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Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia: The Times and The Man (Book Review)

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Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia: The Times and The Man, by Fergus MacPherson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

The lives of only a few leaders are completely intertwined in the evolution of their country from foreign domination to independence and in the early years of the new state's independence. Their lives record a significant part of the history of a country and a people. Such is the life of Kenneth David Kaunda, President of the Republic of Zambia. Fergus MacPherson, in his *Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia*, has recorded in one volume the colonial background of the period of Zambia which was the era when the Zambian president was born. He mixes this with facts about President Kaunda's parents and early family life not known to the general public. The book is at its best in recording in some detail the early political life of President Kaunda up to independence. The author has captured the fast-moving trend that took Kaunda from the African National Congress to the State House in 1964. Professor MacPherson has also managed to catch the special sparkle of Kenneth Kaunda. The readers obtain a sense of Kaunda's personality from this book. While the focus of the book is naturally Kenneth Kaunda, I regret that the author was not able to give more attention to his wife, Betty. Some of us who have closely followed Kaunda's career believe that his wife has had more than routine influence on his political values.

This book is well documented and is valuable for students and others interested in pursuing specific matters in greater detail. It would have been more comprehensive if the author had been able to include a chapter on the relationships of this African leader with leaders in other parts of the world. Kaunda not only corresponds with leaders in all parts of the world but influences them.

In my opinion, history has already guaranteed a place in the hierarchy for Kaunda: in his short lifetime, he has been the founding father of a nonracial state in southern Africa! Now he faces even greater challenges as he uses his considerable skills to find just solutions for the problems of Rhodesia and South Africa. The author was not able to include these subjects in his book because Kaunda's role was just beginning to evolve when he wrote this book. The events in southern Africa in 1974, 1975 and 1976 give every indication that Kaunda may be able to play a historic role in resolving some of the tensions that have plagued this part of the world too long.

MacPherson's work is a first-rate book on a man of considerable nobility. It should be required reading not only for students of African affairs but for all interested in one of the most strategically located countries in Africa. Although several biographies of Kaunda have been published by now, MacPherson's is the first major comprehensive work on Kenneth David Kaunda of Zambia.

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