

Assembling a National Colonial Archive: Considering the Influence and Historical Legacy of the Kaunda Era on Zambia's Archives

by

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Abstract

Drawing mainly from original archival research, this paper aims to explore the contribution and impact of the Kaunda administration in establishing an independent national archive and archiving system in Zambia, between 1964 to 1969. The attainment of independence in Zambia, under Kenneth Kaunda's leadership and the United National Independence Party (UNIP), served as a transformative catalyst, paving the way for the establishment of an autonomous national archive and an archiving system preserved within Zambia rather than abroad in Zimbabwe. From the mid-1940s, Zambia's public archives material was kept and preserved in Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia) due to the absence of a mature archiving and records management system in Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia). Negotiations between Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland led to the establishment of a shared archival service, resulting in Northern Rhodesia's archives being centralised at the Central African Archives in Salisbury (Harare) until the 1960s, coinciding with the advent of Kaunda's administration. This article argues that, the Kaunda administration was instrumental in reclaiming Zambia's colonial archives from the custody of Southern Rhodesia Archives in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. This move played a crucial role in the establishment of an independent national archive, which now serves as an essential resource for Zambia's national history. By scrutinising the repatriation of archives material from Zimbabwe to Zambia and the establishment of the archiving system as well as the development of archival legislation from colonial era standards to contemporary frameworks influenced by the political context of independence and burgeoning nationalism, this paper endeavours to explain the critical role of Kaunda's administration initiatives in preserving Zambia's national history.

Key words: National Archives of Zambia, Colonial Archives, Archives Repository, Archives System, UNIP, Kenneth Kaunda, Records Management System

Introduction

This article examines the influence of Kenneth Kaunda's government in repatriating Zambia's colonial archives from Southern Rhodesia and assembling an autonomous national archive within Zambia following the country's political independence, between 1964 and 1969. During the British colonial rule, particularly between 1946 and 1963, the important documentary resources for Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) were preserved in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) at the Central African Archives (now National Archives of Zimbabwe). During this,

period, the Northern Rhodesia colonial government had not yet invested in the construction of a purpose-built repository for the preservation of public archives with suitable storage facilities like an air conditioning system. The lack of a professional archives repository and archiving system within Northern Rhodesia including the desperate need to preserve and safeguard the territory's public colonial archival documents, motivated the Northern Rhodesia colonial government to enter into a joint archives project with Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Malawi). This joint archival scheme was instituted through the Northern Rhodesia Ordinance, no 21 of 1946. The Ordinance authorised the archival institution in Southern Rhodesia to assume responsibility for the custody and preservation of Zambia's colonial archival documents. This joint archives project required the transfer of Northern Rhodesia's public documentary resources to the Central African Archives repository situated in Salisbury (now Harare) for safe keeping, as it had suitable storage facilities, including an air conditioning system, to prolong the life span of archival materials.

However, after Zambia gained independence in 1964 under the leadership of President Kenneth Kaunda, the colonial archival documentary resources, which had been held at the Central African Archives (later renamed the National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, then Southern Rhodesia Archives, and ultimately the National Archives of Zimbabwe), were repatriated to Zambia. These records were preserved at the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ). The name of the archival institution changed several times due to political transformations. The formation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953, which brought together the governments of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland, prompted the name change from the Central African Archives to the National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland to reflect the structure of the central Federal Government. After the federation was dissolved in 1963, the name reverted to Southern Rhodesia Archives.

Furthermore, following to the transfer of Zambia's colonial archives from the Southern Rhodesia Archives, Kaunda's government facilitated the formulation of the first post-colonial archives legislation referred to, as the National Archives Act of 1969. This Act continued to provide for the preservation, custody, control and disposal of public archives and records within Zambia until selected provisions were amended influenced by a regime change which ushered the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) into political power in 1991.

Drawing both from archival and secondary sources, this article demonstrates the significant role of Kaunda's government in establishing an independent archiving system which saw the safe preservation of a national archive within Zambia. The article also examines the role of Kaunda's government in the process of repatriation of Zambia's archival materials from Southern Rhodesia to Zambia. Further, this article explains how the Kaunda regime facilitated the

development of a post-colonial archival legislation in Zambia which replaced the colonial laws to suit the country's preservation needs in the context of political independence.

The paper begins by contextualising the preservation, management and custody of national archives through historiographical representations of Zambia's archival collections. The paper then traces the background to the origins of the preservation, management and custody of Zambia's colonial archives in Southern Rhodesia through the collaborative archival project initiated in 1946. This is followed by a discussion on the repatriation process of Zambia's colonial archival materials from Southern Rhodesia for preservation within the country. The discussion particularly demonstrates the role of the Kaunda regime in the repatriation of these colonial archives, assembling of a national archive and instituting of the archiving systems within Zambia through the National Archives of Zambia in the 1960s. This paper concludes by providing an account of how the Kaunda regime initiated the making of the 1969, National Archives Act with provisions that intensified state control of national archives collection, preservation and management through the National Archives of Zambia until 1991 when the MMD took over government of Zambia.

Historiographical Understanding of National Archives Preservation and Custody

From the middle of the twentieth century, the earliest history of Zambia's national archives material was constructed in the context of archival institutions such as the Central African Archives and the National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The colonial archivists, government officials and historians attached to these institutions were primarily responsible for the earliest narrative on Zambia's colonial archives which attempted to foster public awareness of the existence of archival collections. The narratives of colonial archivists such as Teddy Baxter and Edward Burke, concentrated on the background history of the establishment of colonial archival institutions in Central Africa including the management and classifications of archival materials.¹ Colonial government officials such as William Vernon as well as historian like Lewis Henry Gann and John Peter Wallis, who also worked for the earliest archival institutions contributed to the historiographical understanding of national archives in colonial Zambia. As professionals working for the archival institution and serving the colonial government, they pioneered narratives which originated from their experiences. They gave emphasis to the

¹ T.W. Baxter, 'The Preservation of Archives with Particular Reference to Central Africa,' *Rhodes-Livingstone Institute Journal*, 8 (1956), 57-72; E. Burke, 'Some Archival Legislation of the British Commonwealth,' *The American Archivist*, 22/3 (1959), 275-296.

description and use value of archives rather than reflecting on how the changing political settings influenced the preservation and management practices which this article addresses.²

However, the early post-colonial views on national archives in Zambia drew attention to the challenges and information gaps in the collection and the potential value of archival materials in the production of historical knowledge. Influenced by contemporary debates on the construction of African history from local sources, the post-colonial scholarship of the mid-1960s adopted a far more critical approach in the discussions of Zambian archives. Historians such as, for example, Prosser Gifford working in various colonial contexts, posed questions about the nature of archives and existing gaps in colonial archival collections.³ However, in the 1970s and 1980s, the scholarship moved to consider the broader nature of post-colonial archives preservation and records management practices at archival institutions in Zambia. Works compiled on the national archiving processes gave a description of the archives and a critical analysis of preservation and management strategies that shaped the permanent state of archival materials in Zambia.⁴

Furthermore, broader and regional literature has highlighted the experiences of archives preservation, management, appraisal and legislation in Central and Southern Africa. These works suggest that, the majority of postcolonial African governments were pre-occupied with accelerating the pace of economic development.⁵ As such, matters of archival preservation were legated to what may be referred to as a 'waiting list' in national development programmes. These comparative experiences are contrary to the Zambian situation in the early years after independence in 1964, because the Kaunda regime put in place measures that facilitated the improvement in the preservation of national resources.

² L. H. Gann, 'Archives and the Study of Society,' *Rhodes-Livingstone Institute Journal*, 20 (1956), 48-67; W.V. Brelsford, *Handbook to the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland* (London: Cassell, 1960); J.P.R. Wallis, 'The Story of the Central African Archives,' *African Affairs*, 47/189 (1948), 238-242.

³ P. Gifford, 'An Initial Survey of the Local Archival and Published Materials for Zambian History, 1895-Independence 1964,' *African Social Research*, 1 (1966), 59-84.

⁴ See A.M. Banda, 'History of the National Archives of Zambia,' *ECARBICA Journal*, 1/1 (1973), 25-30; P.M. Mukula, 'National Archives of Zambia,' *ECARBICA Journal*, 1 (1973), 22-26; and D.E. Stiles, 'Libraries in Zambia: The National Archives of Zambia,' *Zambia Library Association Journal*, 2/1 (1970), 1-5.

⁵K. Romokate, 'Preserving the African Memory: Critical Challenges for ESARBICA Archival Organisations,' *ESARBICA Journal*, 25 (2006), 84-94; M. Chida, 'Preservation Management in Tropical Countries: A Challenging Responsibility and Limited Resources: The Case of the Zimbabwe National Archives,' *ESARBICA Journal*, 14 (1994), 22-36; S. Mwiyeriwa, 'Records Management: General Observation and the Case of Malawi,' *ECARBICA Journal*, 2/2 (1974), 1-7; N. Mnjama, 'Records and Information: The Neglected Resource,' *ESARBICA Journal*, 23 (2004), 34-44; J.C. Kufa, 'Private Archives: Their Location, Collection and Accessibility with Reference to Zimbabwe,' *ECARBICA Journal*, 6 (1983), 27-38; and M. Manyeli, 'The Role of Archives in a Developing Country,' *ECARBICA Journal* 6 (1983), 63-70.

Background to Preservation of Zambia's Colonial Archives in Zimbabwe

The preservation of Zambia's colonial archives in colonial Zimbabwe can be traced back to the early 1940s when Sir Donald Mackenzie-Kennedy, then Governor of Nyasaland (now Malawi), suggested the idea of preserving the public archives of his territorial state in the Southern Rhodesian Archives (now National Archives of Zimbabwe) repository. After his official visit to the Southern Rhodesia Archives in February 1941, Sir Donald Mackenzie-Kennedy informed Vyvian William Hiller, the then archivist of the Southern Rhodesian Archives, about the hazardous condition of public records in Nyasaland. These records were poorly stored and had suffered damage from insects, rats, and mice, as well as from the dampness of Central Africa's tropical climate.⁶ In this regard, Hiller observed, that Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) also faced similar challenges. Hence, he suggested the establishment of a joint archival service for both the Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia governments in collaboration with the Southern Rhodesia Government.⁷ The public archives generated by governments of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland needed safe preservation and custody because they were a firm foundation upon which an efficient colonial administration was built. These archives mirrored policies and activities, justified precedents, showed the various procedures and changes in administration that had taken place, and assisted in the efficient functioning of government departments.⁸

Since these public archives were essential for the conduct of thorough administration and were also the "life blood" of colonial governments in Central Africa, both Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland made legal efforts to ensure their proper care and preservation. In view of that, in 1945, the Central African Council, which was an inter-territorial entity established to coordinate issues of policies amongst Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, endorsed the joint preservation of the three territories' government archives.⁹ This was followed by the passing of the uniform archives legislations with similar provisions (except for minor variations) covering all the three territories. Therefore, the Northern Rhodesia Government passed the Northern Rhodesia Archives Ordinance No 21 of 1946. This Ordinance recognised and authorised the Southern Rhodesia Government archival institution as the custodian of Northern Rhodesia's official archives but without relinquishing ownership of its records.¹⁰ As a result of this Ordinance, the name of the archival institution for Southern Rhodesia was changed from Southern Rhodesia

⁶ National Archives of Zambia (hereafter: NAZ) Secretariat (hereafter: SEC) 1/143, Report on the Southern Rhodesia Archivist's Visit to Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 20 June 1945.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Baxter, 'The Preservation of Archives with Particular Reference to Central Africa,' 57-58.

⁹ NAZ SEC 1/ 143, Minutes, Central African Council (Salisbury), 23 October 1945.

¹⁰ Central African Archives, *Annual Report, 1935 -1947*, (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1947), 99.

Archives to Central African Archives to signify the integration of Northern Rhodesia as well as Nyasaland's archives at the Salisbury (Harare) repository. The Ordinance also had a provision which authorised the government archivist of Southern Rhodesia to carry out archival services for the public archives of Northern Rhodesia.

Therefore, V. W. Hiller, who was initially the government archivist of Southern Rhodesia Archives now became the Chief Archivist in charge of the Central African Archives officially stationed in Salisbury. Hiller also had legal authority to perform archival services in Northern Rhodesia. The provisions of the Ordinance, authorised the Archivist to have access to the archival documents or records held by government departments in Northern Rhodesia. The Archivist had a responsibility to examine any records in the custody of government departments and to advise on their care and safe custody. The Archivist also had a level of authority over the selection of these records either for permanent preservation or destruction. However, the Archivist's examination of records and decisions on government documents for destruction or permanent preservation at the Central African Archives remained under the supervision of the Governor of Northern Rhodesia.¹¹ The Governor remained the final authority and determined guidelines relating to the appraisal of records, disposal or destruction of public records that were considered not of sufficient public value to justify their permanent preservation at the Central Archives.

The formulation of the 1946 Archives Ordinance became a turning point in the preservation of Northern Rhodesia's archival records. In 1947, the Chief Archivist of the Central African Archives, V. W. Hiller, assisted to establish the first archives office in Northern Rhodesia. The office which became a temporary archives depot in an annex of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia, was a branch office of the Central African Archives, which itself was a department of the Southern Rhodesia Government. This depot was mainly intended for the preliminary activities of fumigating, sorting and classifying the records before they were transferred to the Central African Archives repository for permanent preservation.¹² The establishment of the archives office in Northern Rhodesia created a need for trained personnel to manage the archival material at the Livingstone depot. The staff was recruited in Britain, where there were several facilities for the training of archivists. For example, by the 1940s, the United Kingdom had institutions such as the English Library Association and the School of Librarianship at University College, London. These institutions offered courses with components on

¹¹ NAZ SEC 1/143, Northern Rhodesia Archives Ordinance No.21, 1946, Section 7 (2-3).

¹² NAZ SEC 1/145, Report to the Colonial Office on Preservation of Official Archives in Northern Rhodesia, 1 June, 1948.

palaeography and archives, among others.¹³ The first appointee at the Livingstone depot was A.J. Saich, previously an assistant at the Reading Public Library. Prior to the commencement of his duties, the new assistant underwent a period of intensive training about archives management, as well as studying the history of Northern Rhodesia.¹⁴ The reason for the rigorous training was that archivists of colonial archival institutions were expected to be fully versed in the administrative history of the territory whose archives were in their custody, and to handle fragile documents – whether mouldy or water-sodden – and also to restore faded documents.¹⁵

Following the establishment of the Livingstone depot, the Chief Archivist of the Central African Archives carried out a survey and an assessment of all available records held in government departments. These were mainly older records generated during the British South Africa Company administration. The survey was meant to assist in the compilation of accurate lists of records for preservation at the Central African Archives. Hence, the first collection to be transferred to the Central African Archives consisted of records created by the British South Africa Company administrators of North Western Rhodesia, North Eastern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia. The other collections included records created by the Northern Rhodesia government through the offices of the Chief Secretary, High Commissioner for South Africa and the Resident Commissioner. The rest were mostly from Northern Rhodesia colonial government departments or civil service, Provincial and District commissioners.¹⁶ Subsequently, at stipulated intervals, all other significant records created by the Northern Rhodesia Government departments continued to be transferred to Southern Rhodesia for preservation at the central repository. Specifically, heads of respective government departments were legally authorised to transfer any public records in their custody that were fifteen years or older which were no longer required for immediate administrative purposes.¹⁷ This status quo persisted until the mid-1960s, when a comprehensive professional archiving system was established in Zambia after the country achieved political independence under Kenneth Kaunda's leadership.

Kaunda's Rule and Repatriation of Zambia's Colonial Archives

On 24 October 1964, Zambia achieved political independence from the British imperial government under the leadership of Kenneth Kaunda and the United National Independence

¹³ By the 1950s, a graduate Archival diploma had been instituted at University College London. The programme consisted of courses in archives administration, administrative history, palaeography of English and archives transcription. Additionally, twelve months full-time paid service in an approved repository was to be completed before the diploma could be granted.

¹⁴ Central African Archives, *Annual Report 1947-1948*, 49.

¹⁵ Baxter, 'The Preservation of Archives with Particular Reference to Central Africa,' 58.

¹⁶ Central African Archives, *Annual Report 1947-1948* (Salisbury: Central African Archives, 1947), 24.

¹⁷ NAZ SEC 1/149, Archives Destruction and Disposal Regulations, 1947, Section (10).

Party (UNIP). Immediately after independence, Kaunda's government began making arrangements for the return of Zambia's colonial archives held in Southern Rhodesia. As previously noted, the professional practice of archival preservation and records management for Zambia's colonial archives was conducted in collaboration with Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia for nearly eighteen years (1946-1964). Kaunda's government recognised the importance of retaining Zambia's colonial documents into the country, viewing them as vital tools in the post-colonial administrative processes. These archives provided a long-term institutional memory of Zambia's former administrative systems, particularly the British South Africa Company (BSAC), which governed from 1890 to 1923, and the British Colonial Government from 1924 to 1963. The colonial documents generated by these past administrations were considered important for facilitating governance, as they offered precedents regarding previous administrative decisions and transactions. For instance, these archives recorded the obligations and commitments of colonial governments, as well as evidence of the rights and entitlements of the colonised population. Kaunda's government was also determined to maintain custody of these colonial documents within the country to preserve national identity and promote social, political, and economic development. Thus, efforts to repatriate these historical records became a matter of urgency for Kaunda's administration.

The Kaunda government's first step towards the repatriation of Zambia's archives was the revision of colonial archival legislation. As a result, the National Archives Act of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was swiftly revised to facilitate the repatriation of Zambia's archives from Southern Rhodesia. This Act was the only existing archival legislation at the time of Zambia's independence, having been enacted in 1958, to guide the preservation of archives created by the Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in Salisbury (Harare). The National Archives Act of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was passed after the repeal of the 1946 Ordinance Act following the formation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953.¹⁸ The modification of colonial legislation was necessary, as Kaunda's government was unable to promptly formulate new legislation due to its preoccupation with establishing governance structures. Thus the modification of archives legislation largely aimed to legally empower the national archival institution in Zambia for the collection, preservation, and custody of public documents.¹⁹ This legislation established an important framework that enabled the national archiving institution to

¹⁸NAZ MHA 1/5/1, Federal Government Notice, 3 May, 1954. See also Federal Government of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, *The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Constitution) Order in Council* (Salisbury: Government Printer, 1955).

¹⁹ NAZ MHA 1/5/1, Northern Rhodesia Government Notice No. 46 of 1964, 7 January 1964.

operate effectively and granted it authority in its interactions with government ministries and departments. Specifically, the amended archives legislation raised the status of the Lusaka regional archives depot to that of a national archival institution and it became known as the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ). Initially, as already stated above, the depot functioned as a transit repository, temporarily holding records destined for Southern Rhodesia.

As a national archival institution, the NAZ became responsible for the disposal of government documents considered valueless and permanent preservation of those identified as valuable. Unlike the colonial period, when the archives for all the three territories (Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland) were under the responsibility of a single archivist, the Kaunda regime made sure that the revised legislation provided for the position of a Director, who particularly became in charge of government archives in Zambia. The revised legislation empowered the Director to inspect records from any government ministry or department, and to advise on their care and preservation.²⁰ The government decided that departments retained ownership of their information for thirty years, after which custody and control would pass to the Director of the NAZ.²¹ The primary goal of the Kaunda regime was to ensure that NAZ acquired all important government documents for safe custody.

In 1965, the national archiving institution, played a pivotal role in facilitating the return of colonial archives from Southern Rhodesia. These colonial archives originated from different periods of Zambia's administrative history. The repatriation of records from Southern Rhodesia to Zambia was one of the most significant task carried out by NAZ on behalf of the Zambian government after independence. This effort ensured that the valuable archival materials, including records of colonial governance, historical documents, and other essential records pertaining to Zambia's past, were returned to Zambia for preservation and continued access. As the national archiving institution, NAZ, under the leadership of its Director, B. T. Burne, took full responsibility for the retrieval and safeguarding of these records from the Southern Rhodesia Archives. NAZ made sure that all public archives held in Southern Rhodesia were properly transported back to Zambia for preservation at the national repository, in line with Kaunda's government goal of preserving its historical and administrative heritage. The repatriation process was meticulously planned and carried out by T. Burne and E.E. Burke, the Directors of both the National Archives of Zambia and the Southern Rhodesia respectively, with careful coordination to determine the most appropriate transport methods based on the size and bulk of the records being moved.

²⁰ NAZ MHA 1/5/1, The National Archives Laws (Modification and Adaptations) Regulations No. 2, 1964

²¹ NAZ MHA 1/5/1, The National Archives Laws (Modification and Adaptations) Regulations No. 2, 1964

For the archives that were not heavy or bulky, such as collections of maps, these were transported via insured parcel post. This allowed for a more efficient and cost-effective means of moving smaller materials over the distance between the two countries. However, for larger collections, such as boxes containing photographs, films, and other weighty documents, a different approach was necessary. These more substantial records were sent by road and rail to ensure their safe and secure delivery. Precisely, the NAZ frequently engaged Glens and Clan Transport companies with operations in both Zambia and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), to facilitate the transportation of bulkier records.²² A notable example of this process occurred in June 1966, when census records from Southern Rhodesia were transported to Zambia via post.²³ Meanwhile, larger and heavier items, such as large boxes of photographs and film reels documenting Zambia's colonial administration history, were dispatched via road transport to ensure they were handled with the necessary care and efficiency. This careful repatriation process was crucial in preserving Zambia's historical records, enabling the newly independent nation to have full access to its colonial-era documents, and ensuring that the national archiving institution became the key repository for these vital records. The repatriation of these materials allowed the Zambian government to build a comprehensive historical record of the country's governance, cultural heritage, and development, thus supporting future research, education, and nation-building initiatives.

Therefore, the earliest records to be repatriated were those created by the BSAC, through its London headquarters. These colonial archives date back to the mid-1890s, the beginning of colonial administration in Zambia under the BSAC. Additional records were those produced by various departments and courts that operated during the BSAC administration (1895–1923), within Northern Rhodesia consisting of correspondence, minutes, and reports.²⁴ Notably, a collection of seventy-six boxes of early records concerning Rhodesian affairs, generated by the office of the British High Commissioner in South Africa, was also returned.²⁵ Similarly, the archives created by British colonial authorities from 1895 to 1964 which included official correspondence, memoranda, and circulars sent from the British Colonial Office to the administrative officials of the BSAC were repatriated. All these documents produced during the BSAC's administration in

²² NAZ NA 13/4/8, Correspondence from E.E. Burke, Director National Archives of Southern Rhodesia (Salisbury) to T. Burne, Director, National Archives of Zambia (Lusaka) 16 June 1966.

²³ NAZ NA 13/4/8, Correspondence from E.E. Burke, Director National Archives of Southern Rhodesia (Salisbury) to T. Burne, Director, National Archives of Zambia (Lusaka) 16 June 1966.

²⁴ For further details on sources of Zambian colonial archives see for example, P.M. Mukula, *Archives in the National Development* (Lusaka: Government printer, 1985).

²⁵ National Archives of Zambia, *Annual Report 1965-1966* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1967), 2.

colonial Zambia form the earliest collection at the National Archives of Zambia, known as the BSAC series.

The other collections of colonial archives returned to Zambia included those created by the Colonial Office and the office of the Governor of Northern Rhodesia between 1924 and 1953. In 1924, following the British colonial government's takeover of Northern Rhodesia, a provision was established for appointing a Governor and Commander-in-Chief as the head of the colonial administration. This created a direct line of communication between the Northern Rhodesian government and the Colonial Office.²⁶ While the Governor's office held jurisdiction over legislative approval in Northern Rhodesia, the Colonial Office retained the final authority. It could either authorise or disapprove recommended ordinances or laws from the colonial government.²⁷ Consequently, the Governor of Northern Rhodesia and the Colonial Secretary of the Colonial Office communicated directly through correspondence. This administrative relationship resulted in the creation of archives consisting of incoming dispatches, correspondence, circulars, minutes, and memoranda from the Colonial Office, as well as reports and correspondence sent from Northern Rhodesia.²⁸ Although both the Colonial Office and the office of the Northern Rhodesia Governor generated corresponding sets of records, the key difference is that those preserved in Britain at the National Archives of the UK include the minutes and procedural notations of the colonial government, while those now housed in Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) contain imperial directives and orders.²⁹

After their repatriation, the records generated by the office of the Northern Rhodesia Governor, were initially categorised under the "P" series but now classified as the Secretariat collection at NAZ. The classification of archival information was done according to the offices of origin primarily informed by the principles of provenance and original order. These principles ensured that records from a specific source such as a government department, office or unit were grouped together to preserve their original context.³⁰ Maintaining records in their original context was seen not only as essential for preserving their integrity and authenticity but also as crucial for research, allowing information to be better understood in relation to its source and the order in which it was created.

²⁶Mandy Banton, *Administering the Empire, 1801-1968: A Guide to the Records of the Colonial Office in the National Archives of the UK* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2015), 16.

²⁷J.W. Davidson, *The Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1948), 22-24.

²⁸I. M. Graham and B.C. Halwindi, *A Guide to the Public Archives of Zambia 1895-1940* (Lusaka: National Archives of Zambia, 1971) 99-101.

²⁹See for example, P. Curtin, 'The Archives of Tropical Africa: A Reconnaissance,' *Journal of African History*, 1,1, (1960), 129.

³⁰National Archives of Zambia, *Annual Report 1964* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1964), 1.

The Kaunda government also facilitated the repatriation of a collection of civil service archives created by various departments of the British colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia from 1924 to 1953. These archives consisted of correspondence, circulars, reports, minutes, and memoranda produced through the administrative link between heads of government departments and the Chief Secretary of the Secretariat, which was the central governing body of the colonial administration. All communication between the central government and subordinate entities in the colonial state was routed through the Chief Secretary. Key departments of the colonial civil service that generated these archives included the Treasury, Legal, Customs, Medical, Education, Agricultural, Veterinary, Forestry, Public Works, Survey, Postal, and Railway departments.³¹ Upon their return to Zambia, these archives became part of the Secretariat Series at the National Archives of Zambia. Notably, the repatriated departmental archives were generally larger than those produced by central government bodies. Gann argued that this development occurred because the expansion of the civil service was driven by the needs of colonial society, leading to the establishment of more departments to meet its demands.³²

Kaunda's dedication to establish a national archive and an archiving system within Zambia, received recognition and support from the Southern Rhodesia government. Despite the tensions arising from the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by the Southern Rhodesian government in 1965, which the Kaunda government strongly opposed and which led to the closure of borders and a deterioration in relations between the two nations, the archival institutions of NAZ and Southern Rhodesia Archives continued to maintain their professional relationship and operated as usual. On November 11, 1965, Rhodesia's Prime Minister Ian Smith and his government issued the UDI, declaring independence from the United Kingdom without British approval. While archival records do not clearly indicate the exact routes used to transport Zambia's colonial archives back into the country after the closure of official borders during the UDI period,³³ it is likely that alternative routes were employed. Similar to how the government and general public used less direct and indirect paths to move goods into Zambia, it is plausible that the archival documents were moved across the border into neighbouring Mozambique from where they were redirected to Zambia. Given the importance of preserving historical records, special care would have been taken to secure these materials and ensure their safe arrival in Zambia. For instance, in 1968, despite strained diplomatic relations, a significant collection of files

³¹Charles Joseph Jeffries, *The Colonial Empire and Its Civil Service* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 98-99.

³²L. H. Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society: The Development of Northern Rhodesia Under the British South Africa Company, 1894-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), 112.

³³J. Mwanakatwe, *End of Kaunda Era* (Lusaka, Multimedia Zambia, 1994), p.71-73.

containing correspondence and reports on the administration and policing of Northern Rhodesia was transported to Zambia with the cooperation of the Government Archivist of Botswana.³⁴ This example underscores the resilience of archival cooperation even in the face of political challenges.

The unexpected continuity in collaboration between the Rhodesian and Zambian archival institutions in the UDI era was also exemplified, when a collection of colonial documents, previously overlooked, was discovered within various government departments in Rhodesia. The Rhodesia Archives generously provided NAZ with details about these uncollected archival resources and facilitated their return. This collection included census data generated in 1946 by the Southern Rhodesian statistics office, which had conducted a census of households for the Northern Rhodesian government.³⁵ In addition, other materials were found at the Department of Federal Survey, relating to an aerial survey of Northern Rhodesia conducted in the late 1920s and early 1930s.³⁶ With the assistance of the Southern Rhodesian Archives, all of these documents and many more were successfully repatriated to NAZ. This collaborative effort also helped the Kaunda administration realise that the partnership in archiving, initiated in the 1940s, had not been severed by the disintegration of the Federation in 1963.

Kaunda's Government and the Struggle for Zambia's Federal Archives

Although the Southern Rhodesia Government was supportive in helping the Kaunda regime repatriate the public archives generated during the British colonial administration, the despatch of federal records into Zambia became contentious. In 1953, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland formed the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, hoping to gain economic benefits from closer ties among Britain's Central African colonies. This federation was governed by a central system under the Federal Government of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. However, in 1963, the federation was dissolved due to the failure of the federal governments to fully implement the policy of multi-racial partnership on which the federation was founded. Afterwards, Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland entrusted the Southern Rhodesia Government with the custody of federal documents created by the defunct central federal system. The reason for this decision was that these federal records were of common interest to all the three former federal partners and it became a challenge dividing them equally among the all the entities

³⁴ National Archives of Zambia, *Annual Report 1968 and 1969* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1969), 2.

³⁵NAZ NA 13/4/8, Correspondence from E.E. Burke, Director National Archives of Southern Rhodesia (Salisbury) to T. Burne, Director, National Archives of Zambia (Lusaka) 16 June 1966.

³⁶NAZ/NA 13/4/8, Correspondence from R.S. Turner, Archivist, National Archives of Southern Rhodesia (Salisbury) to T. Burne, Director, National Archives of Zambia (Lusaka), 2 August 1966.

concerned. These federal documents included those that had been deposited with the National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in Southern Rhodesia as well as those that were still held by the now-defunct federal government departments.

At the time the Kaunda government initiated the archives repatriation program, most of the federal archives were still held at a central repository in Southern Rhodesia awaiting the appraisal process and for permanent preservation. Since the Kaunda government urgently aimed to create a coherent representation of Zambia's history by comprehensively collecting and preserving all available public archives related to the country, it spearheaded the actualisation of the Quadripartite Agreement. The Quadripartite Agreement was a legal understanding among the former federal partners for all federal archives and records to be set aside for central preservation under the Director of the National Archives of Southern Rhodesia, on behalf of the three territorial governments (Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland).³⁷ The Quadripartite Agreement also provided for the formation of an Inter-Governmental Committee composed of representatives from all the three former federal territories, with the primary goal of assessing the relevance of the archives to each country and distributing them according. As a result, in the mid-1960s Kaunda's government through Davis Lewis, the then Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, facilitated the appointment of Ivor Graham, an archivist from NAZ, to represent Zambia on the Committee.³⁸ After the Committee was formed, annual meetings were held in Southern Rhodesia, attended by archivists from all the former federal territories. During these meetings, committee members physically examined federal records and created schedules for their despatch.

While the Kaunda regime ensured that Zambia was consistently represented at the annual records appraisal meetings in Rhodesia, the plan of preserving a comprehensive record of the country's administrative history at NAZ could not be fully achieved as expected. Largely, this was due to the colonial political dynamics surrounding the control over federal records. During these appraisal meetings, the Zambian representative was not granted access to all the categories of records due to the embargo conditions placed on selected information by some of the defunct federal government departments.³⁹ The embargo was intended to protect the British government's

³⁷ NAZ MHA 1/5/2, Report on the Quadripartite Agreement between the Government of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the Government of Southern Rhodesia, the Government of Southern Rhodesia and the Government of Nyasaland, 22 November 1963.

³⁸ NAZ MHA 1/5/1, Correspondence from Davis Lewis, Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs to Office of the Governor (Lusaka), 11 May 1964.

³⁹ See NAZ MHA 1/5/2, Section (9) of the Quadripartite Agreement of 1963

reputation and shield its colonial collaborators from potential retribution after independence.⁴⁰ The embargo primarily affected records that related to political communications, territorial constitutions, security matters, and correspondence between the federal government and British authorities. Specifically, these records contained sensitive information that reflected the British government's perspective, which it sought to keep from the former federal territories. Some former federal government officials argued that revealing this information could have embarrassed both the former territorial governments and the British government.⁴¹ Philip Murphy also noted that some documents were particularly offensive due to their portrayal of African politicians, with British officials often using candid descriptions of their personalities.⁴²

The Kaunda government was unable to contest or protest against the embargo conditions because the Quadripartite Agreement required the former federal governments to adhere to these restrictions as imposed by the defunct federal government.⁴³ This provision meant that, although the federation had long since dissolved, its influence continued to affect the shape and preservation of the federal collection in post-colonial Zambia. However, regardless of the restrictions imposed by the embargo conditions enshrined in the Quadripartite Agreement, Kaunda's government successfully fought to secure a significant collection of federal archives repatriated to Zambia. Zambia's representative on the Inter-Governmental Committee retrieved some of the federal documents especially those generated by federal commissions, departments, and ministries with information on federal policies, politics, society, economics, defence, science, technology, and the rights and obligations of individuals.⁴⁴ Among the notable records repatriated to Zambia were collections of correspondence and reports from the Departments of Immigration and Registration. Approximately, thirty boxes of foreign registration files for Northern Rhodesia and fifty boxes of records from the High Commission for British South Africa were transferred to NAZ.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ S. Sato, "'Operation Legacy': Britain's Destruction and Concealment of Colonial Records Worldwide," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 45/4 (2017), 697-719.

⁴¹ NAZ MHA 1/5/7, Correspondence from Administrative Secretary, (Ministry of Home Affairs) to Secretary of the Cabinet, 22 November 1966.

⁴² See P. Murphy, 'Censorship, Declassification and the History of the End of Empire in Central Africa,' *African Research and Documentation*, 92 (2003), 3-26. See also, Mandy Banton, 'Destroy? "Migrate"? Conceal? British Strategies for the Disposal of Sensitive Records of Colonial Administrations at Independence,' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40/2 (2012), 321-335

⁴³ NAZ MHA 1/5/2, Section (9) of the Quadripartite Agreement of 1963.

⁴⁴ NAZ NA 22/1/2, Minutes of the Second Inter-Governmental Committee Meeting on Federal Records held at the National Archives of Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury, 30 November 1964.

⁴⁵ NAZ MHA 1/5/7, Report from T. Burne Archivist, National Archives of Zambia to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, 9 August 1967.

Further, although the Kaunda regime did not challenge the embargo conditions, it raised serious questions about the criteria used by the Inter-Governmental Committee to allocate federal archives among the former federal partners. The Kaunda government protested against the way federal archives were shared and suspected that Southern Rhodesia obtained a disproportionate portion of the federal archives by abusing its role as the custodian on behalf of Zambia and Malawi. It was claimed that, as the custodian, Southern Rhodesia remained well-informed about the contents of the federal archives, using this knowledge to secure a larger proportion of archival materials in the future.⁴⁶ As such, the representatives from the Southern Rhodesia government dominated the decision-making process regarding which archives should be returned to either Zambia or Malawi. These concerns were also articulated in a 1966 letter from Zambia's archivist and representative, T. Burne on the Inter-Governmental Committee to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs. In the letter, the archivist expressed frustration, stating that, "One disadvantage of the federal records appraisal system is that we largely have to rely on the advice of the custodian of records and the Rhodesian members. In instances where we requested specific files, we often had to comply to their judgment."⁴⁷ Given these sentiments, Zambia's concerns appear justified, especially considering that from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, the archival resources of both Zambia and Malawi were housed within the Southern Rhodesia Archives. The Southern Rhodesian archivists definitely become familiar with their contents.

Building a Historical Manuscript Collection and Navigating Archiving Challenges

Apart from making a significant progress in developing a national archive by repatriating materials from Southern Rhodesia, the Kaunda regime also focused on collecting archival resources from within Zambia. The government made a shift from a restrictive policy that focused solely on preserving government-generated documents to a more inclusive approach that embraced non-governmental archives. Partly, the impetus for acquiring local archival materials stemmed from the political realities of newfound independence and rising nationalism. Kaunda's government now actively promoted the collection of historical manuscripts through requests, donations, and purchases, targeting private collections from institutions such as corporations, societies, churches, as well as from individuals like colonial administrators and missionaries. Driven by a wave of post-independence nationalism, the Kaunda government sought to create a

⁴⁶ NAZ NA 22/1/2, Minutes of the Inter-Governmental Committee Meeting on Federal Records held at the National Archives, Salisbury, 8 December 1968.

⁴⁷ NAZ MHA 1/5/7, Report on Inter-Governmental Committee Meeting on Federal Records from T. Burne, Director of National Archives of Zambia to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, 7 August 1966.

comprehensive documentary collection that represented a consolidated national history.⁴⁸ This broader collection policy also mirrored initiatives in other post-colonial commonwealth countries, such as Malawi and Botswana, where nationalism also spurred similar efforts to collect historical manuscripts. Like Zambia, Malawi sourced its historical manuscripts primarily from corporate bodies, churches, societies, and individual missionaries and colonial administrators.⁴⁹ During the 1960s, many independent African governments and their archiving institutions aimed to preserve a comprehensive national history. Philip Curtin noted that the newly independent governments in Africa were keen to safeguard their histories, and African leaders were more supportive of historical research compared to their colonial predecessors.⁵⁰

By the late 1960s, through efforts made by the Kaunda regime the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) acquired donations from the Lusaka Chamber of Commerce, the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Northern Rhodesia, and the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.⁵¹ The donated documents included correspondence and minutes primarily focused on labour relations. The United Church of Central Africa (UCCA) in Rhodesia also contributed correspondence, reports, and minutes covering the period from 1939 to 1963. The UCCA was a significant religious organisation in Zambia's Copperbelt, which played a vital role in the colonial community.⁵² Additionally, the Rev. Fergus MacPherson provided archival documents highlighting the membership for the Presbyterian Church of Central Africa from 1901 to 1944. NAZ also received archival materials in the form of minutes and correspondence from the defunct Zambian National Council on Alcoholism and Addiction, established in the early 1960s to raise public awareness about the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption.⁵³ Further contributions included archival documents such as correspondence dating back to the 1950s from the Federation of Women's Institutes of Zambia, as well as personal papers such as the diaries of Thomas Walter Savoury, an early settler in Northern Rhodesia since 1914, which were donated by his grandson, T.E.L. Savoury.⁵⁴ Ultimately, the Kaunda government's efforts in collecting non-governmental archives culminated into the creation of the first Historical Manuscripts (HM) series at the National Archives of Zambia.

⁴⁸ NAZ NA 18/1/2, Correspondence from T. Burne, Director National Archives to David Ramsay, General Secretary, Salvation Army Headquarters, Lusaka, 5 June 1965.

⁴⁹ National Archives of Malawi, *A Manual of Activities and Operations of the National Archives of Malawi* (Zomba: National Archives of Malawi, 1986), 9.

⁵⁰ Philip Curtin, 'The Archives of Tropical Africa: A Reconnaissance,' *Journal of African History* 1/1 (1960), 130-131.

⁵¹ National Archives of Zambia, *Annual Report 1964*, 1.

⁵² National Archives of Zambia, *Annual Report 1964*, 1.

⁵³ National Archives of Zambia, *Annual Report 1970 -1971* (Lusaka: Government Printers, 1972), 4.

⁵⁴ National Archives of Zambia, *Annual Report 1964*, 1

While the acquisition of archives was successful, the challenge of providing adequate space for the preservation of both repatriated and locally collected archives surfaced. By 1968, just a short time after NAZ began operating as a national repository, the national archiving institution faced a significant shortage of storage space. This situation was not only a consequence of adopting a broader collection policy but was also worsened by the expansion of government functions following the attainment of political independence. Immediately after gaining independence, the Kaunda government prioritised several initiatives, including the expansion of medical, agricultural, and educational facilities, aimed at improving the wellbeing of the indigenous population, who had previously been deprived of such services under colonial rule. This agenda led to the establishment of new ministries and departments Zambia. Specifically, on October 24, 1964, the number of government ministries increased to twenty, up from thirteen during the federal period.⁵⁵ Eventually, over the years, this rapid bureaucratisation led to an increase in the creation and accumulation of records, resulting in a greater demand for additional storage space or repositories. The Kaunda regime made significant efforts to arrange alternative accommodation for public archives within Lusaka. In November 1969, the Permanent Secretary of the Cabinet Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Works and Supply improvised a warehouse at Impala House, located in the centre of Lusaka along Chachacha Road.⁵⁶ This situation was not only peculiar to Zambia, P.C. Muzikana, observed that similar challenges were faced by many archival institutions across Africa, which were often housed in inadequate, makeshift buildings.⁵⁷

Development of Zambia's First Post-Colonial Archival Legal Framework

Five years after gaining independence, Zambia underwent significant changes in archives preservation and records management, necessitating updated legislation to align with its new status as a nation. On November 10, 1969, the first president of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, enacted the National Archives Act, No. 44 of 1969. This legislation marked a fundamental shift in the archiving landscape of postcolonial Zambia, as it repealed and replaced the federally-focused modified national archives legislation.⁵⁸ Although the previous laws had been adapted to address the realities of post-independence archiving, they remained insufficient for the country's evolving

⁵⁵ NAZ NA 2/2/5, Cabinet Circular No. 119 of 1964 from D. Joy, Secretary to the Cabinet, to all Permanent Secretaries, 28 October 1964.

⁵⁶ NAZ NA 1/1/6, Correspondence from A. Ahmad, Acting Director, National Archives of Zambia (Lusaka) to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Power, Transport and Works (Lusaka), 4 December 1969.

⁵⁷ P.C. Muzikana, 'Archives: Africa,' in A. Large, (ed.) *World Information Report* (Paris: UNESCO, 1997), 145.

⁵⁸ NAZ MHA 1/5/8, Speech by Minister of Home Affairs on the National Archives Bill, to the Zambian National Assembly 1969, 7 October 1969.

needs. After independence, Zambian politicians implemented several significant changes to the constitution and administrative structure, including the creation and merger of various government ministries and departments. For example, a nationalisation policy transformed many private companies into parastatals, resulting in new types of information, such as semi-government business records and documents from statutory boards and special commissions. This shift created a demand for new archival legislation to accommodate these diverse types of documents. Moreover, the existing colonial-era legislation was outdated compared to more recent archives laws in other Commonwealth countries.⁵⁹ It lacked provisions for state control over non-governmental archival resources of national importance.

Accordingly, the Kaunda government initiated the drafting of Zambia's first post-colonial legal framework, beginning with the formulation of an archives policy statement. The policy statement was essential for creating an archives legislation, as it outlined the guiding principles for the legal framework. The policy specified that the legal framework should define public archives and records, detail the functions and powers of a national archiving institution, establish processes for selecting archives, outline access to public archives, and provide guiding principles for prohibiting the exportation of archival materials.⁶⁰ In line with these policy guidelines, the 1969 National Archives Act of Zambia introduced definitions for public records and archives as the information generated by government departments, corporations, societies, associations, and institutions established through statutory instruments. This broad definition significantly transformed the archiving processes for public archives in Zambia. While the modified archives legislation that governed the management of archives during the first five years after independence primarily focused on the acquisition and preservation of comprehensive collections, the Kaunda regime ensured that the new National Archives Act also emphasised records management and state control. The collection policy under the National Archives Act was expanded to include records that had not been covered by the colonial-era archival legislation.

To safeguard Zambia's public archives, regardless of their origin or context, the Kaunda regime ensured that the National Archives Act introduced the principle of decentralisation. This move was also an effort to enhance state control over all archives, both in government and private entities. Unlike previous legislation, the National Archives Act allowed for the establishment of additional places of deposit for public archives beyond the national archival institution. The

⁵⁹ NAZ MHA 1/5/8, Speech by Minister of Home Affairs on the National Archives Bill, to the Zambian National Assembly, 7 October 1969.

⁶⁰ NAZ NA 6/6/3, Ndiyoyi Mutiti, Report on Problems and Practices with Regard to Archives and Legislation Facing Esarbica, 18 August 1995.

Minister of Home Affairs was empowered to designate certain storage facilities belonging to corporations, institutions, or organisations as official places of deposit for public records and archives. The Act specified that if the Minister determined that a particular facility was suitable for the safekeeping and preservation of records, such a place could be declared as a place of deposit for specific categories of public records. This provision emphasised the principle of common provenance, ensuring that only records generated by a specific corporation or organisation would be processed and preserved at designated locations.

This development marked a significant milestone in Zambia's archival practice, paving the way for non-governmental archiving under the supervision of the Minister of Home Affairs and the Director of the National Archives. While the Act liberalised the management of archival information in Zambia, NAZ retained authority over the preservation of public archives at these deposit sites. Custodians of these places were required to follow the supervision and instructions of the Minister of Home Affairs and the Director of NAZ, ensuring that records and archives of national importance were safeguarded according to established archival standards.

In addition to designating certain facilities as places for the deposit of public archives, the Kaunda government made sure that the National Archives Act provided for state control over historical records not held by government institutions. Particularly, the Act required the Director of the national archiving institution to declare any documentation considered of historical value as public archives. This provision introduced a new approach to classifying historical records for permanent retention, allowing specific records to bypass the usual appraisal process before preservation. The retention value of certain historical records would be determined by the archiving authority. The Act also granted the right to appeal against such declarations. It allowed the custodians of historical records to appeal to the Minister of Home Affairs, whose decision on the acquisition and preservation of these records would be final. However, declarations could be revoked if the Minister accepted an appeal.

Furthermore, as recommended by the Kaunda regime, Zambia's postcolonial legislation reinforced the principle of secrecy in archiving. Unlike previous colonial archives legislation, which made no provisions for confidentiality, the postcolonial Zambian archives law explicitly prohibited the public disclosure of sensitive information. The Act mandated that public records containing confidential information be kept confidential. Both the creators of such sensitive information and the archiving authorities responsible for appraising these records were required to take an oath of secrecy. Unauthorised disclosure of any information in confidential archives was punishable by law. The confidentiality provisions were grounded in considerations of personal and national security. They addressed the potential impact that the contents of confidential records could have

on the reputations of individuals, including state officials, particularly those generated by the judicial system, defence forces, and health institutions. Records related to health conditions and sensitive court proceedings were specifically protected from public scrutiny. For instance, health records aimed to safeguard the privacy of individuals who wished to keep their medical conditions confidential. Similarly, the nature of information produced by the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Foreign Affairs was inherently sensitive, as it pertained to national security. By restricting access to confidential information, the Act effectively dictated what could be remembered about the past and how it could be understood. These provisions of the National Archives Act remained intact and binding for a one party state under the leadership of Kaunda until the mid- 1990s it was revised to meet the needs of the multi-party democratic government under President Frederick Chiluba.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article emphasised the transformative role of Kenneth Kaunda's government in establishing an autonomous national archive and archiving system in Zambia after its political independence, from 1964 to 1991. Prior to independence, Zambia's significant colonial archival resources were housed in Southern Rhodesia due to the absence of a professional archiving framework in Northern Rhodesia (later Zambia). Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland entered into a collaborative archival scheme to have their archives preserved at a central repository in Salisbury (later Harare). The reason behind this joint archives scheme was to prevent the loss of archives generated by the Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland governments which did not have appropriate storage facilities for preserving public documents. This status quo continued until 1964 when Zambia attained its political independence under the leadership of Kenneth Kaunda as the first president of Zambia. Thereafter, Kaunda's government began to facilitate the repatriation of archival materials to Zambia. The return of Zambia's colonial archives brought about the establishment of the national archiving institution, ensuring the preservation of the nation's documentary resources within its own borders. The introduction of the archiving system allowed Zambia to reclaim its historical narrative and foster a sense of national identity, moving away from colonial legacies that had centralised its archives in Southern Rhodesia.

The enactment of the National Archives Act of 1969 also marked a significant milestone in Zambia's archival governance, replacing colonial regulations with legislation tailored to meet the country's preservation needs in the post-colonial context. This act laid the foundation for the effective preservation, management, custody, and control of public archives, reinforcing the importance of national identity and historical continuity. The development of archival legislation

during this period from 1964 to 1991 shaped by the dynamics of independence highlights the importance of Kaunda's initiatives in safeguarding the nation's history. Ultimately, the establishment of a national archive not only preserved Zambian legacy but also confirmed the significance of autonomy in historical representation, ensuring that the nation's past remains accessible for future generations.

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