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Transnational Migration and Pan-African Solidarity: the case of the Central African Federation, 1953-1963¹

Abstract

The Federation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland was declared in 1953, linking the three territories of central Africa politically and economically. The decision went against the wishes of the African majority, particularly in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, where Federation was viewed as an opportunity to extend white settler domination north of the Zambezi. The territories had a history of close association prior to 1953, connected by flows of migrant labour to the urban and industrial economies of the south. Anti-federation sentiment served to unite African political interests in central Africa in the 1950s, bringing about a moment of Pan-African solidarity between the African Congress parties that has remained largely unexplored by historians. This paper inquires into transnational political networks and highlights the influence of ‘northern’ nationalists on African politics during the Federation period. This study complicates the nationalist histories of central Africa and contributes to research on Pan-Africanism, African diasporas, and the impact of cross border mobility on central African politics.

Introduction

The central and southern African region has a rich history of migration. From the mid to late nineteenth, and throughout the twentieth century, central Africa supplied a vast amount of the labour for the southern African economic region. Such widespread mobility had important consequences in terms of the social, political and economic development of the countries within this region, throughout the colonial period and beyond.² International and internal migrations also played an important role in the

¹ This paper is based on the final chapter of my PhD thesis, ‘Malawians in Colonial Salisbury: A Social History of Migration in Central Africa, c.1920s-1960s’, Keele University, 2011.

² As Leroy Vail described: ‘The links that were rapidly constructed to weld together the various territories of this region – and their societies – included ties of finance, trade, political influence, and, especially, migrant labour.’ L. Vail, *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California, 1989), p.7.

growth of national and pan-African consciousness. The practicalities of achieving national liberation in southern Africa, also depended, in part, on the connections and support provided by neighbours and the frontline states. While current scholarship has begun to address the entangled histories of liberation in the region, the transnational character and significance of Malawian nationalism in central Africa during the late colonial era has been overlooked.

This paper explores the consequences of transnational connections, in terms of the development of African nationalist movements in the central African territories of Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia in the 1950s and early 1960s. Nyasaland (Malawi), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) were united from 1953 to 1963 by an economic and political union - the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Yet histories of nationalism in these countries have paid little regard to the association between African political movements, both prior to, during, and after the 'Central African Federation.'³ In part, this is due to the very different colonial circumstances in each territory, and their vastly different postcolonial trajectories. The settler population of Southern Rhodesia was granted minority rule by the British in 1923, whereas Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia were British Protectorates granted independence soon after the break-up of Federation. Besides these important distinctions, common experiences of migration and colonialism helped to nurture a period of collaboration and pan-African solidarity between the nationalist movements of central Africa. The Federation was created against the wishes of the African

³ Officially called 'the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland', but referred to more commonly as 'the Central African Federation'. For histories of these countries during this period see, Richard Gray, *The Two Nations: Aspects of the Development of Race relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960); Robert Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: the Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); David Birmingham and Terence Ranger, 'Settlers and Liberators in the South, 1953-1980', D. Birmingham and P. M. Martin (eds.), *History of Central Africa, Volume Two*, (London: Longman, 1983), pp.336-382.

majority. Yet, it served to unite African political interests and gave new impetus to the anti-colonial struggle in the region.

JoAnn McGregor has written eloquently on the continued importance of the migration history for Zimbabwe, and the historical and contemporary role of diaspora politics, at home and abroad.⁴ In response to the publication of a new national history of Zimbabwe⁵, she asks the pertinent question: ‘If modern territorial nationalist ideas have developed partly through transnational flows of people, ideas and connections, is it possible to write a history of nationalism in a way that is sensitive to context, plurality and contestation through a narrative that is restricted by state borders?’ My own doctoral thesis sought to demonstrate how processes, such as nationalism, cannot be fully understood without research which transcends national boundaries.⁶ Jeffrey Ahlman’s piece on ‘Nkrumah, Southern Africa and the Eclipse of a Decolonising Africa’ is an excellent example of recent scholarship which explores transnational dialogues across the continent, shaping anti-colonial politics in the region.

The themes of transnational migration and Pan-Africanism frame this paper, which seeks to make a new contribution to scholarship on social, political and cultural forces that did not fit neatly with the dominant narratives of nationalist historiography in the 1960s and 1970s.⁷ Through the use of colonial archives, newspapers, nationalist magazines and biographical accounts, the article will show how the alliance between Central African Congress movements was important for several reasons. External branches strengthened the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC), and their influence

⁴ J. McGregor, ‘Rethinking the Boundaries of the Nation: Histories of Cross Border Mobility and Zimbabwe’s New ‘Diaspora’’, *Critical African Studies* 6 (Online:2012)

⁵ Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo (ed) *Becoming Zimbabwe* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2010).

⁶ Z. Groves, ‘Malawians in colonial Salisbury: A Social History of Migration in Central Africa, c.1920s-1960s’, PhD Thesis, Keele University (2011).

⁷ See, for example, Gewalt, J.B., Hinfelaar, M., Macola, G. (eds) *Living the End of Empire: Politics and Society in Late Colonial Zambia*. (Leiden: Brill, 2011). For an early discussion on the shortcomings of national histories, see Donald Denoon and Adam Kuper, ‘Nationalist historians in search of a Nation: The New Historiography in Dar Es Salaam’, *African Affairs*, 69, 277 (1970) pp.329-349.

helped to radicalise the more moderate Southern Rhodesian African National Congress (SRANC). Ties between the movements also led to more repressive action on behalf of the Federal and territorial governments, particularly during the 1959 'Emergencies' in Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The first section of the paper will describe the background to the creation of federation and early African political movements in central Africa. It then looks at the anti-federation movement and efforts to co-ordinate a central African campaign of resistance, inspired by Pan-Africanism around the continent in the mid to late 1950s. Finally, conclusions are drawn about the impact of Malawian nationalism and pan-African solidarity in the anti-colonial struggles of central Africa.

Central African Connections before 1953

Of the three central African territories, Nyasaland had the strongest tradition of out-migration. At first mainly young men left from the north, but later the southern and central provinces also provided migrant labour for the mines and commercial farms of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.⁸ Migrants were away from home for periods of between two months and thirty years. Others never returned and became known in Nyasaland as *Machona* - the lost ones. Migrants took with them particular religious and cultural associations which spread throughout the region. Certain religious expressions and social movements were also brought back to Nyasaland by returning migrants, most notably the Watch Tower and the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, initially started in Cape Town by the northern Nyasa Clements

⁸ Nyasa migrants also went to the Copperbelt and Northern Rhodesian towns and mines from the 1920s onwards, and to a lesser degree Elisabethville in the Belgian Congo, and to the Sisal Estates and plantations of Tanganyika. Some men took their wives with them, depending on the accommodation provided. Women later migrated in greater numbers on their own.

Kadalie, and later spreading to Southern Rhodesia in the 1920s, by which time migrant networks throughout the region were well established.

Early African political associations were established in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, prior to World War Two. Many were formed by returned labour migrants, often those with a mission education from either the Livingstonia Mission in the north of Nyasaland, or the Blantyre Mission in the south. By 1933 fifteen 'native associations' had been formed in Nyasaland by educated Nyasa men working as clerks, evangelists and teachers. Nyasa civil servants were the first to establish similar groups, known as 'welfare associations' in Northern Rhodesia. Prominent founding member of the Ndola group, Ernest Alexander Muwamba, was in fact closely related to ICU founder Kadalie and the colonial authorities closely monitored correspondence between them and other Nyasas referred to by the Secretary for Native Affairs as 'professional agitators'.⁹ Intended as vehicles of protest and to advise chiefs and Native Authorities (who represented African opinion to the colonial government), these associations mimicked the structure of political groups encountered by migrant workers elsewhere in the region.

The concept of 'closer association' between the Rhodesias and Nyasaland long predated the creation of the Central African Federation in 1953.¹⁰ Formal plans for amalgamation were initially proposed by the settler communities of Northern and Southern Rhodesia in the 1920s, and again in the late 1930s. Southern Rhodesian settlers were at first hesitant over proposals to amalgamate with the 'black north' where Africans under British Protectorate status benefited from a more progressive 'African policy'.¹¹ Nonetheless, the economic benefits of 'closer association' helped

⁹ Rotberg, p.131

¹⁰ For a more detailed account of the lead up to Federation, see: C. Leys and C. Pratt (eds.), *A New Deal in Central Africa*, (London: Heinemann, 1960).

¹¹ The Southern Rhodesian 'Native Policy' was more in line with South African policy of racial segregation.

to sell the idea to the settlers and in 1937 the Bledisloe Commission was sent by the British to hear views on amalgamation from each of the territories.

Strong opposition, particularly in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, was expressed from virtually every section of African society. Chiefs in particular were fearful of land alienation and there were concerns that amalgamation would lead to an increase in labour migration, guaranteeing the supplies of labour needed for the Rhodesian industries, whilst holding back further the development of Nyasaland. Most significantly for educated elites, it was feared that amalgamation would mean a step backwards along the path to self-government. Southern Rhodesia was viewed by Africans in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia as, '...a conquered country, [where] the Africans have no voice.'¹² A petition drafted by Charles Matinga of the 'Blantyre Native Association' and presented to the British government in 1935, described Southern Rhodesia as 'anti-native'.¹³ The Bledisloe Commission listened to the complaints voiced by Native Associations and Native Authorities, and recommended that amalgamation should not be imposed against the will of the African majority.

As WW2 came to a close proposals were again brought to the Colonial Office table by the white settler communities of Northern and Southern Rhodesia. By this stage the Nyasaland African Congress had come into being. Along with the Bantu Congress in Southern Rhodesia, both groups were modelled on the South African National Congress. The idea was to unite individual African associations underneath one banner and to become 'the mouth piece of the Africans.'¹⁴ Demonstrative of their inclusive ideology at this early stage, founding member James Frederick Sangala

¹² Malawi National Archives (MNA), Transmittal files, 'Federation of Nyasaland and Rhodesias: Views of Nyasaland Africans in Northern Rhodesia'.

¹³ Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism*, p.123.

¹⁴ Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism*, p.184.

invited all Africans who resided in, but had not necessarily been born in Nyasaland to join.¹⁵

In 1944, the Southern Rhodesian Bantu Congress reiterated the opposition of its members to amalgamation of the three territories if it meant extending the 'Native Policy' of Southern Rhodesia 'to their brothers in the north.'¹⁶ That same year the idea of linking the Southern Rhodesian Bantu Congress with the emergent movement in Nyasaland was first voiced.¹⁷ It was agreed that the next step should be to join their efforts in achieving full rights for Africans throughout central Africa.¹⁸ Membership of both organisations, it was stressed, should be broad and inclusive, transcending ethnic or regional affiliations. Their joint sentiments were clear: any effective challenge to white settler domination would need to come from a united African organisation.¹⁹

A Northern Rhodesian African Congress did not come into existence until slightly later in 1948. Soon after its formation, the organisation protested vehemently against the new proposals to form a 'Central African Federation'. Anti-federation sentiments were much stronger in the northern territories than in Southern Rhodesia. This was clearly articulated in the memorandum drafted in 1949 by Hastings Kamuzu Banda and Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, both future leaders of their prospective national congress movements.²⁰ Both Banda from Nyasaland and Nkumbula from Northern Rhodesia were based in London at the time. Nkumbula was educated at Makerere University College in Uganda before receiving a scholarship to study at the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ranger, 'Are We Not Also Men?', p.98.

¹⁸ The majority of this correspondence is found in the Samkange Archive which remains closed. These archives were used extensively by T. Ranger. Ibid.

¹⁹ On these instructions, Charles Matinga founding member of the Nyasaland Congress travelled to South Africa to try and persuade Dr A. B. Xuma of the South African National Congress, to sponsor a Pan-African Congress. While on this visit he also encouraged Nyasas in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Bulawayo to support Congress back at home.

²⁰ Hastings Kamuzu Banda and Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, *Federation in Central Africa* (1949)

University of London. Banda practiced as a GP and had been advising the Nyasaland Congress from a distance for some time, having first represented them at the 1945 Pan-African Congress in Manchester. By 1950 Banda kept much closer contact with the Congress leaders in Nyasaland and was an important source of funding for the organisation.

Hopes to establish a Central African Congress faded when delegates were sent to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa in the late 1940s to create external branches of the Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesian Congress. The move to convene separate congress meetings according to territorial origin, rather than encourage membership of a single movement was interpreted by Thompson Samkange, leader of the SRBC as, 'a resurgence of the old enemy of the Africans – tribalism.'²¹ Samkange urged the Nyasaland executive to work towards a 'Central Inter-Territory African Congress.'²² However, keenly aware of the financial contribution to be made from migrant remittances abroad, Matinga and Sangala sought to strengthen their national movement by building on the migrant networks already in place throughout the region. In the 1950s, the Mashonaland and Johannesburg branches became a crucial source of financial support, particularly after Dr Banda withdrew his personal contributions, following his departure from Britain to the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1953.

Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesian congress branches opened in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa over the course of the next few years. Membership of these branches was at first relatively small, and the tone of their meetings was moderate. Migrant networks made it possible to create outposts of the new Congress movement throughout the Federal territories and beyond. By the mid to late 1950s,

²¹ Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men?*, p.101

²² *Ibid.*

areas where Nyasas had established significant diaspora communities (including South Africa and Tanganyika) and districts in Nyasaland of a strong migrant tradition, constituted some of the most influential and popular branches of the Nyasaland African Congress.²³

Efforts to unify the three Central African movements into one Congress failed in the 1940s. Nonetheless, the early phase of collaboration between the Nyasaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesian Congresses illustrates the importance of extra-territorial networks in building a successful political movement. These links later proved vital to the achievements of the Nyasaland African Congress in the late 1950s and simultaneously helped to radicalise the more moderate Southern Rhodesian movement. Samkange and Jacha proudly asserted the strength of the Bantu Congress, suggesting that Southern Rhodesian leaders could be reliable spokesmen for all Africans in Central Africa.²⁴ However, despite proclamations of their size and influence, the Southern Rhodesian Bantu Congress was criticised in the columns of the *Bantu Mirror* as the weakest of the three main Congress movements in southern Africa (compared to the Nyasaland and South Africa National Congresses).²⁵ Similarly, while the Nyasaland Congress had the aspiration of working on a territorial-wide basis, ‘nothing was organised on a national scale, despite many speeches of resistance.’²⁶

²³ Nyasaland Congress strongholds included Blantyre, Lilongwe, Nkata Bay, Salisbury, Bulawayo, Lusaka and Orlando, Johannesburg. TNA CO 1015/1748 ‘Nyasaland Intelligence Report, January 1958’

²⁴ T. Ranger, (1995), p.99.

²⁵ Ibid, p.120.

²⁶ J. McCracken ‘African Politics in Twentieth Century Malawi’, T.O. Ranger (ed.) *Aspects of Central African History*, (London: Heinemann, 1968), p.203. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis*, p.72.

The Anti-Federation Campaign, 1953-1959

Common experiences of working and living in Southern Rhodesia shaped attitudes towards federation in the northern territories. A statement by the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), one of the most popularly attended churches in Nyasaland, explained:

The people may not be particularly articulate or active...but they see Federation making Nyasaland like Southern Rhodesia or South Africa. Almost every family has a member who has worked there. They don't want that kind of white domination, race segregation and discrimination here.²⁷

However, popular antagonism towards the threat of Federation was not enough at this stage to execute a sustained programme of resistance.

In 1953, Harry Nkumbula, leader of the Northern Rhodesian Congress, called for a meeting of the three territorial movements, in an attempt to coordinate a joint course of action. Unanimously, they agreed to launch a campaign of civil disobedience and passive resistance, although the campaign in Southern Rhodesia never really took off. Opposition to Federation was less clearly articulated there than in the northern territories. Local political organisations were preoccupied with territorial matters, such as the effects of Land Apportionment and the 1946 Urban Areas Act. African politics in Southern Rhodesia in the early 1950s was divided between ethnically-based regional groups, infant trade unions and the 'polite politics' of educated elites. Furthermore, the popularity of locally based organisations overshadowed the legitimacy of the Southern Rhodesian Bantu Congress as a national movement. By the early 1950s the organisation had become increasingly inactive and lacking in direction. Members were ambivalent on the subject of Federation, which unlike earlier plans for amalgamation, came with the promises of inter-racial 'partnership'. Just as Africans in the north were fearful of Southern Rhodesian settler

²⁷ Rhodes House Library (RHL) Box 239/8, Statement of the Synod of Blantyre of the CCAP Concerning the Present State of Unrest in Nyasaland, 1953.

control, a number of educated Africans in the south hoped that closer association with the more liberal protectorates of the north could help to improve their position in settler society.

Demonstrations against Federation in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia were more radical and involved chiefs' resignations, the boycotting of labour recruiters and in some cases violent clashes with the authorities. The Nyasaland Congress endorsed a programme of non-cooperation and action was decided by a supreme council set up under the control of Chief Gomani from Ncheu District. Gomani was later removed by the Nyasaland Government, provoking a violent response in a number of districts.²⁸ Troops were called in from Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Tanganyika to quell the violence, yet the use of Southern Rhodesian forces further exacerbated the fears of white settler domination under the new Federal government. By 1954 the Nyasaland Congress had conceded defeat and called an end to their campaign. The quiet which followed signalled, 'the end of round one' and intelligence kept close surveillance over those who were 'fanatical in their insistence on full African rights...'²⁹

Divisions between the African organisations, as well as within them, further hampered their ability to build a unified challenge to the implementation of federation. After the initial incidents in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia in 1953, there were few moments of explicit African opposition displayed towards Federation until 1956.

The changing nature of urban politics in Southern Rhodesia in the mid 1950s was illustrated through the transition of popular support from the Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (RICU) to the Salisbury City Youth League in

²⁸ The National Archives, (UK) CAB/129/98, 'Report of the Nyasaland Commission of Inquiry, 6 April, 1959' (The Devlin Commission), p.11. See also, J. Power, *Political Culture and Nationalism: Building Kwacha*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010), pp.55-74.

²⁹ RHL, Welensky Papers, Box 239/8, Federal Intelligence and Security Bureau (FISB), Report by Mr Spicer on Nyasaland, September, 1953.

1956. The City Youth League was founded by a group of educated Africans who had reached the limits of upward social and occupational mobility. It was an alliance of frustrated teachers, shop-keepers and white collar workers, dissatisfied with the political strategy of the RICU and unconvinced by the promises of partnership promised by Federation. James Chikerema, George Nyandoro and Paul Mushonga headed the group. Dunduzu Chisiza from Nyasaland, resident in Salisbury at the time where he worked as a clerk for the Indian High Commission, was also a founding member of the organisation. That same year he was later deported from Southern Rhodesia because of his involvement in youth league politics, but he went on to play an instrumental role in bringing together the agendas of the two Congress movements in Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia. Leaders of the Youth League transformed their organisation into a national movement in 1957 by amalgamating with the revived Southern Rhodesian African National Congress, re-launched under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo. The Southern Rhodesian Congress looked to strengthen its support base and co-ordinate a Pan-African anti-federation campaign. This change marked the beginning of a more radical phase in Southern Rhodesian nationalist politics and a closer association between the three territorial nationalist movements in central Africa.

The central body of the Nyasaland African Congress also enjoyed a renewal of its membership in the mid 1950s. Congress activities had been quiet on the national scene, but things began to change in 1955 when acts of defiance again became part of a coordinated programme of political resistance.³⁰ Firstly, this was seen in the Northern Province under the initiative of Flax Katobe Musopole.³¹ A returned migrant

³⁰ It has been suggested that whilst the central body of NAC was experiencing a quiet phase, some of the individual branches were busy building up important grass roots support in their localities. See J. Power, 'Building Relevance: the Blantyre Congress, 1953-56' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 28,1, (2002) pp.45-65.

³¹ McCracken, 'The Ambiguities of Nationalism'.

worker from South Africa, Musopole was described by the authorities as ‘a known Communist sympathiser’. He had been closely involved with the South African ANC and the Defiance Campaign in 1952, which influenced his political career on his return to Nyasaland. Musopole was later joined in the Northern Province by Gilbert Kumtumanje, President of the Mashonaland Province branch of the Nyasaland Congress prior to his expulsion from Southern Rhodesia in December 1957. Kumtumanje had lived in Salisbury for ten years following service as a corporeal medical orderly during World War Two. He and Musopole, along with other emerging Congress members Kanyama Chiume and R. R. Chumia, reinvigorated and opened new branches throughout the Northern Province, building up a particularly substantial following in Karonga and Nkata Bay.³²

Another group of deportees, Makandawire, Lackson Kumwenda and V. H. Chikama opened new Congress branches in Mzimba district in 1957.³³ These men had taken part in disturbances on the Copperbelt in Northern Rhodesia. By 1958 the Northern Province was noted by intelligence reports as the Nyasaland Congress stronghold, boasting twenty-six registered branches organised by ‘extremist elements’, with the full support of the majority of chiefs and Native Authorities.³⁴

Henry Masauko Chipembere was a prominent member of Congress most active in the Southern Province. Chipembere was one of several African nationalists to have studied at Fort Hare University in South Africa. He returned to Nyasaland in 1955 and later recalled his time there:

Fort Hare remained the training ground of future leaders in South Africa. There was...enough political activity and awareness to transform each student into a

³² Chiume, Musopole and Chumia were described in one Intelligence Digest as ‘the main driving force’ behind Congress in the Northern Province. The National Archives (UK) CO 1015/1748 ‘Nyasaland African Congress Intelligence Reports’, Extract from Nyasaland Intelligence Report for the Quarter Ending 31 December 1957.

³³ Ibid. Extract from Nyasaland Police Intelligence, Digest from November 1957.

³⁴ The National Archives CO 1015/1980 ‘Extract from Nyasaland Intelligence Report from January, 1958’

much more radicalised and politically enlightened person by the time he completed his studies. The vast majority of African leaders in South Africa and, for some time, in Central Africa, were alumni of Fort Hare. I became one when I returned to Malawi.³⁵

Chipembere was elected to the Legislative Council along with Kanyama Chiume who had recently returned to Nyasaland from East Africa. Chiume studied education at Makerere University College in Uganda and like Chipembere, had been active in student politics before returning home and working within the Nyasaland Congress. This new generation of nationalists, including Dunduzu Chisiza, collectively became to be known as ‘the Young Turks’. They injected a new vigour and inspiration into the central executive and sought to re-establish ties with the newly re-launched Southern Rhodesian ANC and their counterparts in Northern Rhodesia.

A large number of nationalists to join the Northern Rhodesian ANC had also been educated abroad in South Africa, Uganda, the UK and India, during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Simon Kapwepwe, Nalumino Mundia and Munukayumbwa Sipalo were among those who became involved in Congress activities on their return. The extension of Congress influence, not just within each territory but between them, was a growing concern to the colonial and federal authorities. Colonial Office Intelligence reported how ‘nearly all of the Congress leaders have gained experience by travelling in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, some of them have been to east Africa and a few to the UK...’³⁶

With the hope and excitement generated by Ghanaian independence in 1957, anti-colonial activity intensified.³⁷ Nyasaland African Congress President, T.D.T

³⁵ R. Rotberg (ed.), *Hero of the Nation. Chipembere of Malawi: An Autobiography*, (Blantyre: Kachere Press, 2002) p.137. Also, see T. Ranger, ‘*Are We Not Also Men?*’ p.105-6. A number of Southern Rhodesians at Fort Hare protested in 1945 about the fact that senior teaching positions in schools would be closed to Africans.

³⁶ The National Archives CO 1015/1748 ‘Nyasaland African Congress Intelligence Reports’, Letter from Sir Robert Armitage (Governor of Nyasaland) to Alan Lennox-Boyd, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4 October 1957.

³⁷ Ahlman described the ‘unparalleled optimism both inside and outside the continent about what Ghana’s independence meant to the future of Africa and Africa’s place in the burgeoning post-war

Banda visited Ghana in February that year and returned proclaiming full ‘moral and material support’ from Kwame Nkrumah and Dr Banda ‘for the Nyasalanders in their fight against Federation.’³⁸ His visit raised concern that external influences had resuscitated their interest in the future development of self-government for Africans in Nyasaland. Subsequently, the Federal government moved an intelligence officer to Nyasaland, stationed within the Special Branch, to keep a closer eye on events such as the formation of ‘Action Groups’. Labelled ‘the brain child’ of the Northern Rhodesian Congress central executive, action groups had gone into operation on their own in the recent beer hall boycotts: ‘...the work of these branches during the boycotts showed a high degree of organisation, including the use of children, teenagers and women for overt action to impede the forces of law and order...’³⁹

Intelligence agents in Nyasaland monitored a group known as the ‘Kwaca Boys and Freedom Fighters’, essentially a gang of ‘young hooligans’ (or more strongly, referred to as ‘terrorists’) based in the Blantyre area.⁴⁰ Youths would gather to sing anti-federation songs and hold processions at Congress meetings. On encouragement from the Congress leaders they spread anti-Federation propaganda and were reported to intimidate those who refused to join their local branches. A correspondent from the London *Observer* noted the ‘secret and brooding resentment of the African’ in Nyasaland and suggested that anti-Federation feeling in Nkata Bay and conditions in the Northern Province were such that they bore a greater resemblance to the circumstances of the Kikuyu rebellion, than any other part of Africa.⁴¹ The events of the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya were still fresh in the minds of colonial officials. Having seen the intelligence reports on the extremist activities of

international community.’ J. S. Ahlman, ‘Road to Ghana: Nkrumah, Southern Africa and the Eclipse of a Decolonising Africa’, *Kronos* 6, p.24

³⁸ TNA CO 1015/1748 Extract from Intelligence Digest No.4 1957.

³⁹ Ibid. Correspondence between Robert Armitage and Alan Lennox-Boyd, 4 October 1957.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Action Groups in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

⁴¹ Ibid. Extract from Nyasaland Intelligence Reports from the Quarter Ending 31 December 1957.

the Northern Rhodesian action groups, calls were made for ‘firm, prompt and exemplary action in dealing with people like the ‘Kwaca [sic] Boys’.⁴² Recognition of the Nyasaland Congress as the mouthpiece of African opinion in Nyasaland was withdrawn soon after.

Meetings of the Nyasaland Congress branches in Southern Rhodesia were well attended by Africans from throughout the Federation. Through the medium of singing, dancing and drumming and some impassioned speeches, the Nyasaland Congress captured the attention of a wider section of African urban society. Nyasa A.C. Malifa was thought to be the driving force behind the Mashonaland branch of the Nyasaland Congress, ‘the most active branch in Southern Rhodesia’, known for its ‘considerable financial support to the central body in Nyasaland.’⁴³ He was described by the Federal Intelligence and Security Bureau (FISB) as:

a militant African nationalist whose activities as an executive of the African National Congress in Southern Rhodesia have been noted for the last five years... Malifa is regarded as the leader of the Nyasas in this colony and the danger of his continued residence here lies in his ability to incite Africans resident in this colony to follow the course of subversion dictated by African National Congress of Nyasaland.⁴⁴

From 1958 the external branches of the Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesian Congresses became an important channel for the coordination of the anti-Federation campaign in all three territories. Combined Congress meetings became more frequent and were arranged between the executive committees. The central committees were not always in agreement on how best to proceed as was clear from the rejection of proposals put forward by Harry Nkumbula in 1957 to amalgamate the two northern movements. Suggestions were also made at this time to form stronger ties with the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) because it was felt they shared similar

⁴² TNA CO 1015/1748 Comments by E. M. Hall 7 October 1957.

⁴³ RHL FISB Affairs Box 239/8 ‘Memorandum concerning Joshua Chirwa Wellington MALIFA’ 1 August 1956.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

aspirations.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, by 1958 a strong assertion, if not always a full demonstration of Pan-Africanism, underlined the strategies of all three territorial nationalist movements.

A Federal Constitutional Review was due to be held in 1960 and Roy Welensky's ambitions to transform the Federation into a white-controlled Dominion, free from British control, were clear. The northern nationalist leaders were determined not to allow their protests to be sidelined. As the Young Turks of the Nyasaland Congress upped the level of the anti-federation campaign, they called for the return of Dr Banda to lead their movement. Disillusioned with the British following the introduction of Federation in 1953, Banda had moved to Kumasi in the Gold Coast to practice medicine. On receiving these calls from his colleagues, Banda was eventually persuaded by Nkrumah to return to Nyasaland. He arrived back in July 1958 and was greeted by a crowd of three thousand, demonstrating new levels of support for the nationalist movement. Kanyama Chiume proclaimed: 'the symbol of Nyasa independence has returned!'⁴⁶

Later that year Banda and a number of central African Congress officials attended the All Africa Peoples Conference in Accra, one year after Ghana's independence.⁴⁷ African leaders gathered from across the continent under the banner of Pan-African unity and it was decided that firm action should be taken to break up the Central African Federation. Nkrumah promised material and moral support for the Nyasaland Congress. The conference was attended by over 250 delegates and on the agenda was: anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-racialism, African unity and

⁴⁵ Ibid. Nyasaland Intelligence Report, November 1956 to January 1957.

⁴⁶ P. Short, *Banda*, (London: Routledge, 1974), p.89.

⁴⁷ A declaration had been made at the conference that full support would be given to, 'all fighters for freedom in Africa.' Colin Baker suggested that this declaration was significant: while the nationalists in southern Africa advocated the use of non-violent means in order to gain independence they went one step further at this conference, claiming they would not rule out the use of force in retaliation, or if peaceful means did not gain results. C. Baker, *State of Emergency: Crisis in Central Africa, Nyasaland 1959-60*, (London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1997) p.8-9.

non-alignment. Recently returned from Accra, Kachunjulu from Nyasaland addressed a meeting in Bulawayo: ‘The Congressmen are not only for the freedom of Nyasaland but also for the freedom of the African continent... Let us follow Nkrumah’s ideology and we shall be alright in a short-run.’⁴⁸

Dr Banda was deliberately delayed on his return from Accra by the Nyasaland government. Officials were worried that large crowds might gather at Chileka airport that weekend to greet their leader so his flight was grounded in Salisbury where he ended up staying for the night. The plans of the authorities backfired however, as Banda was greeted by large crowds who gathered to hear him speak in Salisbury. He recalled his experiences to the crowd at Chileka the following day:

...my stay in Salisbury brought us and our people in Southern Rhodesia [together]; and I don’t mean the Nyasaland Africans working in Southern Rhodesia but the Mashonas, Matabeles and Makarangas gathered together... they said we the Africans of Southern Rhodesia do not recognise the Federation so this is our leader for everybody in Central Africa.⁴⁹

Writing to the Commander Fox-Pitt (ex-Provincial Commissioner in Northern Rhodesia dismissed for his criticism of the colonial government’s racial policy), Banda reiterated how pleased he was with his reception from the Southern Rhodesian leaders and local population:

Incidentally the authorities did a stupid thing...my stay in Salisbury proved to be a blessing in disguise. The Africans in Salisbury received me with such enthusiasm that even the Nyasas were a bit jealous. I stayed with Southern Rhodesian Congress leaders. George Nyandoro, the Secretary of the Southern Rhodesian Congress, himself, told his people that I was not only the leader of the Africans of Nyasaland but also of those of southern Rhodesia, and that from Sunday onwards, we would work together as a team.⁵⁰

Shortly after his impromptu visit to Salisbury, Banda was prohibited from entering Southern and Northern Rhodesia under the Inter-Territorial Movement of Persons

⁴⁸ Bulawayo Archives, personal notes from T. Ranger, File S.O.8 Vol.4 T Box 150 ‘Annual Conference held in Stanley Hall, Bulawayo, 11 May 1958’.

⁴⁹ Zimbabwe National Archives (ZNA) F120/L343/1 ‘Security Situation Reports’, Dr. Banda’s speech at Chileka Airport in Blantyre, 28 December, 1958.

⁵⁰ RHL, Box 241, File 1 Letter to Commander Fox-Pitt from Dr Banda dated 30 December 1958.

Act. The Harare branch of the Nyasaland Congress Women's League gathered in protest, declaring their intention to 'unite in support of our Messiah, Banda.'⁵¹ Only a week later, Chipembere was also banned from entering Southern Rhodesia and added to a list of Nyasas and Northern Rhodesians labelled as 'extremists', having spoken violently against Federation.⁵² Their names, in addition to hundreds of others, comprised the 'Sunrise lists' drawn up by Federal Intelligence.

The perceived radicalism of the nationalists in the north with their powerful anti-federation rhetoric alarmed the authorities in Southern Rhodesia, where African political figures were aligning themselves with their neighbours in the north. The Federal Immigration Act of 1954 gave wider powers to the government to restrict the movement of nationalists and their sympathisers from one territory to another. Entry as well as exit was denied in some cases, particularly when African leaders applied to attend Pan-African or socialist conferences elsewhere on the continent. The new laws were used 'extensively and comprehensively to confine the main Congress leaders in the Protectorates to their own territories and to prevent contact between them.'⁵³

Chipembere wrote to Chiume on 2nd February, soon after he was banned from Southern Rhodesia, revealing that his trip to Salisbury had been for the purpose of meeting with all of the Congress leaders. The Inter-Territorial meeting was postponed and they re-scheduled to meet in Blantyre, yet federal restriction orders made it difficult for them to find a suitable location:

George [Nyandoro] being determined to have the meeting arranged that it take place in Blantyre, but then a sudden ban descended on [Manukayumbwa] Sipalo – he was arrested and sent back to Northern Rhodesia! ...it was decided that Du [Dunduzu Chisiza] and George should go to Fort Manning and meet Sipalo there.

⁵¹ ZNA F120/L343/1 Security Situation Report, 1959. Expulsion orders had previously been issued for Nyasas J.C.Malifa, Gilbert Kumtumanje and Andrew Philip Banda from Northern Rhodesia. RHL FISB Affairs, Box 239/8 'Expulsion Orders, 20 July, 1956'.

⁵² *The Nyasaland Times*, 6 January 1959

⁵³ C. Leys, 'The Growth of Police Powers and the 1959 Emergencies', Leys and Pratt (eds.), *A New Deal*, p.127.

This has at last been achieved. The Imperialists are quite baffled. Police have been enquiring where George and Du are!⁵⁴

The federal and territorial governments were conscientious in their efforts to prevent further contact between the nationalist movements. By 1959 Congress leaders were busily trying to coordinate their efforts and step up their campaign. Another protest was arranged by Southern Rhodesian Congress members in Harare Township on the 18th January in response to the prohibition order against Dr Banda. By this stage tensions were building up throughout the Federation. In his letter to Chiume, Chipembere exclaimed: ‘Brother, you cannot imagine the state of Nationalism now. If we are not careful, the whole thing might go out of hand. Boys are really, really hot and determined.’⁵⁵

Colonial Repression and the End of Pan-Africanism in Central Africa

On 24th January 1959 an emergency Nyasaland Congress meeting was convened in Blantyre. The next day it moved to a private location near Limbe where, according to the unreliable testimony of the colonial authorities, the notorious ‘massacre plot’ was hatched.⁵⁶ George Nyandoro was present, having managed to evade government surveillance, and reportedly offered the full support and assistance of the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress.⁵⁷ Funding was a primary concern at the meeting as it was rumoured that the Nyasaland African Congress would soon be banned in Southern Rhodesia, meaning an end to donations and subscriptions from Nyasas abroad.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Appendix One, The Devlin Commission, ‘Letter from Chipembere to Chiume, 2 February 1959’.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ The National Archives, CAB/129/98, ‘Report of the Nyasaland Commission of Inquiry, 6 April, 1959’ (The Devlin Commission).

⁵⁷ RHL Welensky Papers 240/1.

⁵⁸ The Devlin Commission, p.48.

As the security situation in Nyasaland worsened Welensky, the Federal Prime Minister, discussed how best to respond with the Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister Whitehead and the governors of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Benson and Armitage. Welensky was anxious to send in Federal and Southern Rhodesian troops but Armitage initially refused.⁵⁹ On the 2nd February a plan of action was devised as Armitage received agreement with the Federal authorities that, should it be necessary to arrest large numbers of Nyasa nationalists, the 'hard core' would be detained in Southern Rhodesia. Sir Edgar Whitehead warned that unless a State of Emergency was declared, his government did not have the power to detain suspects without bringing them to trial.⁶⁰ It was therefore agreed that action should be taken first in Southern Rhodesia, before tackling the disturbances in Nyasaland. All that was required was to find a pretext for declaring an emergency in Southern Rhodesia where conditions were relatively peaceful.

The emergencies in Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia were thus fundamentally linked in a number of ways. When an emergency was declared in Southern Rhodesia on the 26th February the central aim was to pre-empt any actions by members of the Southern Rhodesian Congress in support of their Nyasaland colleagues. In addition, the government decided to take action against the large number of well-organised Nyasaland nationalists residing in Southern Rhodesia. As a result, during the first wave of arrests in the Southern Rhodesian emergency, 495 people were arrested: 307 members of the Southern Rhodesian Congress; 105 belonging to the Nyasaland movement; and 83 officers and members of the Northern

⁵⁹ RHL Welensky Papers 239/9 Federal PM's meeting, 19 January 1959.

⁶⁰ Their prediction was correct. Dr Banda exploded in reaction to the movement of troops into Nyasaland to tackle unrest in the Northern Region. In a letter to the Governor of Nyasaland, Banda wrote: 'I protest in the strongest possible terms against the sending of outside troops, particularly, troops from Southern Rhodesia, to Karonga, Fort Hill and anywhere else in this country... Nowhere in the country has law and order been so broken down as to necessitate the calling in of troops from Southern Rhodesia, either federal or territorial...' 23 February 1959.

Rhodesian Congress.⁶¹ All Nyasaland Congress branches in Southern Rhodesia were closed and all three Congresses declared illegal organisations.

Most detainees from Nyasaland were initially sent to Khami prison where they were kept separate both from the Southern Rhodesian detainees and from Banda, Chipembere and Dunduzu Chisiza, who had been sent to the former women's prison at Gwelo (Gweru). A letter smuggled from Edson Sithole to his friend and colleague from City Youth League days, Dunduzu Chisiza, alarmed the authorities; visits to the 'hard core' in Gwelo were temporarily banned.⁶² A number of Nyasaland detainees arrested in Southern Rhodesia were deported to Nyasaland when they were no longer considered a threat by the authorities. Many of those arrested had been respectable middle-class Africans working in Salisbury as teachers, ministers and shop keepers. Others included the nineteen year old Aleke Banda, who had been born in Northern Rhodesia to Nyasaland parents, and raised in Southern Rhodesia where he had taken an active part in youth politics. Banda had never previously been to Nyasaland. Following his arrival in Blantyre he joined with others in establishing the successor organisation to Congress, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP).

Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesian detainees in Southern Rhodesia were allowed limited contact with their families. Some were sent back to Nyasaland or Northern Rhodesia on their release, while others remained in Salisbury. Providing they were recognised by the Southern Rhodesian Government as having spent ten years or more living in the colony, Nyasas were permitted to remain. Those still detained were joined in June by a further 90 Nyasaland Africans, arrested in Salisbury

⁶¹ The National Archives CO 1015/1532 'Declaration of State of Emergency', Inward telegram to Commonwealth Relations Office, from Salisbury, 6 March 1959. These figures were published in an issue of *Dissent* and confirmed by the Devlin Commission Report.

⁶² P. Mackay, *We Have Tomorrow: Stirrings in Africa, 1959-67*, (Norwich: Michael Russell Ltd., 2008), p.32. The 'hard core' referred to Dr Banda, Henry Chipembere and Dunduzu and Yatuta Chisiza.

under the new Unlawful Organisations Act.⁶³ These men and women had been collecting funds on behalf of the Nyasaland Congress to go towards ‘the defence and relief of the detainees in Nyasaland.’

Both movements suffered from restrictive legislation which gave the police wide powers of search, arrest and detention. But while the Malawi Congress Party, following its foundation in September 1959, rapidly expanded as an even larger and more powerful movement than its predecessor, Southern Rhodesian nationalists took longer to re-group. It was not until 1960 that the National Democratic Party (NDP) emerged as successor to the SRANC and even then it remained a relatively weak and divided body. Editors of the radical broadsheet, *Dissent*, noted how the Nyasaland African Congress in 1959 had ‘superior survival value’ over the Southern Rhodesian Congress, because of its deeper roots and better organisation at the time of the banning.⁶⁴ An article in *Dissent* also suggested that involvement with the nationalist movements of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland had acted as a catalyst for African politics in Southern Rhodesia. The Southern Rhodesian movement was certainly slower to take off as a successful nationalist organisation and was considered moderate compared to some of the more militant and ‘extreme Congress elements’ in the north. In 1957 the Southern Rhodesian organisation was thought to be a fairly innocuous group airing ‘a few African grievances.’ Following the emergency, the Beadle Review Tribunal reported a great deal of evidence showing a close liaison between the Congress organisations.⁶⁵ High level conferences had been planned between the leaders of all three movements, such as the one in Lusaka in 1958. A presidential report on the progress made by the Southern Rhodesian Congress since its

⁶³ *Dissent*, No.6, 25 June 1959.

⁶⁴ *Dissent*, No.6, 25 June 1959.

⁶⁵ The National Archives CO 1015/1532 ‘Review Tribunal, Preventive Detentions Act, 1959 General Report’, pp.18-21.

revival in 1957 explained: ‘The success of this conference marked the beginning of an interchange of information between the three Congresses.’⁶⁶ Prominent leaders of the Southern Rhodesian Congress, such as George Nyandoro were inspired by the organisation of Congresses in the north and by the principles of Pan-Africanism espoused in the 1958 All Africa People’s Conference. Nyandoro had encouraged the formation of a Women’s League and a Youth Wing, imitating their neighbours in the north.⁶⁷ Although, as late as 1959, Southern Rhodesian nationalist politics remained immature compared with what was happening further north.⁶⁸

Zimbabwean nationalist Chigwendere later reflected on the impact of the 1959 emergency:

I think the ban came as a surprise to many people. It shattered quite a lot of people’s hopes and it also took a long time to recover... But I think it also gave them time to think. The ban in Nyasaland resulted in the formation of the Malawi Congress Party, which later developed to lead Malawi to independence. Kaunda’s Zambia National Congress was banned. After that it seemed like they were making some kind of headway and I suppose it gave the feeling to people in Southern Rhodesia that they were also no exception.⁶⁹

The 1959 emergency interrupted the efforts of the nationalist movements to work together in their struggles for black majority rule. After the emergency, Nyasaland was on a course for secession from Federation, heading towards independence. The first Annual Delegates Conference of the Malawi Congress Party at Kota Kota (Nkhota Nkhota), in September 1960, was perhaps the final display of Pan-African solidarity between Malawian and Zimbabwean nationalists. Six delegates attended from Southern Rhodesia, including Jason Moyo (who later founded the armed wing of the Zimbabwe African People’s Union – ZIPRA). An invitation was also extended to

⁶⁶ It was decided that the level of co-operation must continue in order to coordinate one general policy of the Congress movement. For the full report, see: C. Nyangoni and G. Nyandoro (eds.) *Zimbabwe Independence Movements. Select Documents* (London: Collings, 1979), p.17.

⁶⁷ C. F. Hallencreutz, *Religion and Politics in Harare, 1890-1980*, (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1999), p.331.

⁶⁸ *Dissent*, No.19, 9 June 1960.

⁶⁹ ZNA Oral/228 Interview with Chigwendere, 24 May 1974.

distinguished nationalists and Pan-Africanists from other parts of Africa, such as Kenya's Tom Mboya and Tanganyika's Julius Nyerere, though neither were able to attend.⁷⁰

The inability of the Zimbabwean and Malawian nationalist movements to continue their united struggle against Federation and white settler domination can be explained in a number of ways. Clearly, the tragic deaths of convinced pan-Africanists such as Dunduzu Chisiza and Sketchley Samkange in 1962 broke important links between the territorial movements. But even by this stage the focus on the individual territory rather than the region or the continent as a whole had begun to dominate. 1960 was declared the Year of Africa and the number of independent states between then and 1964 rose from 9 to 33. While this was highly celebrated it also served to complicate the integrative process of Pan-Africanism. Nation building and development overshadowed other priorities. The hey-day of Pan-Africanism as a liberation movement was coming to a close.

Like many other Malawians and Zambians, Henry Chipembere, Yatuta Chisiza and Kanyama Chiume were 'linked by ties of residence and kinship to other territories.' For these men, as John McCracken has observed, 'national identity appears to have been of less importance initially than identity with fellow Africans.'⁷¹ However, with the road to political freedom almost inevitably involving the transition from colonial state to independent nation, any option other than the territorial one became redundant. The Pan-African (or, at least, region-wide) priorities of the

⁷⁰ RHL, *Tsopano*, No.11, September 1960. One of the pictures from the event was labelled in *Tsopano*, November, 1960, 'A Symbolic picture of unity in politics and culture as two members of Southern Rhodesia's National Democratic Party delegation, Mr. J. Z. Moyo and Mr. Z. Sihwa, from Bulawayo, watch a display of traditional dancing.' There were four other delegates from Southern Rhodesia. For a short time Banda looked east (instead of south) to forge stronger pan-African ties with Tanganyika. The Pan-African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa became the focus of Banda's extra-territorial attention in 1960, until disagreements with Nyerere over the way forward ended their collaboration. The National Archives CO 1015/2439 'H. K. Banda'.

⁷¹ J. McCracken, 'The Ambiguities of Nationalism', p.76.

Nyasaland Congress were replaced by the more militant and exclusive agenda of the MCP.

Peter Mackay, whose memoirs highlight the significance of Malawian politics for central Africa as a whole, commented on Dunduzu Chisiza's involvement in Southern Rhodesian politics:

At the time, before African nationhood had confirmed Africa's colonial borders as immutably national, when Pan-Africanism was a guiding ideal for the new generation of nationalists and the borders were marked on maps yet not engraved on hearts, the sense of Africanness could transcend feeling for country...⁷²

By 1965 Banda had lost patience with the divisions of African nationalists in Southern Rhodesia - building a Malawian nation was priority and he soon faced a number of major domestic problems of his own, primarily with the Cabinet Crisis which ensued just several weeks after Malawi was declared independent in 1964.⁷³ One of the issues which led Banda's ministers to revolt was his policies towards Portugal and Southern Rhodesia. The sympathy expressed for their 'down trodden brethren of Zimbabwe'⁷⁴ faded rapidly after 1964. Banda was critical of the split between the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), and refused to 'boycott' Rhodesia, South Africa or Mozambique in the 1960s, or to join the international community in their economic sanctions against these states.⁷⁵ Of 'the Rhodesian problem' he said, 'it remains Britain's problem and the rest of us must leave it to Britain to solve.'⁷⁶

Conclusion

⁷² Mackay, *We Have Tomorrow*, p.20.

⁷³ On the Cabinet Crisis, see J. McCracken, *A History of Malawi 1859-1966*, pp.429-460.

⁷⁴ *The Malawi News*, 29 July 1960.

⁷⁵ D. Hedges, 'Notes on Malawi-Mozambique Relations, 1961-1987', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 15, 4 (1989), pp.617-644.

⁷⁶ MNA Pam. 1127, Dr Banda's address to Parliament, 8th March 1966.

Prior to the emergency in 1959, there were several moments when the potential was strong for the nationalist movements of the Central African Federation to combine their efforts in building a more powerful anti-colonial (and anti-federation) movement. The long tradition of out-migration from Nyasaland strengthened the nationalist movement in the 1950s by enabling the Nyasaland African Congress to establish roots outside of the territory and within. Congress grew in size and influence and the experiences of an early generation of prominent nationalist figures away from their homeland shaped the development of nationalist politics in Nyasaland and the wider region. Returned 'Nyasa' migrants re-invigorated the Nyasaland African Congress in the mid 1950s, particularly in the Northern Region, and shaped the central executive according to Pan-African sentiments instilled in them during their time abroad. These ideals were shared with close colleagues in Southern and Northern Rhodesia and enhanced by the All Africa People's Conference in Accra in 1958. The appeal of African nationalism was widespread and should be understood within a broader transnational framework.

Fervent nationalism in the northern territories radicalised African politics in Southern Rhodesia during the Federation period. Yet the strength of collaborations between African nationalists in Central Africa was to be short lived as repressive action taken by the federal state resolved to drive apart territorial connections and to break the influence of external forces. These pivotal moments in central African history have remained overshadowed by the formidable dictatorship in Malawi under Dr Banda, and the long protracted liberation struggle of Zimbabwe.

Returning to the story of the Central African Federation, this paper has sought to enhance our understanding of the development of national identities in Malawi and

Zimbabwe and to remind us of the important legacies of migration, as well as the role of diaspora communities in politics, both at home and away.

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