waarvan die koloniale museum en die se Eurosentriese uitstallings beskuldig was. Derhalwe, reflekteer die museum se uitstallings die politiek van die dag – Eurosentries tydens die kolniale era en Afrosentries tydens die postkoloniale era. Nieteenstaande bied die museum ’n platform en ’n opvoedkundige sentrum waar beide die Zambiese en buitelandse besoekers kon leer oor die geskiedenis, kultuur, en die pad wat die mense van Zambie gewandel het vanaf die pre-koloniale tydperk tot die huidige. Bowen alles het die museum die ryke geskiedenis en kulturele erflating van die mense van Zambie lewendig gehou.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Zambie; kolonialisme; koloniale periode; postkoloniale periode; onafhanklikheid; Livingstone Museum; materiële kultuur; Afrosentries politieke agenda; Eurosentries rassevooroordele; opvoedkundigesentrum; een Zambie, een Nasie.