

Dr Banda of Malawi ROGUE ELEPHANT OF AFRICA

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When Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda arrived in Nyasaland on July 6, 1958, to take over the leadership of Nyasaland African Congress he had been absent from the country of his birth for 42 years. He could not even speak his native language, and at public meetings could only communicate with his audience through an interpreter. As he stepped from his aircraft at the Chileka aerodrome, a skin of civet cat, the traditional symbol of chieftainship, draped over his elegant western suit, he appeared to personify the aspirations of his people to move from the black night of colonialism into the bright dawn of independence. He was given a hero's welcome.

Six years to the day after his return to Nyasaland, Banda presided over the independence celebrations of the new state of Malawi. The Central African Federation which the Nyasaland African Congress had helped to destroy had perished six months earlier, at the end of 1953. Perhaps it was significant that at the state luncheon at which independence was celebrated, the guests (who included the Duke of Edinburgh amongst other notabilities) drank Portuguese wine. The arch of independence, which was the central feature of the celebrations, cost about £15,000, was designed by a South African and was topped by an aluminium cockerel made in Southern Rhodesia. The cannons from which the salvos of independence were fired had been borrowed from the Southern Rhodesian Army. Ian Smith, but not Welensky, had received Banda's personal invitation to attend. Pressure of work prevented him from going, but Lord Graham went in his stead. Portuguese representatives, too, were present for the first time at any African independence celebration. And of course there were the South Africans.

Right from the outset, the wrong note seemed to be struck. In striking contrast to Patrice Lumumba, who at the Congo's independence celebrations in 1960 delivered a slashing attack on Belgian

misrule in Africa in the very presence of the royal representative, Banda both before and after independence adopted a markedly pro-imperialist stand. In January 1964 he told the Legislative Assembly that after independence Nyasaland's foreign policy would be 'one of discretionary non-alignment We are not going to enter into any cold war'. But it soon became apparent that this was not the usual 'neutrality' of former colonies seeking to break free of entanglements. Banda very quickly quarrelled not only with the leading cadres of his own liberation movement but with the entire Organisation of African Unity. He proclaimed his admiration for Malawi's former imperialist masters.

'We must forgive even if we cannot forget the past The British' he mused, 'are a peculiar people. They imprison you today and honour you tomorrow'. He expressed himself determined to maintain, and expand, his country's 'traditional relationships' with the neighbouring White-dominated states—Rhodesia, South Africa and Mozambique. Inside his country there was naturally opposition to his policies, but he put down his opponents with a single-minded ruthlessness.

Today he rules Malawi openly in the interests, and to the delighted plaudits of, the White racists of Africa and the imperialists and neo-colonialists of the Western world. Pro-West, anti-Communist, pro-South African, anti-OAU, a worshipper of personal authority at the expense of democracy—how did such a man come to preside over the fate of Malawi? The history of Banda's conquest and use of power contains lessons which it is of importance for all Africa and the world to learn.

PERSONAL RULE

One of the stock Western criticisms of independent African states is that they do not practise 'Westminster-style democracy' and rely on one-party rule or outright military dictatorship. In Malawi, Banda rules with a combination of both. This has not alienated his mentors in the West and South because in the long run it is not the style but the content of government which matters. In whose interests does Banda rule in Malawi? What class or section of his people does he represent? What foreign interests does he serve?

Banda's highly individual method of government owes something to his own personal history. Born of Cewa parents in the Kasunga district of Nyasaland in 1902, Banda first trained to be a teacher, then left his country in late 1915 or early 1916 to promote his fortunes in the south. For a while he worked as a hospital orderly at Hartley in Rhodesia, then in 1917 he moved to Johannesburg. His official biographers (Rotberg, Pike and others) say he spent the next seven to eight years as an engine-room oiler and clerk-interpreter on the mines. Banda himself (*Sunday Times* January 28 1968) says he worked at Delmore, near Johannesburg.

I first worked underground wielding a pick on the rock face. You won't believe it, but for two years I hacked away. Today you have pneumatic drills. Later, because I knew a little English, I became a clerk.

The *Sunday Times* adds: 'He was on the mine for six or seven years. He grew up there and he thought that was why he understood South African problems better than other African leaders. "It was from such papers as the *Sunday Times*, that *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Star* that I learnt my politics", he said'.

He was able to break away from the mines through the intervention of a group of American missionaries, who provided the funds to send him to high school in Ohio. He graduated from Wilberforce, where he majored in Latin and Spanish, in 1928, and then obtained his Bachelor of Philosophy degree from Xenia College in 1931, finally qualifying as a doctor of medicine at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1937. Needing British qualifications to practise medicine in Nyasaland, he moved to Edinburgh shortly before the outbreak of World War 2 and was eventually admitted as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1941. He was prevented from returning to Nyasaland by the war, and settled down to practise, first on the Tyneside, and later in the London suburb of Harlesden, where he prospered.

He had travelled a long way from the Witwatersrand rock face, and today considers that because of his experiences on three continents he knows more about the White man and his ways of thinking than most other African leaders. He is certainly more opinionated. He told the *Sunday Times* reporter John Warrell: 'Many have the same background as I have but they are afraid of the others. They want to be on the popular bandwagon. It is not that they are any different from me. Most of them have a European kind of education—but they want popularity. I am not for popularity at all, that is the truth'. (*Sunday Times*, January 28, 1968).

Although it was 25 years since he had left his country, Banda was not an entire stranger to political affairs there. During his period of exile he had kept in touch with developments in Nyasaland, and shortly after the Nyasaland African Congress was formed in 1944 he was appointed its overseas representative. He was also a member of the British Labour Party, the Movement for Colonial Freedom and the union of Democratic Control, as well as an elder of the Church of Scotland. From afar, armed with the prestige of an African who had successfully competed with the White man on his home territory, he exercised a considerable influence on the formulation of Congress policy, and played a leading role at the London end in opposing the establishment of the Central African Federation in 1953.

The British Government and the white settlers had cooperated in the establishment of the Central African Federation with three objectives in mind:

1. The containment of African national aspirations;
2. The containment of South African economic and political penetration of central Africa;
3. The creation of a larger economic unit which would facilitate development and the attraction of capital investment.

All this was done in the name of 'partnership' between Black and White, but Federation was imposed on the African people against their unanimously expressed wish, and without even any formal attempt at consultation. One might have thought this the time for Banda at last to transfer his sphere of operations to Nyasaland. Instead he moved to the Gold Coast (later to become Ghana). He told the Devlin Commission which inquired into the anti-Federation disturbances in Nyasaland in 1959 that he had done so because 'although his views about Federation were unaltered, he did not want to continue in active opposition to it, which if he remained in London would inevitably be the case'. He wanted, he said, 'to give it a chance'. It was for this reason that he decided to go to Ghana and he said that 'if the Nyasa people had accepted Federation he would have remained there'.

THE YOUNG MILITANTS

While Banda isolated himself in Ghana, the task of fighting Federation, building Congress and leading the struggle for liberation was undertaken by young militants like Kanyama Chiume, Masuako Chipembere, Dunduzu Chisiza and his brother Yatuta, Rose Chibambo and Wellington Chirwa.

These were the men and women who stumped the country, addressed meetings, roused the people, created the climate of opinion in which the concept of secession from Federation became a real possibility. These were the men and women with whom Banda quarrelled and whom he drove out of public life within two months of Malawi's achievement of independence.

In assessing the reasons for this defeat of the Congress militants, several factors have to be borne in mind. One is the comparative inexperience of the Congress and its leadership, and its lack of a secure base among the people. The Nyasaland African Congress was first formed in 1944, but suffered a severe defeat with the establishment of Federation in 1953. Its policy of non-violence had been discredited by failure; its lack of organisation, and especially of good cadre material at the rank and file level, made the recourse to violence against the

authorities an impracticable alternative. The immediate post-1953 period saw the fortunes of Congress at a low ebb. For a time revival of interest in Congress was only made possible through its leaders' resort to the constitutional instruments provided by Federation—two Congress leaders, Wellington Chirwa and Clement Kumbikano, sat in the Federal Parliament, while five Congress militants, including Chiume and Chipembere, won all five African seats in the Nyasaland Legislative Council in 1956. Skilful use of both platforms helped Congress to regain the confidence of the people.

Yet even at this stage Congress was divided. The militants, led by Chipembere, felt that the Federal Parliament should be boycotted and the Congress representatives withdrawn. There was dissatisfaction with the Congress leadership, at the time headed by T.D.T. Banda (no relative of the doctor), who was felt to be 'old-fashioned'. Although Congress was the premier political organisation among the Africans, neither the militants nor the old-timers were able to consolidate their power. It is a measure of the immaturity of Congress that, faced with this dilemma, the militants turned to Dr. Banda for a solution, inviting him to assume the mantle of leadership. 'What was needed', Chipembere explained later according to the Devlin Commission report, 'was a kind of saviour, a prestigious father figure who would provide the dynamic leadership necessary for success'. Chipembere wrote to Dr. Banda asking him to return from the Gold Coast to take over the leadership of Congress. 'Human nature is such', wrote Chipembere, 'that it needs a kind of hero to be hero-worshipped if a political struggle is to succeed'. When Dr. Banda eventually agreed to take on the job, the Congress militants 'widely advertised his qualities as a messiah'. (Rotberg *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa*). 'In March, after T.D.T. Banda had been accused of misappropriating Congress funds, they engineered his suspension from office. B.W. Matthews Phiri became the acting president-general of the Congress until Dr. Banda could return'.

In taking this step, the Congress militants reflected not merely their lack of confidence in their own powers of leadership, but more importantly their lack of confidence in Congress and its ability to mobilise the masses. Rotberg writes that although in April 1957 Congress claimed about 60,000 members, only a few months previously its registered branches totalled only 18, of which six had been established by Nyasas living outside Nyasaland. Pike, in his history of Malawi, also reports that 'at that time the Special Branch of Nyasaland police were active in the surveillance of Congress affairs and did not hesitate to undermine or discredit Congress office-bearers whenever the opportunity occurred'. Paid agents were active right inside Congress itself.

During the disturbances of 1959 which led to the ultimate break-up of Federation, the Nyasaland African Congress was banned and Dr.

Banda and over 1,300 of his alleged 'co-conspirators' were imprisoned. Shortly afterwards the Malawi Congress Party was formed to replace the banned NAC. Its aims were almost identical with those of the NAC—to work for self-government and independence for the people of Nyasaland, to eliminate all forms of oppression, 'racial, economic, social and otherwise', and to establish a democratic national government in Nyasaland. Within two days of its formation the Malawi Congress had 1,000 members. Within two months it claimed 15,000 paid up members ; by 1961 more than 1 million. There was certainly mass support for the new party, sufficient at any rate to bring it an overwhelming victory in the August 1961 elections, the country's first direct election in which more than 98 per cent of eligible voters went to the polls. By the time of the next elections in 1964, the Malawi Congress Party was the only party in the field, and elections since then have been a formality.

Dr. Banda took over the formal leadership of the Nyasaland African Congress at its annual general meeting in August 1958, when delegates elected him President-General on his own terms, with the personal right to appoint all the other officers and the members of the executive committee of the Congress. Today he holds the office of President of the Malawi Congress Party for life.

If, today, Malawi is gripped by the cult of the personality of Dr. Banda, the Congress militants must bear their share of the blame. It was they who built Congress, yet surrendered the leadership to him. But the roots of their error, in turn, must be sought in the nature of the Malawi Congress Party itself. No political organisation with a high level of political consciousness amongst the rank and file, with a strictly maintained discipline enforced through the medium of democratic centralism and collective leadership, with a secure class base amongst the people, with a clear programme and ideology, tested in action over the years, could allow such a development to take place.

There is no evidence that the Malawi Congress Party was such an organisation. It had a very short and chequered history, throughout which its leadership had been divided. It was never based on a social programme more developed than that of simple national liberation. The masses responded to the call for freedom, but were given no vision beyond that point. When the crisis point was reached, they responded on the basis of personal and tribal loyalties rather than ideological conviction. Dr. Banda may not have had the mass following of his young opponents, but he had the levers of power in his hands and he was not slow to use them.

THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

The weaknesses of the Malawi Congress Party must be sought again, in the nature of Malawian society. Malawi is amongst the poorest states in Africa, with an income per head of population variously estimated at between £13 and £20 a year. At the time of independence in 1964, she was overwhelmingly an agricultural country, with nearly half of those in paid employment engaged in farming. She grew tea, tobacco, groundnuts, cotton, coffee, tung and rubber, but less than one third of her 4 million African population lived off such crops, most people being engaged in subsistence farming growing such crops as maize.

More than half the gross domestic product was generated in agriculture, four-fifths of this being consumed in the subsistence sector and the balance representing the bulk of the country's exports. As far as was known, Malawi possessed no mineral deposits capable of development save bauxite at Mlanje, and to date lack of power resources, communications and other facilities have prevented this from being turned into the valuable asset it might otherwise become. Total mining and quarrying production amounted to only 0.1 per cent of the national income, while a rudimentary manufacturing industry accounted for a further 4.5 per cent. (*Nyasaland Development Plan 1962-65*). Over 90 per cent of the total population were village dwellers.

The huge extent of the subsistence sector makes for uncertainty in calculating income per head of population. But in addition, the country's income, such as it was, was unevenly spread amongst the various racial groups. The 1966 census gave the following population figures:

Africans	4,023,193
Asians	10,880
Whites	7,046
Others	1,293

Yet according to the 1962-65 Development Plan, income distribution in 1960 was as follows:

Average Earnings – Whites	£1,185 a year
Coloureds and Asians	556
Africans	51

Rural African household income per head was estimated to be £11 a year.

The country's greatest economic problem is seen by the economists to be unemployment flowing from lack of access to the land and lack

of capital for the development of the industrial sector. The 1961 census showed that of the 298,000 Nyasaland Africans in paid employment, 171,000 were in Northern Rhodesia or South Africa. Their remittances totalled some £2 million a year, equal to half the country's export earnings from tea.

In an address to the Malawi Parliament on March 29, 1967, Dr. Banda indicated that the extent of migratory labour was even greater. 'Roughly we have about 200,000 of our men working in Rhodesia, 80,000 in the Republic of South Africa, between 15 and 20,000 in Tanzania', he said.

A survey of the educational situation in Malawi conducted by the American Council of Education, the results of which were published in April 1964, showed that about 360,000 children (about half the total) were in primary school, 3,000 in secondary schools and that less than 900 were receiving instruction in technical and commercial classes either full-time or part-time. Teacher preparation was so inadequate that a large proportion of the primary pupils were being taught by teachers only slightly better trained than the pupils themselves. There were 11 teacher training schools, two Government-operated and nine run by missions. The country's less than 50 college-educated citizens were trained abroad. There was no secondary school in Nyasaland until the time of the second world war. Even by 1965 two-thirds of the secondary school teachers were Americans.

This was the context in which Dr. Banda came into office as President of independent Malawi in 1964. And it is against this background of poverty, migratory labour and educational backwardness that the achievements of the Malawi Congress Party must be seen.

BANDA, THE AUTOCRAT

The divisions in the leadership of the Malawi Congress Party came to a head within weeks of independence in 1964. From the outset Dr. Banda had made it clear he was no democrat. 'I am the boss and anyone who does not know that is a fool', he said. 'I decide everything without consulting anybody and that is how things will be done in Malawi. Anyone who does not like that can get out'. (*New York Times*, September 16, 1964). The militants had given Dr. Banda power, and were now to find that it was to be used in its more drastic form against themselves.

The issues in dispute were not merely personal. They had an ideological and class basis. The young militants were the most forward-looking elements in Congress, led by Chipembere, a graduate of Fort Hare, and Chiume, a graduate of Makerere, and supported by the intellectual elite of the country, most of whom were civil servants and

teachers. Though lacking, perhaps, in ideological clarity, they were typical of the men and women who led the African revolution from one end of the continent to the other in the 60's. They wanted an end to colonialism and discrimination, an end to subservience and dependency. They wanted Malawi ruled by Malawians for the benefit of the Malawians. They wanted Malawi to be raised to a position of equality and honour among the nations of the world. Perhaps they were not very clear about the mechanics of power, the intricacies of high finance or the role of capital. But that they genuinely wanted a break with the past and Malawi firmly set on the road to a prosperous future for all there can be no doubt.

Dr. Banda, the pragmatist (as he is so often called), was not merely an older man. He was also quite clearly orientated towards the West and the capitalist mode of production. Two months before independence he warned his people to be on guard against 'Communism'. Whilst admitting that Russia had made great strides over the past 40 years, he claimed this had been achieved at the expense of great suffering and death. 'If you believe that the State can force you to do anything, order you to prison, then Communism is a good system'. (*Guardian*, May 1, 1964). For a man who in the same year declared himself quite willing to be called the Dictator of Malawi, this was rich. Within weeks of independence he had introduced a preventive detention act, and since then he has banned, restricted, deported, exiled and even executed his opponents and confiscated their property with a ferocity almost unparalleled in the annals of African independence.

Banda's opposition to Communism is not, of course, based on the alleged lack of democracy in the Soviet Union. In his speech he indicated that he preferred the economic and political system practised in Britain and some of the Scandinavian countries 'because there a man can rise . . . and the State will protect him from rigid individualism. The State has some measure of control over capital and production, but the individual is free . . . It is my ideal'.

At a convention of the Malawi Congress Party held in September 1968, President Banda asked delegates to decide for themselves whether they wanted a capitalist, socialist or Communist system of government in Malawi. Reviewing the three systems, Dr. Banda said that for Communism to succeed 'the people must have no freedom at all to do anything'. The correspondent of the *Johannesburg Star* commented 'Dr. Banda left nobody in doubt of which system he personally favoured. Communists and Socialists would obviously be unwelcome in Malawi'. The Soviet Union and People's China sent congratulatory messages to Banda on the occasion of Malawi's independence in 1964,

but no representatives from any socialist country have ever been allowed in Malawi. In December 1964 three Soviet journalists who managed to enter the country in the course of an African tour were put on the next flight to Kenya. In December 1968 Malawi was represented at a five-day conference of the 'World Anti-Communist League' in Saigon by a junior minister of the government, Mr. J. L. Angani.

As it turned out, it was Dr. Banda's psychotic anti-Communism which was one of the causes of his breach with the MCP militants. Aware of Malawi's chronic shortage of development capital, China had offered the country a loan of £18 million. Dr. Banda rejected the offer, alleging that it was merely a bribe to secure recognition of the Peking regime. Chipembere denied this, saying the loan was purely for aid and without strings. In urging acceptance of the aid, the militants were by no means displaying support for Communism for they were not Communist or even Marxist in their training or thinking. But they saw the loan as an opportunity for breaking away from Malawi's traditional reliance on Britain.

DEPENDENCE ON IMPERIALISM

At the time of independence, according to the *London Times* of July 6, 1954, 'the extent of aid (by Britain) is still unknown, but will include between £2 million and £5 million a year in direct budgetary subsidies. Britain has also agreed to pay a large part of the £35 million development plan which may—or may not—enable the annual budgetary deficit to be tapered off'. In fact, the development plan has done little to lessen dependence on British aid. On March 25, 1969, the *Johannesburg Star* reported: 'Malawi is still heavily dependent on outside aid. Since independence British aid alone has amounted to nearly R68 million, this includes direct budgetary assistance'. Economists agree that if development continues on the present lines, budgetary assistance will be required for at least a further 10 years.

In addition, Britain remains Malawi's largest source of capital and is her principal trade market, taking approximately 60 per cent of her exports and providing 30 per cent of her imports. The bulk of expatriates in Malawi are of British origin, and the Malawi administration, police and military forces are in the hands of British officers.

While the Congress militants saw this overwhelming dependence on Britain as a reason for seeking trade pacts and alliances elsewhere, and especially in the socialist countries to give reality to the declared policy of 'discretionary alignment and neutralism' Dr. Banda took the opposite view. Any links with the socialist world would, in his opinion, endanger further infusions of capital from the West. It may be that he had even received advice to this effect from some of the Western governments.

At all events, he vetoed the Peking loan. Diversification of trade he was in favour of, but he sought it elsewhere—from the white supremacist countries of the south. Addressing the Malawi Parliament on March 29, 1967 he explained why he had sent trade missions to South Africa and Portugal:

There is no doubt that the treaties, agreements and conventions with the Republic of South Africa over trade and labour recruitment, with Portugal over transport and communications and transit facilities through Mozambique to and from the sea, the agreements and conventions over Nyasaland Railways Company and the Trans-Zambezi Railways Company which we inherited when we became independent in 1964 have been and still are of great benefit to this country.

A number of our farm produce or farm products which we cannot sell elsewhere have found markets in South Africa. On the other hand, certain consumer and capital goods which we cannot easily get from the United Kingdom and other countries in Europe, we can get them in the markets of South Africa from manufacturers and industrialists of the Republic of South Africa.

This is also true of the labour market in the Republic of South Africa. Next to Rhodesia, the Republic of South Africa is the largest employer of our labour

As to Mozambique, or Portugal through Mozambique, it is hardly necessary for me even to explain. Even a child knows that we are a landlocked country The only port we are using or ports we have ever used are situated in Mozambique, Quelimane, Chinde, Beira. As I am speaking, we are using only Beira.

This being the case, we have no choice but to negotiate new treaties, new agreements and new conventions with the Republic of South Africa and with Portugal.

Since then, as is known, Malawi has become the only independent African state to enter into diplomatic relations with South Africa. The political and economic benefit to the apartheid regime was frankly explained in a Johannesburg newspaper:

The diplomatic exchange will give South Africa a vital diplomatic bridgehead deep into Black Africa. It will also clear the way for Malawi to become a shop-window example of the benefits of friendly co-operation. (*Star*, December 12, 1967).

South African exports to Malawi rose from £857,000 in the year of independence, 1964, to £1,960,000 in 1967 and £2,176,000 in the first three quarters of 1968. Malawi's trade with the Republic continues to rise at a faster rate than that with any other country. South Africa has also come forward with loan and investment capital unobtainable elsewhere. Where Britain, for example, refused to lend money for the transfer of the Malawi capital from Zomba to Lilongwe and in fact advised against the project, South Africa supported it with a first-stage

loan of R8 million, and South African firms are involved in the project which is eventually expected to cost anything up to R40 million. South Africa is also financing the R11 million railway which will link Malawi with the Mozambique railway at Nova Freixo and ultimately provide a second outlet to the sea at Nacala. South African investment capital is also involved in the building of a sugar mill, a pulpwood project on the Vipya plateau, a match factory and other projects. South Africa has also provided broadcasting equipment and the services of technicians to install and operate it, while Malawi's information service and airways are headed by South Africans. The chairman of the Malawi Board of Censors is a Dutch Reformed Church Missionary from the Republic.

No wonder South African Premier Vorster was able to claim, during the debate on his vote in the 1969 session of Parliament, that relations with Malawi were going extremely well. Portugal has also expressed her satisfaction at the development of relations with Malawi since Dr. Banda came to power, and in return Dr. Banda has defended the Portuguese colonial record in Africa. It has been suggested that Malawi is a party to the unofficial military agreement between the white-dominated states for the defence of Southern Africa against the 'Communist menace'. (Michael Leapman in the *Sun* London, April 30, 1969).

PREPOSTEROUS CLAIMS

These suggestions are strengthened by Dr. Banda's preposterous territorial claims against neighbouring Tanzania and Zambia. In September, 1968, he claimed that Malawi's true borders, before they were 'juggled by the imperialists', extended 'to the north at least 100 miles north of Songwe, to the south the Zambesi River itself, to the East the Indian Ocean, to the West the Luangwa River', and demanded that these territories be returned... 'What was stolen from us by the colonial regime must be given back to us now. The British had no business giving that land to someone across there'. Since implementation of the claims would involve the extension of the Malawi border 100 miles into Tanzania, and the incorporation of large slices of Zambia and Mozambique, it is hardly surprising that they were resisted by Dr. Banda's neighbours. In addition, they were repudiated by the Organisation of African Unity, the All-African Trade Union Federation, and a number of liberation movements from countries in Southern Africa still dominated by the racists and colonialists.

In a strongly worded statement issued from its headquarters in Dar es Salaam, the African National Congress of South Africa said Dr. Banda's claim was 'a serious threat to the security of Tanzania and Africa in general, and a hostile act against liberation movements dedicated to free Africa'. The statement pointed out that Dr. Banda had

become 'a catspaw and a springboard of the racist and colonial regimes in Southern Africa and imperialists in general in their aggression against independent Africa'. A similar statement was issued by FRELIMO.

Far from dropping his claims, Dr. Banda rounded on his critics, 'Those people in Dar es Salaam, the rulers in Dar es Salaam, those people in Lusaka, the rulers in Lusaka, they say they are the greatest champions of freedom in Africa, they are the fighters against imperialism in Africa . . . If those people in Tanzania, those people in Zambia are really against imperialism, why do they not disgorge or vomit what they inherited from imperialism and colonialism?'. In a series of speeches at rallies in various parts of Malawi in September and October 1968, Dr. Banda contrasted the criticism of independent Africa with the embarrassed silence of the Portuguese.

'I repeat', he said on October 27 at Chileka Airport, 'the Portuguese have said nothing. As a matter of fact I am going to land in Portuguese territory now. The plane I am taking is a Portuguese plane, not a Malawi plane. Where I am going to speak is a Portuguese border. I am landing on Portuguese soil by the permission and good relationships with Lisbon. The Portuguese have arranged everything there . . . Therefore, who is imperialistic and colonialistic? So far as I am concerned, not the Portuguese . . . The people who shout most against imperialism are themselves imperialistic.'

In the midst of this war of words Dr. Banda announced that he had commissioned a fleet of gunboats to patrol Lake Malawi. Manned by members of the Malawi Young Pioneers, they had orders to fight in case of trouble with their neighbours.

Such are the lengths to which anti-Communist and pro-imperialist external policies have step by step led Malawi. The results have amply justified the warnings expressed by the veterans and militants of the Malawi liberation movement at the time they broke with Banda.

Naturally, their criticisms were not confined to matters of external policy.

GOOD LIFE FOR WHITES

Among other points of difference between Dr. Banda and the Congress militants were:

1. Banda's decision to accept the recommendations of the Skinner commission that the salaries of civil servants be pegged.
2. Banda's decision to impose a charge of 3d. per person for all out-patient treatment at government hospitals. Previously (under Federation) all hospital services had been free.

3. Banda's reluctance to Africanise the administration, and his appointment of Whites (often South Africans) to the boards of Air Malawi, the Bank of Malawi, the Malawi Development Corporation, and other public and semi-public posts.

All these reactionary decisions were a blow to the aspirations of the people. They struck not merely at the Congress militants, but at the entire educated elite from which they were drawn and on whose position of leadership in the community their powers were based: the civil servants, the teachers, all those who by virtue of their training and education, as well as their service to the party, had hoped for greater and faster advancement after independence.

The *Rand Daily Mail* was able to report as late as June 27, 1967:

To visit Malawi today is to be transported back to the palmy days of bygone colonial life and a way of existence that has largely vanished from Black Africa during the past decade. The wind of change has scarcely ruffled the surface of Malawi society . . .

The White community, now numbering about 12,000, is enjoying unparalleled conditions of prosperity and good living. In fact, since independence, the number of Europeans in Malawi has increased by as much as 25 per cent. White administrators and technicians fill official posts; the Presidential entourage is largely White; and the District Commissioners (now called government agents) are in many places still expatriates. The army and the police, including the C.I.D. are White controlled, while Dr. Banda receives the Rhodesian intelligence reports regularly. Business houses have been little troubled by the cry of 'Africanisation' and all responsible jobs in commerce and industry and such industry as there is, are held by Whites.

Even in colonial times, the White population never enjoyed such halcyon days.

Dr. Banda right from the outset stated he had no intention of Africanising at the expense of efficiency. Between 1960 and 1965 the number of senior posts held by Africans rose from 104 to 570, but 901 top posts were still held by non-Africans. (*Training for Localisation in the Public Service in Malawi* by M.J. Berman, *Journal of Local Administration Overseas*, January 1966).

It was only in 1969, five years after independence, that an African was elected for the first time to the executive of the Malawi Chamber of Commerce. On February 5, 1969, the *Johannesburg Star* quoted a Malawi Minister, Mr. Eric Nyasulu, as saying the services of all expatriates in Malawi would be retained as long as they were necessary, no matter what other countries might say and do at the Organisation of African Unity and elsewhere.

The paper added:

Half of Malawi's twelve Permanent Secretaries are Europeans, and the head of the civil service is himself a White. In the police and army, a similar situation applies. The highest military rank so far obtained by an African is that of major. No African policeman has yet been promoted above the rank of superintendent.

It would appear that Dr. Banda is relying on the Whites not only for efficiency but also for his own personal security.

In breaking with the Congress militants, 'manifestly the most able in the party' (Pike), Dr. Banda 'cut himself off by his arrogance from the sources of his popular strength' (*New York Times*, September 21, 1964). And it was only a month after independence that the breach in the ranks of the Malawi Congress Party was revealed. Early in August 1964 Colin Cameron, the only White minister in the Malawi Government, resigned in protest against Dr. Banda's proposal to introduce regulations for preventive detention. On September 8, 1964, Dr. Banda dismissed Chiume, Chirwa and Bwanausi from the Cabinet, and also dismissed Mrs. Rose Chibambo, a leader of the League of Malawi Women and Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources. Chisiza and Chokani resigned in sympathy, to be followed by Chipembere on his return from Canada.

After the dismissals and resignations, Dr. Banda was left only two Cabinet Ministers, and has ever since had the greatest difficulty in finding men of talent and ability, let alone popular support, to serve him. Unwilling to preside over any sort of collective leadership and demanding absolute obedience, he has driven from the party all men of independent mind and initiative.

INSURRECTION

The breach in the Congress Party ranks was at first accompanied by an insurrection, in which the Congress militants appeared to enjoy widespread support amongst the people. But relying on his British-officered forces, Banda put down the revolt with the utmost severity. One of the rebel leaders, Medson Evans Silombela, was publicly hanged in Zomba prison in 1967. The bullet-ridden body of Yatuta Chisiza, who entered Malawi from exile in Tanzania at the head of an armed force, was placed on public exhibition in Blantyre in October of the same year after the incursion had been smashed by the Malawi security forces. Eight of those who had accompanied Chisiza on this enterprise were hanged in Zomba Prison in March 1969 after being found guilty of treason by a British High Court judge Sir Peter Watkin-Williams. Dr. Banda accompanied this punitive action in the field with a thorough purge of the Congress Party membership at all levels.

The result has been that the Malawi Cabinet has been converted from an instrument of leadership into a cabal of yesmen. On December 31, 1968, the *Johannesburg Star*, noting that Dr. Banda had reshuffled his Cabinet twice in the previous three months, commented:

Clearly Dr. Banda is finding difficulty in extracting the best from the men at his disposal, and in laying down an efficient framework within which they can work. The sheer number of Cabinet changes within the past two years is sufficient testimony to this: four major reshuffles and a similar number of smaller Ministerial changes of responsibility. The principal reason for such frequent Government reorganisation appears to be the relatively small number of Ministers of Cabinet ability Dr. Banda has available to him.

At present the Cabinet is at its smallest since independence—with eight Ministers handling between them double that number of portfolios.

Chief of Dr. Banda's aides, now regarded as his presumptive heir (so long as the present set-up lasts), is the youngest of them all, Aleke Banda, aged 28—no relation to the President. Aleke Banda was born in Rhodesia but deported to Nyasaland after being jailed in the 1959 emergency. His path to the leadership has been paved by a combination of hard work and sycophantic devotion to his President. Now Minister of Finance, he has also served as a secretary-general of the Malawi Congress Party, leader of the League of Malawi Youth, director general of the Broadcasting Corporation and first editor of *Malawi News*. He has also won his spurs in Dr. Banda's team as chief trade negotiator with the South Africans, and has headed a mission to the Republic.

Cut off from the masses, Dr. Banda has had to rule by force. Armed with powers as sweeping and arbitrary as any wielded by the Vorster regime in South Africa, Dr. Banda is able to detain his opponents without trial, seize their property, ban the publication of their writings and speeches, exile them to remote areas and place them under other restrictions. If they are expatriates he can deport them. He has used these extensive powers indiscriminately against his opponents of all races, classes, tribes and nationalities. Over 1,000 former party stalwarts are still rotting in detention.

But Dr. Banda has gone further in his bid to strengthen his personal position. He has also tried to create artificially an elite class amongst his people whose interest will lead them to support his programme. Turning to the youth, he founded in 1964 the organisation known as the Young Pioneers, specially adapted to Malawi's needs by Israeli advisers. The *Johannesburg Star* reported on January 30, 1968:

The Young Pioneers have a dual function. Primarily they are the spearhead of Malawi's army of reconstruction. But they are also an arm of the security forces with direct responsibility to their Commander-in-Chief, President Banda.

At the end of 1965 their special position was recognised by Act of Parliament. Young Pioneers cannot be kept under arrest without permission from their commanding officer—which effectively means President Banda. Permission is also required before the police or the army can release a prisoner taken by the Young Pioneers.

The Young Pioneers undergo training on military lines. The first training bases were set up in the south, at Amalika, near Cholo, and at Nasawa, near the capital, Zomba. By 1968 another 14 bases had been established, and seven more were planned. The intention was to have a Young Pioneers base in every district of the country by 1970. During 1968 each base was provided with an airstrip, and groups of Young Pioneers began training as pilots under a scheme being operated by Air Malawi and the Department of Civil Aviation. The *Star* of January 7, 1969, commented: 'Since, in times of crisis, the pioneers can play a military role, the airstrips are strategic as well as an administrative asset'.

A Youth Brigade has been formed to enable schoolchildren to get a grounding in the aims of the Young Pioneers before they reach the age where they become eligible to join. Today there are over 5,000 members of the Young Pioneers, several hundred of them women. Dr. Banda has also introduced military-style training methods in the League of Malawi Women and has used them with great effect (his 'Amazons' as he calls them) in the various struggles with his opponents.

BANDA REVIVES TRIBALISM

The charge has also been levelled against Banda that he has revived tribalism in Malawi as a means of bolstering his power structure. In a most persuasive article *White Africa's Black Ally* published in the September-October 1967 issue of *New Left Review*, Andrew Ross, pastor of a group of churches in Malawi in the post-independence period, states that Banda, far from filling the role of nation-builder has, on the contrary, turned into 'a tribalist destroyer of a nation'. After the break with the young militants in the Congress Party, Banda consciously sought to weed out the educated men from positions of power and influence. In the villages 'the headmen became part of the new regime'. Ross speaks of their reborn sense of self-confidence and authority.

The most dramatic form this took was the open 'cleanings' of villages by witch-finders called in by the headmen. Headmen, recently written off as 'Colonialist stooges', were again men of weight and prestige

Banda, in seeking a personal base of power in Malawi, turned not to a tribe, but to the whole class of people left aside by the rise of the new men. First, he pandered to the older generation of semi-educated men who saw with

bitterness the top jobs in government going to the young graduates. Second, and much more important, he pandered to those who held traditional power in rural society, who had seen this power bolstered by the British, but diminished first by Congress and then by the Malawi Government . . .

The apparent tribalist revival in Malawi, on closer examination, seems to be a social counter-revolution.

Even the move of the capital Zomba to Lilongwe, opposed by a British commission but supported by a South African one, seems to have motivated at least in part by Dr. Banda's desire to promote his interests among the Chewa who dominate in the central region. Banda himself is a Chewa. Most of Banda's opponents were non-Chewa, and Banda has deliberately fostered Chewa chauvinism in his fight against them. In September 1968, Chewa was made of of Malawi's two official languages, the other being English.

Banda himself has paraded in the guise of paramount chief to strengthen his appeal to the tribalist elements. The Congress militants had themselves prepared the Malawi public for his assumption of this role, and he was not slow to realise the advantages. He travels, Pike reports, 'a fly-whisk in his hand, his entourage preceded by a modern version of the praise-maker—a land-rover fitted with loudspeakers—and welcoming groups of ululating women symbolically sweeping the ground with brushwood in front of his path. Because of these histrionics, he was immediately recognised as the de facto paramount chief and he rapidly assumed such a position within the minds of the people'.

Special orders were issued providing for the punishment of those who did not give way to Banda's vehicle on the public highway. In the Malawi Parliament practically every speaker includes in his speech reference to Banda as 'the redeemer of the Malawi Nation', 'the Messiah'. In the course of one day's debate—January 31, 1968—the representative of Kasupe West, Mr. Gunda, said: 'Ngwazi is a great leader in Malawi, in Africa, in the world because God blessed him so that he could look after his people. God chose him to be a great leader'. Mr. Mwale, for Kasunga North, said: 'There is only one person in this House who is bold, acceptable, notable, devoted and approachable, (Applause)'. The Minister of Labour, Mr. Chiwanda, made this notable speech which is recorded in its entirety in the Malawi Hansard as follows:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have got only three things to say this afternoon. One is to congratulate my colleague the Minister of Finance on his excellent budget speech.

Secondly I must praise the brilliant speech made by His Excellency the President in this House on Monday especially the part about entering into a Labour Agreement with South Africa. I, as Minister of Labour have the

honour to inform this House that just after His Excellency the President's speech 60 men were registered in the Central Region and that morning 120 men left on Monday to work in South Africa, a further 200 men are supposed to leave on Friday for South Africa.

At the moment my officers are in the Northern Region and the Central Region and other places where we have established centres.

Thank you Mr. Speaker. (Applause).

Dr. Banda has attempted to live in the style to which his status as Paramount Chief, Messiah and Redeemer would entitle him by building a Presidential palace near Blantyre at an estimated cost of £500,000. A report by William Norris in the *London Times* in September 1967 said the palace will have a circular swimming pool 20 ft. in diameter, a huge room for 'large State gifts' and a lesser one for 'small State gifts'. The banqueting hall, Press conference room and many other airy patios are the other amenities.

Norris's report goes on:

One stupendous view from the hilltop, from where Dr. Banda will be able to read 'Long Live Kamuzu' spelt out in white stone on the neighbouring mountainside, is thrown in for nothing.

Another palace, on a similar scale, is to be built at Lilongwe. These are in addition to the two splendid official buildings already occupied by Dr. Banda at Zomba and Blantyre, and the numerous presidential 'lodges' scattered in various parts of the country. Banda also has three Rolls Royces and a £10,000 Mercedes included in his personal transport fleet.

Against this background of ostentatious luxury for Banda, there has been small improvement in the lot of the masses. The years since independence have seen some development in the industrial sphere. By 1966 there were about 200 manufacturing establishments employing some 12,000 workers with a gross output of £10 million—about 10 per cent of the gross domestic product. (Industrial Development in Malawi by N.C. Pollock, *Geography*, v.52. 1967). The *Johannesburg Star* of March 25, 1969, claimed: 'Manufacturing output has more than doubled since independence—from R1 million to R22 million'. There has even been increasing participation in industry by the State through the Malawi Development Corporation. But most of the concerns are small scale. While a hydro-electric project and a sugar mill at one end of the spectrum are positive gains, the manufacture of beer, whiskey, gin, and transistor radios at the other are of more dubious value. There has also been diversification in agriculture, with a variety of new crops grown. But despite the passage in 1967 of laws providing for the conversion from customary tenure to individual title, investment in agriculture has not matched the requirements, and Malawi still has only

4.5 million acres cultivated out of an estimated 11 million acres cultivable. (*Economic Development and Political Change in Malawi* by J.C.Stone, *Journal of Tropical Geography*, December 1968).

Since independence, the annual rate of growth has declined. It was up to 17 per cent in 1965, but down to 10 per cent in 1966, 9 per cent in 1967 and only 2 per cent in 1968: the last being the consequence of a poorer harvest, devaluation and a cut in budgetary aid from Britain (*Star*, March 25, 1969). With 90 per cent of the population dependent in one form or another on agriculture, most at subsistence level, the effects of this decline must be to some extent cushioned. But the inevitable cuts in the standard of living have affected those in the modern sector of the economy who are most demanding improvements.

Such development as there has been has tied Malawi more firmly to the imperialist countries. The major contributors to Malawian development since independence, in addition to Britain and South Africa, are West Germany (agriculture, roads and broadcasting), Denmark (telecommunications and a brewery), Japan (motor vehicles, motor cycles and textiles), the United States and international agencies under Western influence. In agriculture considerable aid has been provided by teams of experts from Taiwan.

Dr. Banda's plans for the future show no change in the pattern. The development programme for 1969 envisages an expenditure of over R24 million, of which R20 million will come from external sources. The enfeebling drain of manpower to the white-dominated countries of Southern Africa continues. In these circumstances whatever progress Malawi manages to achieve will merely place her more firmly under the control of imperialism. The prospect of self-generated capital accumulation, economic viability and real independence will become ever more remote.

Dr. Banda justifies his policies on the grounds that he has no alternative. This is not true. He had an alternative, but he rejected it.

The alternative was to diminish and eventually eliminate Malawi's ties with imperialism and the racist regimes of Southern Africa, to mobilise constructively the creative resources of the country and people, in alliance with peoples of free Africa and the socialist countries, to place the economy of the country on a more secure foundation by planning to meet the needs of the people instead of attempting to attract capital by inciting the greed of foreign investors. This might have proved a harder and tougher road in the short run, but who can doubt that in the long run it would have raised Malawi to a position of greater wealth, freedom and influence than she can possibly hope for under present auspices?

The time will come, perhaps sooner than we think, when the people of Malawi will demand a change of course. For most of them

independence has brought no benefits. All they can see is the wealth of their country being looted by foreigners, with a few jacks in office, sharing the crumbs. The statistics of progress are reflected in the profit charts of the capitalists but not in the homes of the people.

The policies of the Banda regime are not, however, a matter of concern to the people of Malawi alone. Certainly they are the prime victims, and on their shoulders falls the main burden of redeeming the reputation of their country from the low level to which it has fallen. But the pro-imperialist and anti-African attitudes and actions of the Malawi administration are a serious embarrassment and also a threat to its neighbours and to the cause of African unity and liberation.

Banda is the 'rogue elephant' of Africa. He openly flouts the sanctions and boycotts solemnly decided by all African states, against the Portuguese and white racist regimes. He has turned Malawi into an advance base for the adventurist plans of Vorster, Smith and Caetano against Africa. In due course he will have to answer for these misdeeds.

How is it that we, a people deprived of everything, living in dire straits, manage to wage our struggle and win successes? Our answer is: this is because Lenin existed, because he fulfilled his duty as a man, a revolutionary and patriot. Lenin was, and continues to be, the greatest champion of the national liberation of the peoples. Amilcar Cabral (P.A.I.G.C.) addressing the International Symposium 'Lenin and the National Liberation Movement,' Alma-Ata, October 1969.