

*In 1978, Lucy Banda Sichone was selected as Zambia's first female Rhodes Scholar. She was admitted to Somerville College and read for a BA in PPE. Upon her return to Zambia, Sichone practiced as a lawyer and public defender and founded the Zambia Civic Education Association. Notoriously outspoken, Sichone made a name for herself challenging and chastising her country's government officials. She died in 1998.*

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### **Lucy Banda Sichone (1954-1998): Voice Of Conscience, Daughter Of The Nation**

Colette Gunn-Graffy

*With special thanks to Austin Mbozi, whose as-yet-unpublished biography of Sichone was vital to this article.*

On August 28, 1997 the Zambian President Frederick Chiluba returned from a two-week trip to Europe and East Asia. As he advanced down the runway, shaking hands with the government and party officials who had come to greet him, a woman stepped out of the ranks and thrust a handmade banner in his face. It read, "Welcome to Zambia's own Sharpeville, August 23, 1997."

The banner was making a provocative analogy between the assassination attempt on former Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda five days earlier and the March 1960 Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa, when police had killed 69 people in an unarmed crowd that had gathered outside a police station to protest the apartheid practice of carrying passbooks. August 23, 1997 saw another incident of police firing on protesters; this shooting occurred in Zambia and was directed at Kaunda, who was also the leader of the opposition United National Independence Party (UNIP). Kaunda's crime was that of holding a rally without a permit, a rally intended to launch a campaign of civil disobedience across the country. The permit, though applied for through the police, had not been granted. Kaunda was injured, his political ally Rodger Chongwe gravely so, but neither was killed by the shots.

On that day in August 1997, the woman at the airport standing up to President Chiluba was Lucy Banda Sichone, a 1978 Rhodes Scholar. A lawyer and public defender, Sichone was also a freelance columnist for *The Post* newspaper and the founder and head of the Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA). Although she was known for her aggressive criticism of

Zambia's political leaders, to hold a one-woman demonstration against Chiluba was risky. In Zambia, political opposition frequently faces violence or intimidation, and human rights abuses by police are common.<sup>1</sup> Yet while her demonstration might have been foolhardy, it was also, according to Kenneth Kaunda's son Major Wezi Kaunda, "the typicality of [Sichone's] bravery. Not even men whom I know could do that."<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately for Sichone, when the police who were protecting Chiluba grabbed her and tried to drag her towards their vehicle, she resisted and was able to escape. In a column she wrote a couple of days after the incident, Sichone maintained that her escape was due in part to the presence of a crowd of street vendors who told the police that their "mummy [was] not [to] be harassed in any way."<sup>3</sup> In the same column, she also said that it was the man who grabbed her who needed protection and medical attention. "Under attack," she crowed, "I do react like the Incredible Hulk."

This juxtaposition of images — protective nurturer versus enraged giant — emerges over and over again in Sichone's own writing and actions, as well as in what others have said and written about her. In the last seven years of her life, she became something of a celebrity in Zambia. Letters written after her death called her "a voice of conscience" and "a great daughter of the nation;"<sup>4</sup> yet over her lifetime she also managed to stir up a great deal of controversy, both personal and political. A mother of four biological and three adopted children, she devoted her life to protecting the uneducated and underprivileged from the abuses of government and law-enforcement authorities. In doing so, however, she was frequently brash and hard-headed. More than once, she threatened (or even engaged in) physical violence against those who insulted her or her family.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alex Vines, "Zambia: Elections and Human Rights in the Third Republic." December 1996. *Human Rights Watch Web Site*. 31 May 2007 <<http://hrw.org/reports/1996/Zambia.htm>>.

<sup>2</sup> *The Post*. 25 August 1998. As cited in Austin Mbozi, *The Many Faces of Lucy Sichone: A First Hand Account of Zambia's Human-Rights Heroine of the mid-90s* (unpublished), p. 48. A rising political figure, Major Wezi Kaunda was himself assassinated. Expected to take over leadership of the UNIP from his father, Major Kaunda was forced from his car and shot several times just outside his home in November 1999. See BBC World News article: "Zambia Mourns Wezi Kaunda." BBC News. 9 November 1999. 11 June 2007 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/511321.stm>>.

<sup>3</sup> "Lucy on Monday." *The Post*. 30 August 1997. As cited by Mbozi, p. 120.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. (Dr) Nevers Mumba, National Chairman of the National Christian Coalition to *The Post*, as cited by Mbozi, p. 151.

<sup>5</sup> According to Mbozi, on January 29, 1996, Sichone was convicted by the Lusaka magistrate court of assaulting her landlady Agnes Kuwani and sentenced to nine months "light imprisonment." However, this sentence was suspended because her common-law husband Kebby Musotwane was then ill in hospital. See Mbozi, p. 13.

Indeed, there were many sides to Sichone. A biography (still in draft form) written by Austin Mbozi, one of her former colleagues, has tentatively been titled “The Many Faces of Lucy Sichone.” Yet, despite this – or perhaps because of this – attitudes toward her tended to fall into one or the other extreme. As Laura Mitti, another colleague of Sichone’s and now a columnist for *The Sunday Times of Zambia*, summed it up, “Either you like her or you hate her.”<sup>6</sup>

### “A Good Critical Mind”

Born Lucy Banda on May 15, 1954, Sichone grew up in Kitwe, the third largest city of what was then Northern Rhodesia and commercial activity in the Copperbelt region.<sup>7</sup> As part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (which also included present-day Zimbabwe and Malawi) the country was administered by the British Colonial Office. Over the next decade, African nationalist parties campaigned to secede from the Federation – a goal that was finally realized on December 31, 1963 when the Federation was dissolved completely. On October 24, 1964, Northern Rhodesia officially became the Republic of Zambia, led by President Kenneth Kaunda.

The fact that Sichone came of age in the first decade of Kaunda’s 27-year presidency would greatly influence her views of governmental intervention in the economy. Under Kaunda, control of the economy was centralized and many socialist economic policies were put into place, including government subsidies to farmers and consumers. In the 1960s, Zambia’s chief export was copper – as it still is today. At that time, however, the Zambian copper mines were state-owned, and as such, were able to offer free education, health and social services to their workers and their families. Sichone’s own father, Robert Banda, was a miner in the Nkana mine of the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) company. Later in life, she wrote in one of her columns that were it not for UNIP socialist policies such as those described above, she would still “be living in Buchi [Kitwe] selling tomatoes by the side of the road.”<sup>8</sup>

Yet even if Sichone did not grow up to sell tomatoes, she maintained a deep connection with the people and customs of Kitwe. In his unpublished biography, Mbozi describes her as feeling “more at home” in the rural countryside, “beaming with excitement, eating with simple-

<sup>6</sup> As cited by Mbozi, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> In 1888, Cecil Rhodes convinced local tribal chiefs to sign a contract giving over all mining rights to this area to his British South Africa Company (BSAC). The BSAC then administered these lands, known as Northern and Southern Rhodesia, respectively, until 1923, when control was ceded to the British government.

<sup>8</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 8 June 1998. As cited by Mbozi, p. 20.

looking villagers, and [much less] emotional [than she was] when in the city.”<sup>9</sup> She enjoyed the sense of community the villages offered — particularly in the east where she was from. Families settled together in compounds, rather than living on their own. “She loved it all [the village community] and encouraged us to buy local food to provide the much needed market for the people.”<sup>10</sup>

Given this strong identification with rural Zambia, it is perhaps surprising that Sichone chose to apply for the Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford. Even more extraordinary is the fact that in doing so, she was reacting against both her mother — Lily Mulenga, a “traditionalist” who “believed that girls should not go to school but should prepare for marriage”<sup>11</sup> — and the cultural norms she had grown up with, since the majority of Zambians do not complete ninth grade.<sup>12</sup>

It is difficult to say exactly what it was that drove Sichone to pursue education to the degree she did, but, according to one of her recommenders to the Rhodes Scholarship, she came across as someone “who will naturally aim for the very best possible.”<sup>13</sup> Before applying to the Rhodes, Sichone had attended an all-girls secondary school and had received a BA in Law from the University of Zambia (UNZA). Noted for her “well above average” intelligence, she stood out in school for her critical mind and her “courage to stand up for her conviction[s].”<sup>14</sup> The fact, for instance, that in the second, third, and fourth years of her LL.B. program at UNZA Sichone was the only female, certainly did not hinder her in contributing to discussion.<sup>15</sup>

Even at a young age, Sichone seemed to have a great sense of duty. Decades before she came to condemn government hypocrisy in her newspaper columns with allusions to the New Testament, she was active in several Christian youth groups, and through them, leading efforts to

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<sup>9</sup> Mbozi, p. 57.

<sup>10</sup> Mbozi, p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> Mbozi, p. 45.

<sup>12</sup> It was estimated that in 2004, only 38.5 percent of Zambian children completed school up to year 9 (junior secondary school). See Angela Wood. “Back to Square One: IMF wage freeze leaves Zambian teachers out in the cold. Again.” *Global Campaign for Education*. 3 June 2005. 11 June 2007  
<[http://www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/Jun2005/back\\_to\\_square\\_one\\_tcm8-4743.pdf](http://www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/Jun2005/back_to_square_one_tcm8-4743.pdf)>.

<sup>13</sup> D.I. McDougall to H.R.M. Currey, Esq.,

<sup>14</sup> A teacher at Fatima Girls School to the Secretary of the Rhodes Selection Committee, 8 October 1977. Included in the “Lucy Banda” file.

<sup>15</sup> D.E. Ndhlovu to the Secretary of the Rhodes Selection Committee, 21 September 1977. Included in the “Lucy Banda” file.

get young people off the streets. As she told one of her recommenders, she wanted “to do something worthwhile in life.”<sup>16</sup> To Sichone, education had an essential role to play in fulfilling that duty. In 1996, two years before her death, *The Post* ran a profile article on her entitled, “My greatest mistake,” in which she says, “I think my biggest mistake was to go to school because this made me become aware of my abilities and rights, resulting in [a] failure to keep quiet about my informed stand on issues.”<sup>17</sup>

Certainly by the time Sichone applied for the Rhodes Scholarship, she had recognized and embraced this “failure.” “After [I receive my Masters from Oxford],” she wrote in her application essay, “I intend to pursue a career in teaching [as a lecturer], it being my belief that students learn a lot more from lecturers than what is written in their text books. I hope I will be much more than just a lecturer to my students.”<sup>18</sup>

### **A Seemingly Enigmatic Woman**

As it happened, it was a second bachelor’s degree that Sichone pursued – in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) – and it did not prove easy, at least initially. Having won the Rhodes Scholarship in 1978, she applied to Somerville College at Oxford. Although the college was eager to accept her, Sichone’s desire to read for a BA in PPE caused some consternation among her potential tutors, as she had little background in the subject. Their solution was to admit her as if she were an undergraduate, so that she would have a third year in which to take her degree. (Typically, those taking a second BA in a subject related to their first BA completed the degree in two years.) Certainly Oxford, with its gleaming spires and old-boy traditions, was worlds away from the poverty and rural customs with which Sichone had grown up. Judging by the first-year reports of her tutors, it took some time for her to adjust to the course. Although she showed enthusiasm for the work, Sichone’s level of writing was considerably lower than that of her peers, and she clearly was not used to the depth of analysis her tutors expected. Early on, several tutors expressed concerns that, even with the third year, she would not be able to cope with the demands of the subject.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> D.E. Ndhlovu.

<sup>17</sup> Joe Kaunda, “My greatest mistake.” *The Post*. 31 January 1996. As cited by Mbozi, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Lucy Banda, “Curriculum Vitae.” 13 July 1977. Included in the “Lucy Banda” file.

<sup>19</sup> Somerville College Report Forms, Michaelmas Term 1978 – Hilary Term 1979. Included in the “Lucy Banda” file.

It is possible matters were further complicated by the fact that, in departing Zambia for Oxford, Sichone had also left behind a four-year-old daughter, Martha, and her fiancé, a Zambian police cadet called Martin Sichone. Whatever her feelings about this parting, it is doubtful Sichone shared them with her new acquaintances at Oxford. Both the Principal of Somerville, Barbara Craig, and Sichone's moral tutor Judith Heyer, commented on her formality — her seeming need “to keep at a respectful distance.”<sup>20</sup>

Even amongst her peers, Sichone “generally ... didn't open up. ... [She] kept to herself more.”<sup>21</sup> According to Susan Karamanian and Isha Ray, two of her friends at Oxford, Sichone was an enigma to those who knew her only by acquaintance. In appearance, she stood out for her insistence upon wearing layers and layers of clothing, “[r]egardless of the season.” But her behavior, at least “in large groups ... was reserved, you could say even shy.”<sup>22</sup>

However, those who lived with Sichone in Somerville's Holtby Hall saw a different side to her. There she was known for being a powerful, often unapologetic voice. “She had strong opinions on nearly every issue. She could disagree with you bluntly, saying, ‘You are wrong.’ Or ‘Ah-lah, you don't know anything.’ She simply did not believe in little niceties or social airs.” And yet, in dispensing her advice as fact, Sichone also came across as “the hall's matriarch,” and it was often she who took care of the women in her group and listened to their problems.<sup>23</sup>

By her second year at Oxford, Sichone's work had greatly improved. Her tutors' pleased remarks indicate the remarkable strides she had made; indeed, she was writing and arguing on a par with her peers. Sichone's views, however, remained her own, which “made her a refreshing student to teach.”<sup>24</sup>

It was during this year that Sichone married her fiancé, and in petitioning the Governing Body to allow her to continue her studies also revealed that she was due to have a baby the following autumn.<sup>25</sup> Although she did take Martin's name, she asked that those in College

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<sup>20</sup> Principal Barbara Craig to Judith Heyer. 29 February 1980. Included in the “Lucy Banda” file. At Oxford, a “moral tutor” is essentially a personal academic advisor.

<sup>21</sup> Susan Karamanian. Personal Interview. 5 February 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Susan Karamanian, “Lucy Banda Sichone (1978),” Somerville College Report, 1999.

<sup>23</sup> Susan Karamanian, “Lucy Banda Sichone (1978).”

<sup>24</sup> Somerville College Report Forms, Trinity Term 1980. Included in the “Lucy Banda” file.

<sup>25</sup> At one time, Rhodes Scholars were not allowed to marry; to do so was to forfeit the Scholarship. By 1965, this stipulation had been relaxed to allow Scholars to marry after their first year, so long as they formally requested

continue to call her by her maiden name Banda.

At the end of October 1981, Sichone returned to Oxford for her third and final year, having left her new baby, Robert, under her mother's care in Zambia. Her work throughout that year continued to win praise from her tutors, who predicted further good results in her exams.<sup>26</sup> Tragically, on June 9, 1981, just as she finished her last exams, Sichone received word that her husband Martin had been killed in a car crash. She was also informed that a plane ticket had been purchased for her (by the Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines, who were to employ her on her return to Zambia) to fly home that very night. Several of Sichone's friends took her to buy mourning clothes. Then, according to Karamanian, "we helped her pack up her things and she left that evening. I never heard from her again."<sup>27</sup>

The following autumn, Daphne (now Baroness) Park, then Principal of Somerville College, received a letter from Sichone, thanking her for all that had been done for her in the immediate aftermath of Martin's death. "It is not something I am likely to forget."<sup>28</sup> Although Sichone had clearly been through a time of mental anguish, she assured the Principal that she was "okay now." Her son, she wrote, "is the exact replica of my husband — it is quite painful to look at him sometimes. But he does bring me some happiness and it's mainly due to him that I revived so quickly."<sup>29</sup> Sichone also praised the Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines (NCCM), her current employer, as "invaluable" to her recovery. Not only had the NCCM arranged for her flight and the transportation of her belongings back to Zambia, the NCCM had also addressed a problem nearly as disastrous as her husband's death: according to Zambian custom, Sichone's in-laws had stripped her and her children of everything they (and her husband) had owned. Shortly thereafter, NCCM had supplied her with the living essentials — from "teaspoons ... to cooker and fridge" — she needed to rebuild her life.

This experience — although temporary — of being robbed of all that she possessed deeply affected Sichone. "[The] way I was left destitute has given me the idea of what I want to do ... start

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permission from the Governing Body *before* the occasion. Unaware of this rule, Sichone petitioned the Body *after* she had been married; by then however, the petition was more of a formality than anything else, and she was granted permission to continue her studies. In 1995, the marriage rule was revoked.

<sup>26</sup> Somerville College Report Forms, Hilary Term 1981. Included in the "Lucy Banda" file.

<sup>27</sup> Karamanian interview.

<sup>28</sup> Lucy Banda Sichone to Daphne Park, 17 October 1981. Private letter included in the "Lucy Banda" file.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from Lucy Banda Sichone to Daphne Park.

a Legal Clinic for widows and orphans — who are not as well-equipped to face life after a husbands'/fathers' [sic] death."<sup>30</sup>

This idea was clearly the seed out of which the grassroots work of the Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA) grew. Before Sichone would pursue this dream, however, she took a stab at more traditional top-down political reform. In 1991, she resigned from her position with the mines to pursue a position within the UNIP party.

### **“The Only Young Person who [Acknowledged] what UNIP had Done for Us”**

In 1964, the year Zambia gained independence, it was one of the wealthiest countries in Africa. Nearly half a century and three democratically elected (in theory, at least) presidents later, it is one of the poorest and most indebted nations in the world. According to the World Bank's 2004 estimates, 73 percent of the Zambian population now lives below the poverty line, and the average life expectancy is just 36 years.<sup>31</sup>

Finger-pointing typically begins with former President Kaunda's nationalization of the copper mines; yet in the decade following independence, his socialist policies were relatively successful. The price of copper, Zambia's primary export, increased, as did the real GDP — by approximately 2.3 percent per annum.<sup>32</sup> But, in 1975, following a massive increase in the price of oil, the price of copper plummeted. Effect was that between 1975 and 1990, the country's real GDP per capita declined 30 percent.<sup>33</sup> As Zambia's economy worsened, it borrowed heavily from foreign lenders, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In the 1980s, the IMF began to put pressure on Kaunda to restructure the economy using a number of measures including the elimination of subsidies to farmers and devaluing the currency. This led to huge increases in the price of food. Riots broke out in the country's urban centers, and Kaunda moved away from the IMF's structural adjustment plan to institute an ultimately unsuccessful economic recovery program of his own. In 1989, a further agreement was reached with the IMF, which, among other requirements, required Zambia to begin privatizing its government-owned industries.

As living standards in Zambia declined, so too did popular support for Kenneth Kaunda.

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<sup>30</sup> Letter from Lucy Banda Sichone to Daphne Park.

<sup>31</sup> “The World Bank in Zambia: Country Brief 2005-2006”, The World Bank Group, p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> “Virtual Zambia.” 2005, Biz/ed. 1 May 2008 <<http://www.bized.co.uk/index.htm>>.

<sup>33</sup> “Virtual Zambia.”

In 1972, Kaunda had banned all opposition political parties and instituted a one-party system of government — a move that kept UNIP in power for nearly three decades. Yet in 1991, faced with growing public dissatisfaction, he was forced to call a multi-party election. During this time, one of Kaunda’s most popular opponents was Frederick Chiluba, leader of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy. Promising political and economic reforms, MMD swept both the presidential and parliamentary elections, installing Chiluba in the seat that had belonged to Kaunda for nearly 30 years.

At this time, most Zambian intellectuals and elites, if they had not already done so, defected to the MMD. Lucy Banda Sichone was one of the few to hold out. Her allegiance was partly out of gratitude; after all, it was thanks to the socioeconomic policies of UNIP, not the IMF’s structural adjustment programs, that she had been fed, clothed and educated as a child. “The heritage of UNIP to my generation,” she wrote in a later article, “had to be preserved for my children and their children.”<sup>34</sup> Yet, it was not out of loyalty alone that she dug in her heels. According to Mbozi, Sichone wanted to ensure there would continue to be a viable opposition to the new regime. Without such an informal system of checks and balances, the country would be a two-party state in name only. Thus, rather than shackle herself to the MMD — even if doing so would, no doubt, have landed her a cushy position within the new government — Sichone left herself free to act as a very vocal “check.”

Sichone stood out at a time when most of her intellectual peers were fleeing Kaunda’s circle. She was quickly appointed to the Central Committee as Chairperson for the Women’s Affairs Sub-Committee, as well as to the UNIP’s Constitutional Review Commission. In these positions, Sichone spent about a year under Kaunda’s tutelage, observing his interactions with common citizens and his consultations with other political leaders. During this time, she developed a great respect for the former president, whom she praised for his skills “as a statesman, [and his] wisdom.”<sup>35</sup> In later years, she frequently came to the defense of his person and reputation, both as a columnist and as a political activist – for instance, following the attempted assassination in August 1997, she held a press conference, as well as the aforementioned “Sharpeville” welcome of Chiluba at the airport.

Yet, only a year after joining the party, Sichone resigned — just “a step,” she believed,

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<sup>34</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 8 June 1998. As cited by Mbozi, p. 20.

<sup>35</sup> Mbozi, p. 20.

“ahead of expulsion.”<sup>36</sup> Although she may have admired the UNIP’s socioeconomic policies, she was also intent on party reform. The trouble was that many of the UNIP’s senior members — including Kaunda — were not.

In 1991, after Kaunda lost the presidency, change inside UNIP had seemed possible, even inevitable. Kaunda had announced his intent to retire and threw his support to Kebby Musokotwane, a young and intelligent former Prime Minister, to succeed him as party leader. Those who opposed this move, mostly conservative members of the party, Sichone lambasted publicly as sycophants “using [Kaunda’s] coat tails for [their] continued survival in politics.” In fact, she told Kaunda, “[You] should take all of them with [you when you retire.]” Although Kaunda chastised Sichone for the “rudeness of [her] language” he also acknowledged the “truth” of her views, and according to Sichone, “it was at that meeting that KK [*sic*] took me under his protection.”<sup>37</sup>

But this protection only extended so far. Following intra-party elections, Sichone joined the “new look” (Musokotwane-led) UNIP as the Secretary for Legal, Constitutional, and Parliamentary Affairs. Believing that as the leadership of the party evolved, so should its image, she used the power of her position to advocate for several reforms. Among the most controversial of these were the replacement of Kaunda’s image on the UNIP membership card with that of a hoe, and a new dress code of jacket and tie, rather than the “safari suits” made famous by the former president. For this, she was labeled a traitor by many of the “old guard” members of the party, and — according to Sichone — she lost the support of Kaunda himself.

In addition, Sichone’s behavior following the discovery of the “Zero Option Plan” set many party members against her. In February 1993, *The Times of Zambia* published excerpts of a document known as the “Zero Option Plan” which called on UNIP supporters to render the country “ungovernable” through acts of civil disobedience and armed insurrection. Sichone condemned the authors of the document, arguing that whatever the crimes of MMD, it was still a democratically elected government, and to destabilize it was to commit treason. Then, a week or so later, when President Chiluba declared a state of emergency on account of the document, she lashed out at him as well. To many in both parties, this volte-face seemed completely illogical and not a little misanthropic: if both parties were in the wrong, who, then, other than Lucy Banda Sichone, was in the right? Yet, what most partisans did not seem to realize was that Sichone was

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<sup>36</sup> Mbozi, p. 17.

<sup>37</sup> Mbozi, p. 16.

not standing up for a particular group, but for an ideal – that humans possess certain rights, among them to seek recourse via negotiation and due process, rather than through violence, whether that violence is perpetuated by the government or by opposition parties.

However, Sichone baffled and angered people in the way in which she seemed to make her own rules. While a member of the “new-look” UNIP, she began an affair with Kebby Musokotwane, who was not only party leader but a man married with children. According to Mbozi, the couple were relatively open and honest about the relationship – at least once it had been exposed by the media – which likely saved them from greater embarrassment and even won them some public sympathy.<sup>38</sup> Their plan to marry, however – casting Sichone in the role of second wife – and the revelation that she was pregnant with his child, caused much outrage and controversy. By the time the story of “Kebby and Lucy” had been exposed by the press, it was 1995. Sichone had left UNIP several years earlier, but Musokotwane at that time was party president on his way to running for president of the country in 1996. Questions not only of morality but also of logistics preoccupied many Zambians – how would Musokotwane keep two wives in the statehouse? And which of them would be called “first lady?”<sup>39</sup> Sichone’s simple defense was that there was nothing wrong with polygamy if all three parties accepted it; however, there was never any indication that Musokotwane’s first wife, Regina, had done so. In fact, in an interview with *The Post*, what she had actually said was, “Naturally I’m not happy [about Kebby and Lucy]. No woman would [be].”<sup>40</sup>

Sichone responded with characteristic defiance to the criticisms of her private life. Comparing herself to other public “greats,” such as Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, and Nelson Mandela, she wrote, “The reason why we make ourselves available to the puny stone throwers is because we know that the pebbles will not dent our nobility of character nor will it hinder the good that is done through our work.”<sup>41</sup> But in 1996, before the couple could be married, Musokotwane died of a sudden illness. “Widowed” a second time, Sichone did not put her grief on display – though she did pointedly warn the media “to leave the dead to rest in

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<sup>38</sup> Mbozi, p. 11.

<sup>39</sup> Mbozi, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> Mbozi, p. 13.

<sup>41</sup> Mbozi, p. 13.

peace or risk reprisals from yours truly.”<sup>42</sup>

### **An Authority on Everything**

If Sichone’s views were too revolutionary for party politics, they found a home in *The Post* newspaper. In Zambia, there are three national daily newspapers: *The Post*, *The Times of Zambia*, and *The Zambia Daily Mail*. Of these three, *The Post* is the only one that is not state-owned. It also has the highest readership — in a country in which 37 percent of the population reads a newspaper, *The Post* claims 39 percent of this readership.<sup>43</sup> While journalists for the state-owned newspapers face a great deal of censorship, *Post* journalists have been harassed and intimidated — even imprisoned — for their criticisms of Parliament and government officials.

Sichone fit right in, of course. In 1993, she began writing her own weekly column in *The Post* called “Lucy on Monday.” Abundant with vitriol, but never with apology, the column provided her with a platform to attack the government for what she perceived to be acts of hypocrisy and pettiness. With language as passionate as it was often pompous, she would explain just exactly how officials had embarrassed and humiliated her nation.

The Vice President General Godfrey Miyanda, Sichone condemned as a “hypocrite ... [who] suffers ... verbal diarrhea.”<sup>44</sup> In another column, she described Zambian Members of Parliament as “eunuchs lack[ing] the most basic human qualities of integrity, courage, vision, concern for other people, patriotism and commitment,” who did not understand that “a job does not make a man. It is a man who makes the job.”<sup>45</sup>

The MMD, a frequent target, she called:

*A drunken man ... [who] has soiled its trousers with fraudulent elections, unlawful usurpation of power the stench of which has naturally attracted large flies and the attention of innocent children and citizens ... My advise [sic] to the MMD is that the only way to get rid of green flies, excited children and the denunciation by law abiding*

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<sup>42</sup> Mbozi, p. 13.

<sup>43</sup> “Zambia Country Report – Newspapers.” *African Media Development Initiative: Zambia Context*. BBC World Service Trust. 27 May 2007 <[http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/AMDI/zambia/amdi\\_zambia7\\_newspapers.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/AMDI/zambia/amdi_zambia7_newspapers.pdf)>.

<sup>44</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 12 October 1996. As cited by Mbozi, p. 121.

<sup>45</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 23 January 1998. As cited by Mbozi, pp. 73–4.

*men and women everywhere is for the party to get behind the nearest big tree, grab a handful of leaves and clean up as best as possible.*<sup>46</sup>

Yet Sichone did not reserve her invective solely for the MMD. After parting company with UNIP, she kept her critical eye trained on its members, and continued to question their actions in her columns. And despite her personal affection for Kaunda, the former president remained a target of many of these written diatribes. Most notably, Sichone took issue with the fact that, despite his apparent retirement in 1992, two years later he was back on the political front line, styling himself as the people’s choice against the incompetent MMD government. Perhaps more treacherous in her eyes was the fact that, in 1995, Kaunda stood against the incumbent Musokotwane for leadership of the UNIP party and won by a landslide – whether the “Kebby and Lucy” scandal had anything to do with this is unknown. In 1996, in anticipation of the national presidential election, Kaunda announced that he would travel the country to collect signatures from his supporters to show that people wanted him back in politics. Completely opposed to Kaunda making any bid for presidency, Sichone vowed to conduct a similar tour; instead of pro-Kaunda signatures, however, she swore she could collect at least 3 million anti-Kaunda signatures – evidence that would contradict his claim of nationwide support. (Neither of them ever did collect the promised signatures.)

To Sichone, Kaunda’s return amounted to “betrayal” of the party, and she went on to criticize his “failure,” in that he “had never groomed a leadership who could continue after him.” Indeed, she wrote, “it must be obvious that there is nothing KK can do now that will add to his stature as a statesman,” as opposed to Nelson Mandela (a personal hero of hers), whose “immortality will be assured by the critical role he will continue to play as an ordinary member of the ANC in the humane task that South Africa faces today – that of reconciliation and nation-building.”<sup>47</sup>

### **How Can One Woman Defeat Us?**

Like Kaunda, however, Sichone could not seem to back down from political pursuits – except in her case, these pursuits evolved into grassroots reform. According to Mbozi, Sichone believed there were “two things indispensable in any democracy: a strong opposition and a well-

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<sup>46</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 30 November 1996. As cited by Mbozi, p. 126.

<sup>47</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 8 June 1998. As cited by Mbozi, pp. 19-20.

informed citizenry.”<sup>48</sup> Towards this end, in September 1993, Sichone founded the Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA). Dedicated to providing civic education and legal aid to those Zambians who would not otherwise be able to afford it — in fact the vast majority of the population — ZCEA started by conducting workshops and public meetings in rural areas. Run by Sichone, these workshops were friendly rather than formal, and her open, frank nature won the respect and attention of villagers and their chiefs.

One of the best-known issues that Sichone dealt with in her workshops was the 1995 Land Act. As part of President Chiluba’s attempt to liberalize the Zambian economy, the Land Act was intended to promote foreign investment in the country and its industries. Prior to this piece of legislation, land had no monetary value and could not be privately owned, though a small portion could be leased. Approximately 90 percent of the land was administered by tribal chiefs, with the remaining ten percent divided between the state, councils or private title deed owners.<sup>49</sup>

Yet such a system was antithetical to Chiluba’s new approach. Having inherited a debt of approximately U.S. \$7 billion, the MMD government turned to the World Bank and IMF for financial support; in return, Chiluba had to implement certain economic reforms conducive to privatization and diversification of industry and investment.<sup>50</sup> The World Bank maintained that in order to encourage development, customary tenure — the communal holding of land — should be replaced with a more secure form of ownership in the form of land titling and registration. Thus, under the legislation, all previously tribal-held lands were repossessed and vested in the president of Zambia to hold in trust for the Zambian people. The Act also put a monetary value on the land and gave the president the power to distribute land to any person, whether Zambian or not. In effect, the law transformed many villagers into squatters overnight after their once communal land became the private property of government-sanctioned investors; further, as Sichone wrote furiously in one of her articles, “the money paid by the so-called investors does not go to compensate, resettle or rehabilitate the villagers. ...[The Land Act] means the liquidation of an entire way of life, a death sentence for both the

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<sup>48</sup> Mbozi, p. 23.

<sup>49</sup> Mbozi, p. 25. See also Mweembe Muleya Mudenda, “The Challenges of Customary Land Tenure in Zambia.” Given at the XXIII FIG Congress. 8-13 October 2006. 18 June 2007 <[http://www.fig.net/pub/fig2006/papers/ts50/ts50\\_03\\_mudenda\\_0740.pdf](http://www.fig.net/pub/fig2006/papers/ts50/ts50_03_mudenda_0740.pdf)>.

<sup>50</sup> Peter Burnell, “Case Study Two: Politics in Zambia,” *Burnell & Randall: Politics in the Developing World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

people and their livestock.”<sup>51</sup>

In the ZCEA-sponsored workshops she held in rural villages, Sichone would explain the Land Act (among other legal issues) to her audience, as well as their rights under this law, and then would take questions. Several times she did this in the presence of MMD officials who tried to discredit her. She also represented several displaced villagers, who had been accused of being squatters, in court. Unfortunately, Sichone could not get around the fact that what the investors had done was in fact legal; thus, she could not win these cases in court. Undeterred, she directed villagers to ignore the law and resettle on the farms which had previously been theirs. She also encouraged them to use armed force if threatened. As a result, Sichone’s fame spread quickly; both among the village headmen who invited her to conduct workshops, as well as among government officials who attempted to threaten those chiefs who invited her. So successful and widespread was Sichone’s campaign on this issue that National Secretary of the MMD Michael Sata is reported to have lamented, “We as politicians, how can one woman defeat us?”<sup>52</sup>

Another abuse of power which Sichone attempted to expose and subvert through civil education was the passing of the 1996 national constitution. Following MMD’s victory in the 1991 elections, the government set out to adopt a new constitution for the country. A Constitutional Review Commission was created, and Sichone was among those appointed by President Chiluba to travel around the country collecting oral and written statements from the people of Zambia as to what they wanted to have in their constitution; this information was then supposed to be applied to the drafting of the new constitution.<sup>53</sup> In reality, however, the government rejected many of the Commission’s recommendations, including: that the President should be elected by at least 50 percent of the electorate (instead, it was legislated that a plurality was all that was necessary), that Cabinet Ministers be appointed from outside parliamentary

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<sup>51</sup> Lucy Sichone, “Zambia: Land law is a setback to the dark ages.” *Global News*. 1 October 1998. 18 June 2007 <<http://www.ms.dk/sw24932.asp>>. It should be noted that several reports published in this decade, including one by the World Development Movement, have concluded that trade liberalization, a requirement of World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programs, is widely responsible for the disastrous downturn of the Zambian economy: since 1990, the Zambian economy has had a *negative* growth rate of 1.7 percent per year. See <[www.wdm.org.uk/news/presrel/current/zambiareport.htm](http://www.wdm.org.uk/news/presrel/current/zambiareport.htm)>.

<sup>52</sup> Mbozi, p. 42.

<sup>53</sup> While serving on this commission, Sichone became Acting Vice-Chairperson when another member went on leave. Sometime after this, twelve of the other commissioners signed a petition calling for her to step down from the temporary role and alleging that she was not a cooperative person. (Though presumably she was kept on in this role until the actual VCP returned, as the petition was signed by slightly less than half the commission!) See Mbozi, p. 5.

ranks to ensure separation of powers, that a Constitutional Court should be established, and that the chairperson of the Electoral Commission should be ratified by Parliament. Additionally, government ministers included a clause that bars Zambians with one or more foreign parents from standing for the presidency.<sup>54</sup>

In response, the ZCEA and several other NGOs organized a conference in Mulungushi from March 1-10, 1996 at which the “Citizen’s Green Paper,” an alternative to the one endorsed by the government’s “White Paper,” was drafted. The international community, too, voiced concern; Britain’s High Commissioner Patrick Nixon withheld a £10 million grant to Zambia because of the draft constitution. Yet despite this, and despite the fact that several MPs resigned or walked out of Parliament in protest during the constitutional debates, the constitution passed in Parliament and was signed into law by Chiluba on May 28, 1996.

Undeterred, Sichone merely added the truth about the constitution of 1996 — that the government had rejected the will of the people in its drafting — to her workshop agenda.

In addition to counseling Zambians on their legal rights, Sichone often represented them in court as *pro bono* clients. Stories and information gathered from village workshops had made it clear that Zambia’s criminal justice system was a great source of human and constitutional rights abuses.<sup>55</sup> The average Zambian possessed neither the legal knowledge nor the financial resources to defend his or her rights; torture and trumped up charges (or no charges at all) commonly followed political arrests. Indeed, two of Sichone’s high-profile cases followed acts of political extremism: in one, a shadowy group known as the “Black Mamba” set off explosions and sent death threats to MMD officials in an effort to force the government to withdraw the 1996 constitution; the other was a short-lived coup led by “Captain Solo,” a drunken army officer who, along with his regiment, was simply fed up with the nation’s growing poverty and unemployment under MMD. Mass arrests and detentions of UNIP-connected officials followed both incidents, and Sichone was directly involved in the defense — and subsequent acquittal — of many of these individuals.

Occasionally, villagers would question Sichone’s motives because of her UNIP past. Their unease stemmed from suspicions that no one would pursue philanthropy in the absence of any personal or political gain. A far greater obstacle to Sichone’s workshops,

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<sup>54</sup> It should be noted that this last item seemed to have been intended specifically to disqualify Kenneth Kaunda from running for another term as president, as Kaunda is partially of Malawian heritage. See Vines, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> “Human Rights in Zambia.” *International Bar News*. April 1998. p. 21.

however, was the Public Order Act, a law issued by the Chiluba-led government requiring that anyone who wished to hold a public meeting apply for a police permit seven days in advance. Zambian police could be very selective in granting permits; NGOs, opposition parties, and other civic interest groups were regularly denied them, whereas the MMD continued to hold demonstrations and rallies without permits.<sup>56</sup> An added frustration for Sichone was that, in rural areas, the nearest police station was often quite far from the village where the ZCEA was to hold its workshop. It was a blow to travel, in some cases, as much as 60 kilometers, only to be arbitrarily denied a permit. Of course, even if she were denied the permit, she proceeded with the workshop, often battling with or attempting to deceive members of the police. Sichone was counting on the fact that if police did arrest her, a huge local and international outcry would follow, focusing international attention on the MMD government. According to Mbozi, Sichone's philosophy of civil disobedience was taken from Martin Luther King Jr.: that in breaking unjust laws, and in accepting the penalty for doing so, she was upholding justice overall.

### **I Am Not Hiding**

Though her personal views of justice may have been similar to Dr. King's, Sichone was hardly arguing for nonviolence. She did not shy away from violent confrontation — in fact she encouraged it when she thought it would be effective. Even her columns frequently read as challenges rather than commentaries. In response to a demand by some Members of Parliament for her arrest for holding a public demonstration without a permit, Sichone writes:

*I can only say that mob action wherever it occurs is the worst form of cowardice ever known to man. When the same mob mentality occurs in an august institution such as parliament, it means the tragic and painful death of the country which we Zambians are not going to allow. [MP] Earnest Mtwansa should know that my office is just up the road from the National Assembly — I challenge him to come up and attempt to effect a citizen's arrest for exercising my right to free speech as enshrined in the constitution and I am sure we will learn something from the experience.<sup>57</sup>*

<sup>56</sup> Human Rights Watch. "Zambia." *World Report 2001*. 22 June 2007 <[www.hrw.org/wr2k1/africa/zambia.html](http://www.hrw.org/wr2k1/africa/zambia.html)>.

<sup>57</sup> "Lucy Sichone and General Miyanda's Diatribe Rages." *The Post*. 6 February 1996. As cited by Mbozi, p. 116.

For Sichone, even if this outspokenness was on the cusp of impropriety — or, in Zambia, illegality — it remained her natural right. In his biography of Sichone, Mbozi compares her articles to a blunt weapon that she would “hammer” against her opponents; if they reacted against her, she would “hammer even harder ...[until] she hit the final blow and crush[ed] them into silence.”<sup>58</sup> In fact, some of her more powerful opponents were trying to do exactly the same thing to her. One of them, Vice President Godfrey Miyanda, was frequently involved in the MMD’s attempts to gag privately-owned media. In trying to silence Sichone, he proposed government regulation of NGOs, and raised a point of order against her in Parliament. In a letter (later reprinted in *The Post*), Sichone responded to his accusation of malicious character assassination by saying:

*I should categorically state that your job as Vice-President of Zambia gives me the right and mandate to judge your public actions and pass a verdict without us having a personal relationship whatsoever. My right to criticize and pass judgment on your actions as vice president arises from the fact that I am criticized and judged by the world as a Zambian citizen on the basis of the image that you, as vice president, project to the world at large.*<sup>59</sup>

In the end, however, the Zambian government sided with Miyanda against the right to free speech. In January 1996, Miyanda succeeded in raising a Parliamentary point of order against Sichone, *The Post*’s editor-in-chief Fred Mmembe, and managing editor, Bright Mwape. Earlier in the month, the Supreme Court had ruled that sections of the Public Order Act — the law that required people to obtain police permits for public gatherings — were unconstitutional. In Parliament, Miyanda had condemned the Court for this ruling — and the three journalists, in turn, had been critical of his remarks. That prompted a prosecution for contempt of Parliament, and, when none of the three appeared in court, they were tried in absentia and sentenced to imprisonment for an indeterminate period. Although Mwape was immediately detained, Sichone and Mmembe escaped jail by going into hiding; at the time, Sichone took her youngest biological child — then a six-month-old — with her. While in hiding, both she and Mmembe continued to write newspaper articles for *The Post* that challenged the view that Parliament was supreme in these circumstances. In one of these articles, entitled “I am not hiding,” Sichone

<sup>58</sup> Mbozi, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 29 January 1996. As cited by Mbozi, pp. 116-7.

wrote that “Respect ... (even for Parliament) is earned, not worn like a skirt or trousers by virtue of a job or Parliamentary office.”<sup>60</sup>

It speaks volumes about Sichone’s popularity — and respect — among the Zambian people that even though public notices offered 2 million kwachas (approximately \$1700) for information about her whereabouts,<sup>61</sup> not one person came forward to “sell” her to the police. Nearly two months later, High Court Judge Kabazo Chanda decreed that the conviction was unlawful and lifted the three columnists’ jail sentences.

### **We Cannot All See the World Through Your Eyes**

Sichone saw herself as a champion of the people. Frequently in the forefront of conflict with police and government authorities, she put herself at risk to help ordinary Zambians. For her, the protection of human rights was an active process, not one that could be undertaken simply behind a desk or through the distribution of a study or pamphlet. Although it was “not done,”<sup>62</sup> Sichone criticized some Zambian NGOs which she felt did not live up to their stated goal of protecting human rights, but were instead “empty drums who make useless noise [in order to secure] permanent and pensionable employment [for themselves.]”<sup>63</sup> In particular, she chastised the Human Rights Commission (HRC) for directing Zambians whose rights had been abused in the workplace to file with the Industrial Relations Court (IRC), which required a K26,000 filing fee before proceeding — equal to the annual pay for a Zambian civil servant.<sup>64</sup> Unless it was offering to pay these people’s legal fees, she thought the HRC was offering them no help whatsoever:

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<sup>60</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 11 March 1996. As cited by Mbozi, p. 68.

<sup>61</sup> The average yearly income in Zambia is US \$395.

<sup>62</sup> Mbozi, p. 124.

<sup>63</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 1 December 1997. As cited by Mbozi, p. 125. The NGOs she was attacking included the Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP) and the Zambia Independent Monitoring Team (ZIMT), two organisations that monitor Zambian elections and lobby for democratic process; the Inter-African Network for Human Rights and Development (AFRINET), which works to facilitate networking and dissemination of information among African NGOs; and the Non-Governmental Organisations’ Coordinating Committee (NGOCC), which, according to <[www.ngocc.org.zm](http://www.ngocc.org.zm)>, “champions women empowerment and gender equality” through coordinating the activities and resources of various Zambian NGOs.

<sup>64</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 20 July 1998. As cited in Mbozi, p. 126.

*The abuse of rights [is due to] the fact that the victims have no redress in a country in which the judicial system is not only irrelevant to the common man but obscenely expensive, a country that has priced the industrial tribunal beyond its constituents, a government that sets up a Commission for human rights that is a fallacy to mock victims of abuse.*<sup>65</sup>

In response to these criticisms, Nagande Mwananjiti, the executive director of AFRONET, wrote “The trend among global human rights groups is to specialize ... we cannot all run legal clinics or else other areas will be left wanting.”<sup>66</sup>

It may be said that Sichone wrote and acted in the extreme — she steamrolled over the arguments of the opposition and physically put herself at risk by confronting authority head-on, armed with nothing more than a weekly newspaper column and her own sense of injustice and outrage. For all her work for the downtrodden, Sichone seemed to have had little tolerance, or patience, for those whose actions and beliefs did not resemble her own — and certainly not when it came to what should be done for the development of her country and people. Whether it meant attacking the students of the next generation as dim and passive for failing to demonstrate against Pastor Nevers Mumba, the former vice president of Zambia,<sup>67</sup> or publicly disdaining her former colleagues who remained loyal to UNIP (after she resigned) as the “living dead,”<sup>68</sup> she was particularly critical of those who came from backgrounds similar to hers and yet made different choices.

“We cannot all see the world through your eyes, Lucy,” General Benjamin Mibenge once wrote in a letter to *The Post*. “I wish you successful crusading.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Mbozi, p. 126.

<sup>66</sup> “Letters to the Editor.” *The Post*. 4 December 1997. As cited in Mbozi, p. 126.

<sup>67</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 17 August 1998. As cited in Mbozi, pp. 8-9.

<sup>68</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 30 December 1996. As cited in Mbozi, p. 21.

<sup>69</sup> “Letters to the Editor.” *The Post*. 3 January 1997. As cited in Mbozi, p. 21.

**“One of the Most Courageous Human Rights Activists”<sup>70</sup>**

Sichone spent the last years of her life in declining health. But despite her illness and lack of energy, she would not break her commitment to the rural poor of Zambia. In the communities where she held her workshops, she had become something of a celebrity — to the point that her inability to attend a workshop, for illness or other reasons, caused widespread disappointment. According to Mbozi, for some people it seemed “just taking a glimpse at Sichone whom they had heard so much about would satisfy them .... For us organizers we were sure of getting attention, admiration and pride when we identified ourselves as associates of Sichone as a person rather than with ZCEA as an NGO.”<sup>71</sup>

On August 23, 1998, Sichone died, reportedly from pneumonia. When the public heard of Sichone’s death, “it seemed as if a dark cloud had descended on the country.”<sup>72</sup> Newspapers printed letters from people mourning her passing, and prominent Zambians, including Kenneth Kaunda, described her death as a “tragedy,” and a “terrible loss.”<sup>73</sup> Against popular opinion, the government refused to grant Sichone a state funeral.

Certainly, Sichone left a bad taste in some people’s mouths. She was confrontational and professed outrageous and polarizing opinions, more so than is customary in public life. But this made her popular with others, and also widely known. Indeed, were it not for her untimely death, Sichone might have run for president as an independent in 2001. She told journalist Gideon Thole, “The best way I can improve the people’s welfare, is by being the head of state and I’m preparing myself to do just that.”<sup>74</sup> (It is noteworthy that the late president of Zambia, Levy Mwanawasa, had a similar background to Sichone: born and brought up in the Copperbelt province, Mwanawasa attended University of Zambia from 1970-1973 where he received a BA in law, and practiced as a lawyer before being elected president on the MMD ticket; he was not, however, a Rhodes Scholar.)<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> “Lucy was an Inspiration.” September 2008. *Legal Resources Foundation*. 4 April 2008 <[www.lrf.org.zm/Newsletter/September/lucy.html](http://www.lrf.org.zm/Newsletter/September/lucy.html)>.

<sup>71</sup> Mbozi, p. 34.

<sup>72</sup> Mbozi, p. 151.

<sup>73</sup> Gideon Thole. “Zambia: Lucy Banda Sichone — champion of human rights.” *ANB-BIA Supplement*, Issue/Edition Nr 357 — 1 December 1998. 25 January 2007 <<http://ospiti.peacelink.it/anb-bia/nr357/e09.html>>.

<sup>74</sup> Thole, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup><sup>75</sup> President Mwanawasa died on August 19, 2008. Since taking office in January 2002 he had come to be regarded as one of Africa’s most progressive leaders.

It is also interesting to note that in her industriousness, her determination and her magnified sense of self-importance, Sichone was not unlike Cecil Rhodes, who was himself a controversial figure. Like Rhodes, she had a gift for bringing people together and igniting their passions — whether for or against her — as well as tendency to bend, and often break, rules that did not suit her. Yet Sichone always rooted for the underdog — indeed, she was herself an underdog — and in that, their paths diverge.

Had Sichone submitted her application to the Rhodes Scholarship in these last few decades of applicant “grooming,” it is debatable whether she would have been selected. By today’s standards her CV was hardly illustrious, and her writing, certainly not up to snuff. It is true also that her Rhodes Scholarship and Oxford degree did not provide a “passport to success” in conventional terms — as one obituary mentioned, few of the people who touched her daily life knew she had studied at Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship.<sup>76</sup> Instead, the “introductions” Sichone reaped were political and cultural, for if Oxford made her conscious of disparity, it also opened her eyes to possibilities for change. Although Sichone surely had her tongue in her cheek when she acknowledged her extensive education as her “greatest mistake,” it may be that the understanding she acquired also set her on a long and rocky path. She once wrote: “It is the hope of seeing justice done one of these days that makes the ... depression [born of watching the top Zambian executives grow rich from privatization while the rest of the country continues to starve] bearable; at any rate, I do get some relief from writing even if nobody else is listening.”<sup>77</sup>

But people clearly were listening, in Zambia and beyond. In her lifetime, Sichone’s work won her the “Courage in Journalism” Award from the International Women’s Media Foundation as well as the Media Resource Council’s Patriotic Citizen Prize. She also received the International Bar Association’s Bernard Simons Award — regarded as the most prestigious award in the field of international law.

And, in a non-industrialized, non-western country, it may be argued that her voice rang out louder and more clearly than it would have had she settled in the U.K. or North America — as did so many of her fellow Rhodes counterparts.

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<sup>76</sup> “Lucy was an inspiration.” *Legal Resources Foundation*. September 1998. 11 June 2007. <<http://www.lrf.org.zm/Newsletter/September/lucy.html>>.

<sup>77</sup> “Lucy on Monday.” *The Post*. 28 February 1998. As cited by Mbozi, p. 137.