

MALAWI NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

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RADHE SHYAM

CENTRE FOR WEST ASIAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067, INDIA

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जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067

CENTRE FOR WEST ASIAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES
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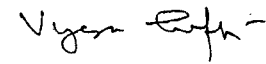
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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled MALAWI NATIONALIST MOVEMENT submitted by Mr. RADHE SHYAM in partial fulfilment for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. To the best of our knowledge this is a bonafide work.

We recommend this dissertation to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


(PROF. ANIRUDHA GUPTA)
CHAIRPERSON


(PROF. VIJAY GUPTA)
SUPERVISOR

DEDICATED TO
ALL MARTYRS OF THE
FREEDOM STRUGGLE

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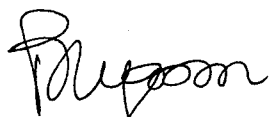
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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Malawi independence movement is one of the striking examples in the history of liberation movement in the Third World in general and Central Africa in particular. The country was formally known as Nyasaland and it achieved independence in 1964 and subsequently came to be known as Malawi.

Since the declaration of Protectorate by the British Government in 1891, the country had been exploited by the White settlers. The natural resources were extracted; Africans were forced to work on white settler's plantations and fields. By introducing various new rules and regulations the European deprived Africans of their lands. Almost all fertile lands of the Africans were grabbed by the Europeans. Thus, the Africans were left on the mercy of the white settlers.

Heavy taxes were imposed on the Malawians. Even the child under fourteen was considered as adult and he was bound to pay the taxes. To pay the taxes, the Africans had to seek employment and were forced to go in search of jobs to the bordering countries i.e. Mozambique, Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and South Africa. As a whole Malawians' condition was miserable and mortality

rate was very high.

The Africans were racially discriminated and were considered as inferior in their own land. The white settlers called them 'uncivilized'. They were not allowed to use even the European dress. Their human rights were denied. They could not live in white residential areas. The African children were not allowed to pursue the study along with white children. All these sufferings forced the Africans to fight against colonialism. Thus emerged the anti-colonial and anti-racial struggle. The new awareness among the Africans challenged the colonial powers. And this forms the content of the present topic.

The first Chapter, 'Colonization' deals with the various methods adopted by the Europeans to colonize the country. In the beginning, the whites patronised the the Christian missionaries to expand and establish the missions and they acted as Philanthropists. Through their missionary activities, they motivated Africans towards European civilizations and demanded land for establishing churches, schools, hospitals etc. Through this method, they acquired lands and colonized the country. And Africans had been deprived of their rights.

The Second chapter, 'Socio-Economic and Political condition of the country and the growth of the nation' highlights

mainly the impact of colonialism on the social, economic and political life of the people. In the field of social life, the Christianity plays the important role in breaking down the social ethics of Africans. Many Christian missions were sponsored by the colonial rule. They taught them European civilization as superior to African and they maintained racial discrimination and segregation. The chapter shows how the Africans reacted against the racial superiority. This chapter also deals with the economic conditions of the country and the introduction of new colonial system like taxes, encroachment of lands, forced labour and deprivation of their land rights. These factors distorted the self-sufficient economy of the Africans and made it part of the colonial economy. The political aspect in the chapter highlights the losing identity of the Africans to the Europeans. The colonial policy of the British deprived Africans of their rights and subjugated them under the colonial power. In the field of political life, the most important event was the emergence of political consciousness among the Malawians and the period witnessed the challenge to the British colonial power by the Africans. They protested against the colonial regime. They challenged the British colonial power and demanded freedom; they brought home the point that freedom is the birth right of

the individual.

The third Chapter focuses attention on why the British government imposed the Federation against the wishes of the Africans, and also why the Africans stood against any kind of amalgamation with Southern Rhodesia is analysed. This chapter discusses the methods adopted by Africans to launch the movement against federation. Constitutional reforms, the split of nationalists into two groups - moderates and extremists, all would be dealt here.

The fourth chapter 'Nationalist movement for total independence' is one of the major chapters. In this chapter, we discuss how the political awareness came to the people and what methods the Africans adopted to challenge the British colonial power. This also deals with the role of the radical and moderate groups while discussing the national struggle. We would evaluate their struggle, projecting its distinguished features. That, through independence struggle how they got united for common purpose, i.e. Independence, is also discussed. The chapter also highlights the personalities like Dr. Hastings Banda who was regarded as a charismatic figure in political arena. The country got independence in 1964, and election was held for the first time for the independent

country. In the general elections, Malawi Congress Party got a sweeping victory. So the focus is on why Malawi Congress Party was so much popular as compared to Nyasaland African Congress.

The last chapter, 'conclusion', summarises the study in short. It also deals with the political condition of the country after independence. In general it discusses about the nature of freedom struggle, and how African freedom struggle is different from that of the rest of the Third World. Finally, it sums up the results of the study in brief.

CHAPTER - ONE

COLONIZATION

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COLONIZATION

Colonisation of Malawi can be traced back to 1885 Berlin Conference although scramble for this rich and fertile land had begun in early mid-19th century. Malawi is a land-locked plateau country. It was in the year 1891 that British declared protectorate over what they named Nyasaland, which is subsequently called Malawi after its independence. The great variations in altitude and latitudinal extent are responsible for a wide range of climate, soil and vegetational conditions within Malawi's comparatively small area of 9,94,081 sq. km. Malawi is fortunate in possessing some of the most fertile soil in south central Africa. Of particular importance is the land area of Malawi which is considered suitable for cultivation of cash crop like tea. The lakes and rivers represent considerable water resources and an irrigation and hydro-electric potential. The rich soil and beautiful climate attracted the European settlers to acquire land and inhabit the beautiful parts of the country. The white settlement complicated colonial governance by introducing racial dimension.

Before the intrusion of the Europeans into Africa as colonial powers, Africans had suffered the cruelties of slave-trade, the lowest level of human degradation. The interest of the Europeans in case of Africa in general was a part of their commercial expansion. The Portuguese under Prince Henry, the navigator, were the first to establish settlement on the West and the East coast of Africa. They were motivated by the desire of breaking the monopoly of the Arab's trade in the East and in parts of Africa. Their missionary zeal to carry the message of Christianity was also another motivating factor, which was appalling in its magnitude and brutal in its methods. The growth of the slave-trade and the huge profits that were made thereby brought other European powers also into Africa. West Africa was the main source of supply of slaves and therefore, it became the scene of rivalry among the European powers. Almost all European powers claimed for subjugation of the 'Dark Continent'. They concentrated first on the mineral resources and slave labour. Because of the Industrial revolution, Britain was particularly interested in capital investment and gaining profits. They had high-technology and skilled-manpower to manipulate the trade with the Africans taking advantage of their underdevelopment in

those sphere. During this period changes occurred in the history of Africa. The period between 1880 and 1935 was the most remarkable period of change. It was the period which saw the conquest and occupation of virtually the whole of Africa by the imperial powers and establishment of the colonial system. In 1885, Berlin conference, with the conquest of Nyasaland, British created a new administration unit. Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, most central and southern Malawi was settled by Bantu-speaking people who were at first a collective part of the vast and widely settled community of Maravi people.¹

The presently known Malawi was the domain of notable tribal groups which were called Nyanja, Chewa, Senga, Tumbuka, Tonga, Marawi, Sena, Zimba, Kunda. The more important ones were the ^Ssena and the Nyanja. These tribes inhabited large areas of the lower Shire valley while the Chewa groups occupied the highlands of the Central regions from where they split over the Rift valley escarpment into the lake-shore areas. The Tumbuka and associated smaller tribes entered the Mzimba Karonga areas of the North; one account in fact places

1. Bridglal, Pachai, "Malawi", The History of the Nation Longnian Group Ltd. (London, 1973), pp. 4-5.

their dominion as far west as the Kofus River.² It is believed that during the 18th and 19th centuries there was a continuous movement of the tribes. This movement led to their fragmentation. The slave trade carried by the Arab and later by Europeans completely disrupted the tenor of life among the (Malawi) people. The extension of slave-trading disrupted the settlement patterns in various areas and brought two southern tribes - the Yao and the Ngoni - to Malawi. These tribes had declared their opposition to slave trade and slave trading tribals. But in the process of defeating the slave traders, capturing slave routes, they captured slave trade and commerce and penetrated the political structures of the erstwhile ruling groups. These two tribes played a vital role as intermediaries in slave trading.

Europeans, particularly the British, also came to Malawi with the same declared mission. They opposed the slave-trading and said that slave-trading was against humanity. But later they themselves took part as main slave traders, exporting slaves from Malawi to other colonies. In the process, the British colonized Malawi and acquired land.

2. J.M. Celinterlesttom, "Outline Histories of this Northern Rhodesian Tribes", Rhodes-livingstone (OUP, 1950), No. IX, published "This is Malawi" Fourth Series, New Delhi, 1966, p. 29.

and forced African labourer to work for European farm and house-hold activities. With the British came the church missionary who played the most important role in colonizing the country. The church worked as a co-ordinator between the Malawian and European settlers. Dr. David Livingstone, undertook mission journeys to the Lake Malawi-Shire valley areas during the year 1850-1866. He came to Malawi as explorer and was the first European who introduced Christianity in Malawi and informed Europe of the physical marvels of the country - Lake Malawi, Lake Chirwa, Mlanja, Zomba mountain and Victoria falls. Christianity was spread in Malawi on the excuse of suppressing slave-trade in the area. The Malawians resisted Christian activities but failed. The first mission, sponsored by the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Durban and Dublin led by Bishop Mackernzie was sent to the southern part of Malawi in 1861. The mission faced resistance by Africans and encountered hostile conditions. This compelled the British to withdraw the campaign in 1876. Meanwhile in 1875, the Free church of Scotland and the church of Scotland had sent out the Livingstone Mission under Robert Laws to end slave-trade and replace it by profitable commercial activities. The success of the Scottish Missionaries brought back the universities Mission and encouraged a group of Scottish business to form in 1878 the African Lakes Trading corporation.

The first trading post in Malawi was set up at Blantyre. Thereafter, another station was opened at Karonga. The Karonga trading post was opened by the London Missionary society. The Blantyre trading post opened up a vast hinterland for trade. Missionary activities were limited to establishment of trading ports. Then other activities included Evangelism, education and medicine. They played a role of permanent importance in the colonization of Malawi.

The aim of the missions' evangelistic work was to convert the people of the Lake to Christianity and convince the British at home that they had gone to Malawi for philanthropic activities like suppressing slave trade and converting the heathens to Christianity. To extend their influence and also show their contribution the Missionaries opened schools and health clinics and distributed clothes to the bare bodied Africans. In this process, they acquired land to build Churches, Schools, clinics and farm land to support the church financially and materially. The main aim of these activities was colonialism and introducing their culture, i.e. religious education and a way of life which they considered was superior to that of the Africans. The function of the

mission School was religious rather than educational. According to Pachai "For the few years he comes under the influence of the Mission what a child is taught of religion is vastly more important than that he should know how to read and write."³

Some of the Malawians received education during the course of evangelism. But they always resented the educational and religious policy of the British. The Africans were particularly opposed to racial education imparted by missionaries when European settlers enlarged in population.

Missionary settlements were thus soon followed by the opening of a number of trading ports. The number of British settlers, including planters, increased so much that by 1883 a British was appointed to the Shire Highlands and accredited to the 'Kings and chiefs of Central Africa'. Six years later in 1889, the British government declared the same area as its protectorate. Now the process of

3. B. Pachai, The Early History of Malawi (London, 1972), pp. 351-352.

subjugation started and door for colonialism was opened to spread and establish the trading posts. The British government claimed that it was obliged to take this step not only to protect the interests of the missionaries and traders but also to check Portuguese ambitions in the areas. By then the 'Scramble for Africa' had begun and all the metropolitan powers sought to secure spheres of influence. In 1891, the British consul for Mozambique, Henry Johnston announced extension of the protectorate to cover the area which came to be known as British Central Africa. In 1907, it was given the name of Nyasaland protractorate and for it a governor was appointed and Executive and Legislative councils were set up which led to the strengthening of colonialism in Malawi.

Land and labour and taxation were the most important issues related to the colonial process by which colonial policy of the British pushed the original inhabitants to deprivation and starvation. We know that before the arrival of the Europeans the nature of ownership of land was based on the traditional view which regarded land as a gift bestowed by God.

Land :

In pre-colonial period in African society, the land did not belong to an individual or a group as such.

In a traditional society, the smallest political unit in respect of land distribution was the hamlet. The hamlet headman held the central position. It was he who managed land distribution and settled land disputes. The headman was not the owner of the land (Mwiniwadziko) He was merely the warden. The chief had the obligation to maintain peace, prosperity and abundance of his subjects. In Chewa society, for example, the chief had a number of advisers called the Amulumuzuna a funuce. In short, land was sacred unit of traditional life. The idea of selling land according to Western concepts was not part of traditional society. In any case, no one had the right to sell land, as legally it did not belong to him.⁴

When Europeans entered Malawi from 1875 onwards whole business of land guardianship and occupation was altered for the benefits of the Europeans. Missionaries, traders and companies competed with one another for traditional lands. And the entire African life was changed. Land had always featured as the most important single attraction in colonial affairs. Sometimes, it was the situation of the land which attracted attention, at other

4. B. Pachai; 'Malawi', The History of Nations', (London, 1973), pp. 94-96.

times, it was the weather of the land either agricultural or mineral or both. Since land generated wealth and wealth generated conflict, land formed the basis for both competition and conflict. The history of land policies in Malawi clearly shows that much of the history of this agricultural country was really the history of land matters, complicated by different concepts of land and occupation.

With the arrival of Europeans, the whole African economic life was severely disrupted. They established new political systems, promulgated laws and set up administrative structures. Roughly speaking, the era of partition and occupation was commonly the period when white rule was at its harshest. They opened new trading posts to explore the raw materials from Malawian to European markets. In the name of missionary activity they got their own company to have commercial purposes. For example, the African Lake corporation founded in 1878, obtained a grant of land from Chief Kapeni of about seven thousand acres and this was approved by the British Administration.⁶ John Buchanan who had come out to work for the Blantyre Mission in 1876, later turned into private enterprise. He obtained 3065 acres of land in exchange of a gun.

6. Ibid., p. 97.

In 1891, the British declared Nyasaland as protectorate. In reality the British were the sole rulers. The Commissioner and consul-general Henry Johnston suggested to the British government that Nyasaland should be ruled by Europeans in order to fully control the central Africa.

After the establishment of protectorate, it was proposed that protectorate should have its own funding source or revenue. The protectorate government came under pressure from the British Treasury for arranging revenue to pay for the colonial administration. Keeping with this policy the British officials concerned themselves with raising the revenue for running the imposed government even at the cost of human rights of the people. This was a general British colonial policy. The area they went to colonize in the name of civilizing it, they made the people of the colony pay for the expenses of the rulers, British soldiers and other imperial agents including the clergy men. The denial of rights resulted in initial dissatisfaction and finally the people raised their voice challenging the British supremacy. This will be discussed in the next chapter. By and large, the British colonial rule acquired almost all land of the country and either distributed it to the Europeans or called it Crown lands. The Africans were x

forced to work for European landlords when ever they fell in the occupied area. The British had managed to obtain huge areas of land from the local rulers and the British officials issued a certificate approving these lease. This certificate was called 'certificate of claim'. Altogether about 3.5 million acre of land, including 2.7 million acres in North for the British South Africa Company were alienated. The important claim and the largest in the country covering the area between the South Rukuru River and Songewe River in the North was granted to the African Lake Company which later transferred it to the British South Company. In the Southern Province, and particularly in the Shire Highland where half of the land was in European hands, conditions were very different indeed, and Shepperson and Price have drawn attention to the importance of land grievance in producing a climate of discontent which was eventually to find expression in the Chilembwe rising of 1915.⁷

As early as 1903 the Land Commission noted that European planters have already assumed the tone and privileges of the feudal seigniors of the native occupier and that 'no tenure is frequently subject to the arbitrary demands of an often autocratic and sometimes uneducated

7. G.S. Shepperson, T. Price, Independent African (Edinburgh 1963), pp. 127-263.

master ... No lease is granted in any case, no compensation for disturbance is awarded and the native tenant tends more and more to become the self or villain of the European owner.⁸ The Africans were alienated from land. In Malawi sixty-six certificates of claim were actually registered, fifty nine with land rights and seven with mineral rights only.⁹ Covering an area of 3,705,255 acres out of a total landholding provided in the protectorate of 25,161,924 acres or 15 percent of the total land area.¹⁰ Except for the grant of 2½ million acres in the northern region, most of the remaining land, around 867,000 acres represented the finest arable lands in the Shire Highlands as well as being the most densely populated part of the country.¹¹ By 1945, 31 per cent of the total population of the country were living on private estates created by Johnson in the Shire Highlands 11 per cent of the whole land area of the protectorate.¹¹

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8. F.O. 2/748, Land Commission to Peace, 6 May, 1903 Quoted in R.H. Palmer, "A comparative study in the imposition of colonial rule" in B. Pachai, ed., The Early History of Malawi, pp. 314-315.
 9. Information obtain from Deeds Registry, Land Office, Blantyre, 1972.
 10. Report of a Commission to enquire into and report upon certain matters connected with the occupation of land in the Nyasaland protectorate, 1920.
 11. S.1/385/23 Enclosure I in No. 75 particulars of land Alienation, 23 February, 1929, National Archives, Zomba.

In Nyasaland, where African population was 1,650,00, less than 1800 Europeans monopolised the most fertile lands of the alienated area, 72.3 per cent of which was in the hands of eleven large scale holders including the British South Africa Company.¹²

Labour :

In order to make Africans work on European occupied land the Nyasaland administration forced Africans to work. This was done by making them landless and charging them taxes which the Africans had to pay in cash, which could be earned only by undertaking wage labour of producing cash crops.

Use of tax collection was the main method of forcing the African to work for Europeans. Laws were introduced to force Africans to pay the taxes. Collection methods were very harsh, Africans were forced to pay taxes for themselves and for their huts. The chiefs or head men were turned into tax collectors. The employers were empowered to collect taxes from their employees and in return were entitled to exact labour payment.

12. T. Ganesh, Colonialism in Africa, (New Delhi, 1952).

Every adult member had to pay six shillings annually. This was called the poll tax. It could be paid in money, in produce, in live stock or in labour. Poll and Hut tax was to be paid, failing to pay these taxes, Africans were tortured, their villages were burnt down, the land which remained with them were confiscated. The British used police force to collect taxes. The police brutalities increased so much that Nyasaland Commissioner W.G. Birthrey noted that "Basa Askai" referred to police, hardly functioned as genuine policemen at all. So they are perhaps entirely engaged for collection of Hut tax and escort cash collectors. In the pre war period, police under the command of district officers, were active in the 1920s in coercing labour, mainly for work with the public work department.

Working condition of labour was so miserable that even children under fourteen years were forced to work in mines. The coercion of labour was at its most brutal form in the early days when white attempted to intensify indigenous production derived from the collection of natural products. Forced labour commonly suffered from a high rate of sickness and mortality; it also disrupted

village life. Africans were compelled to cultivate marketable produce. Many were forced to grow cash crops. The labour was not only recruited for European farms in Malawi but also for South Africa. The migration from Malawi was so massive that it totally disrupted the political and economic structure of Malawi.

In the 1930s there were certain districts in Nyasaland where more than half the adult male population was away from home at any one time. The consequences of labour migration on such a scale were vividly described in a report published by the Nyasaland government in 1936. "As our investigation proceeded" wrote the members of the committee who produced the report "We became more and more aware that this uncontrolled and growing emigration brought misery and poverty to hundreds and thousands of families and that the waste of life, happiness, health and wealth was colossal". If emigration was allowed to continue on its present scale, thought the investigator, "home life will cease to exist: all belief in the sanctity of marriage will disappear. Large tracts of land will be rendered unfit for habitation, and in consequence, the economic life of the whole community will suffer seriously".

"... Resident chiefly in other lands, the Nyasaland born natives will have acquired a complete

mistrust in and loathing for administration by white people which has made milderness and called it peace."¹³

Taxation :

Between 1891 and 1914 European settlers arrived in large number. The labour shortage became problem for settlers and the administration. The settlers demanded that the government was duty-bound to supply labour.

The government adopted various measures to directly or indirectly force the African to work. Taxation on Africans facing them to pay tax in cash which could be mainly obtained by working for administration or settlers, was used to force the African to work. The government issued ordinance to impose National Hut tax and Poll tax.

Hut tax :

Hut tax was imposed in 1892, the amount was six shillings per annum in those districts over which the whites held effective control. The tax was collected in arbitrary

13. Report of the Committee to enquire into emigrant labour (Zomba, 1936) quoted in R. Gray 'The Two Nations' From Robin Hallet, Africa Since 1975, (London, 1975), p. 525.

manners and it was excessive. Yet Africans were forced to pay. The tax was collected first in the lower Shire, Blantyre and Zomba districts and was gradually extended up the Shire to the Lake. By 1894, tax was being collected in eight districts.¹⁴ The Nyasaland chartered company extended its position for the first time by setting up two new post at Pemba Bay and Lurio. The most important event of 1898 was the introduction of hut tax. This was collected from a total of 10,709 huts, 4,776 at Quissanga, 3,770 at Ibo, 1,535 at Palma and 628 at Mocimboa.¹⁵

In 1898 hut tax yielded around £800, after the first stage of conquest, it produced £1,275 and in 1903 after a period of consolidation, this rose to £3,105. The largest increase in revenue came after the 1912 campaign when hut tax yielded £ 31,430 and once again this rose after a period of consolidation to £48,232.¹⁶

The Nyasaland government charged tax from every male over 14. The unmarried men were covered by the poll and married men by the hut tax. The hut tax was

14. R.H. Palmer, "Johnston & Jameson: A Comparative Study in the imposition of colonial rule," quoted in B. Pachai, The Early History of Malawi (London, 1972), pp.305-306.

15. D. Amrini, "Report for 1898, in Cambell's Travellor's Records", pp. 207-9.

16. Barry Neill, Tomlinson, "The Nyasa Chartered Company: 1891-1929" Journal of African History, XVIII, 1 (1977) pp. 109-128.
The Nyasa Chartered Company was founded in 1894.

payable on account of any wife in excess of one, whether or not she occupied a separate hut: it was also payable by any adult unmarried woman who owned a hut. For taxes not paid before September 30 the rate was raised to 9 shillings. The emigrant labour committee explained the necessity of charging tax in cash stating that accepting payment in kind had no meaning as there was no organisation for the disposal of the produce accepted.

The penalty for tax defaulters was imprisonment upto six months, and the forfeiture of the hut. Exemptions were given to widows and persons prevented from raising the tax by age, disease, or infirmity. The defaulters were made to work for Public Works Departments.

The tax was supposed to be equivalent to about one month's wage but the burden was relatively heavy as the employers did not pay the full amount in one month. This according to Emigrant Labour Committee of 1935 was regarded as one of the principal causes of the exodus of young men from the territory.¹⁷

17. Report of the Committee appointed to enquire into Emigrant labour, 1935, p. 20.

In some cases, Johnston had to convert the poll tax into a hut tax where it was clear that a number of adults living in a single hut were unable to pay the tax separately. For the purpose of taxation a fourteen year old was deemed to be an adult.

From the beginning the nature of collection was inhuman. Many of the Malawians migrated as labourers to neighbouring countries in search of jobs to pay the taxes.

On the other hand, Africans were abused, were considered as lazy, lacking an economic urge to work and would work only under compulsion. Though the government had made a policy to safeguard the Africans, their villages against their treatment as serfs or tenants of the planters. However, the planters were still able to exploit the residents for labour. The 'tenent system was so oppressive that the residents were compelled to work for two months. Residents were moved from one estates to another and were not allowed to grow their own crops or cut timber for building their huts. They were beaten up on certain estates if they would not work. Most African residents were forced to accept these hardships. In most cases, agreements were verbal and there was no law to enforce written agreements. Africans therefore, had no

legal protection.¹⁸

In short policy of labour and taxation was used to serve the interests of the European settlers who had grabbed African land. The African had also to carry on his person a pass which contained the account of his employment and tax payment activities. The pass was also used to regulate the mobility of the Africans.

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The policy of land alienation for Crown and Europeans, labour procurement and taxation resulted in the dispersal of thousands of Africans throughout the country, thereby giving rise to a process of steady disintegration and disorganisation of African society. On the positive side a few thousand Africans became labourers on European's farms or moved to urban areas as wage earners, coming in touch with modern techniques of production. Old production relations were broken and new developed. The new relations developed in the framework of superimposition of modern money economy over the old

18. B.S. Krishnamurthy, "Economic Policy: Land and Labour in Nyasaland, 1890-1914", quoted in B. Pachai, The early history of Malawi, (London: Longman Group Ltd. 1972), pp. 395-96.



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subsistence economic sector. The dialectics of the new economic structure was employer-employee, land grabbers-landless, ruler-the ruled, trader-the consumer. The new relationship ushered in capitalist exploitation of labour. In the following years, the contradictions sharpened with the emergence of European's dominant economic class over the weak impoverished Africans.¹⁹

19. Vijay Gupta, Kenya: Politics of (in)dependence, (New Delhi, 1981), p. 31.

CHAPTER - TWO

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF THE
COUNTRY AND GROWTH OF MALAWI NATION

CHAPTER - TWO

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF THE
COUNTRY AND GROWTH OF MALAWI NATION

With the arrival of the Europeans in Malawi the social, economic and political life of the people underwent a considerable change. New ways of life were introduced and culture of the country was replaced with new systems and with new practices. The impact of these changes were evident on their social institutions, economic mode of life and the political system.

In the last chapter on 'Colonization' we have discussed the process of the country's colonization. The ways in which Europeans manipulated the social, cultural, economic and political life of the Africans. The present chapter deals with the socio-economic and political conditions of the country and the factors which led to the emergence of nationalism.

Before the arrival of the Europeans, we had seen that they had their own mode of life where communal ownership over the natural resource was practiced, even though society was graded in a hierarchical order. African society neither conformed to any particular class division,

nor was it classless and indifferentiated. It was composed of tribal groups which maintained their solidarity based on language and habitation. Within the tribe itself there was distinction with different stratas between chief and the common people.

There was a measure of democracy in tribal society. The rules governing tribal life were laid down by customs. The chief had, no doubt, considerable executive and judicial power, but when important issues were involved, he consulted other members, followed by considerable discussion. The tribe had a code of ethics of its own which was generally observed by its members. Such a society was presumably, self-sufficient to meet their socio-economic needs.

The impact of colonial administration on tribal institution was two-fold, on the one hand, it affected the breaking down of the tribal system and on the other by reducing the power of the chiefs and traditional leaders. It greatly undermined the communal and clan responsibility and adversely affected the kinship and communal ties. Tribal authorities were replaced either by Europeans or natives appointed without regard to tribal custom and tradition, thereby weakening the prestige of tribal authority in the eyes of the tribal people. The influence of Christi-

anity also had the same effect which will be discussed in the main body of the chapter. The introduction of colonial economy further upset the traditional self-sufficient character of rural economy. The introduction of cash-crop production in the rural areas created new social classes and produced new consumption habits.

The white settlement resulted in alienating the land of Africans and shifting them away from their home land. The weakening of the power of the chief led to the downfall of the tribal solidarity. With the coming of the Europeans, tribal unity was disrupted.

In social life, the impact of Christianity was one of the major threats to the Africans. It posed one of the biggest challenges to the cultural and political independence of the area. Christian missionaries from their earliest contacts were active protagonists for the extension of colonial rule. During the course of expansion, many Christian missions were established, projecting that Europeans were more civilized people having inherent racial superiority. They were better equipped to civilize the Africans. But their act of civilization included practices of slave-trading recruitment of African workers for Europeans plantations, industries and mines. This led to Africans being forced

to live detestable life and their survival became dependent on the mercy of the colonial masters.

Missionaries were also involved in the breaking-down of the unity among the tribal groups. The two prominent tribal groups i.e. Yao and Ngoni were put against each other in slave-trading activities and missionaries took advantage of their differences.

In the field of education, African children were taught in missionary schools. The basic aim was to attract them towards colonial policy. We have already outlined that to show their contribution, the missionaries opened schools, health clinics and distributed clothes to the Africans. In the educational institutions, the African pupils were taught religious books and asked to respect the superiority of the white (masters). Even in the schools, racism was practiced. In the school, African pupils were segregated on the basis of their colour. They were not allowed to mix with white children. There were separate and better schools for the white and African children. The school courses had appreciation for the colonial country and degenerated the African history and culture.

In the white residential areas, Malawians could not be allowed to build houses nor were accommodated. They were forced to live in rural areas, even these were over-crowded. They suffered paucity of water, drainage, sanitation and general living conditions. Africans had to obtain permits if they wanted to reside, look for work or to visit towns and to live along the railway line even for the time being. Like their brothers in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, they had to carry an identification certificate on person and to produce it wherever asked for by any policemen or white men. None could move freely at night without a special pass.¹

Africans were discriminated by both the white officials and the settlers. They were subjected to a similar type of abuse from white foreman and policemen. Racial discrimination was one of the most hurting issues which discriminated Africans life. Malawian was degraded and insulted in his own land and considered as uncivilized and hence inferior to the whites.

1. Robert I Rotberg, The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa, (London: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 51.

Discrimination was practiced in the case of residential areas, job opportunities and civic amenities. The Africans had no representation on political bodies (legislature, executive and judiciary). The whole society was divided on the basis of colour of skin or race and racism dominated political, economic and social culture.

General racial discrimination and the attitude and behaviour of the Christian missionaries generated social tension which ultimately provided impetus to the rise of new political consciousness among the Africans. The famous African rebellion known as Chilembwe rising of 1915 was the earliest expression of African revolt. The rebellion started by Chilembwe the head of an independent African Church in CHIRADZULU, Chilembwe belonged to the Yao tribe. He had studied at the Blantyre Mission. His entire life was changed when an English Missionary Joseph Booth started a mission at Mitsidi with its main station near Blantyre. Booth taught Chilembwe true Christian values and ideas of equality of man, the faith in the God and service of man in total regard of colour or creed. Booth spread the egalitarian ideas. In his speech he criticised the colonial power for poverty and dissatisfaction of the Africans through his mission - "I

have never felt so utterly ashamed of myself and my fellow countrymen as I have since coming here."²

Chilembwe was inspired by the Christian missionary and established his own providence mission and became the leading propagator. He asked for equal rights, political, social and economic justice for Africans; the development of African education along the technical lines of the European world, independent African activity in all economic field; a just settlement, the encouragement of a pro-African press and literature and the growth of independent African Christianity.³

Chilembwe went to the United States around 1897 and spent nearly three years in the United States. During his three years, he addressed a number of meetings and seminars organized by the American Negroes. He asked the Negroes to resist against social and political discrimination and radicalized the American Negroes on social issues.⁴

Chilembwe came back to Nyasaland in late 1900 and spread his mission throughout the Chiradzulu and

2. Robert, Ibid., p. 61.

3. Ibid., p. 62.

4. Ibid., p. 63.

neighbouring Mlanje districts, to some extent, even in Southern Rhodesia and Mozambique. He established a chain of independent African schools. He was awaring the Africans through various ways. He opposed almost all socio-economic and political policies of the British. He preached a new culture under which all African could raise the slogans of 'Africa for Africans' and called upon Malawians to rise against the Colonialists. These activities regenerated the discriminated Africans. Malawians revolted against the colonialists. The colonial government brutally suppressed the 1915 rising. Chilembwe was the main hero of 1915 rebellion. The Government offered £ 20 as reward for the capture of the ring leader Chilembwe. He was shot dead by eight policemen at noon on February 3, 1915. While he was taking rest near the Portuguese East African border. After 1915, the impact of Chilembwe was widespread it could be felt in the private estates, in the missions, in the legislative council chambers. The independence was yet a long way off.

1915 marked the end of the old era. What happened in 1953 and 1959 was a lengthening of the shadow and a reinforcement of all that it stood for. Chilembwe's rebellion was not a mere symbolic blow. It was a real instrument of change, even if it was fifty years ahead of its times. His colleague Willie J. Mokalapa, the orga-

nizer of Barotse land Church opposed the missionary education. They openly claimed that the missionaries treated them as inferior.

Chilembwe uprising was a great threat to the European powers. The British were convinced to crush the rebellion. The British South African Company (BSAC) conducted a veritable witchhunt against the African employees of Christian Mission in Northern Rhodesia. This reflected a deeply held conviction that the activities of black evangelists, who had played so prominent a role in the Chilembwe disturbances, represented a major threat to the very survival of the colonial state.⁵

During the course of agitation against the racial discrimination, the Negro preacher Richard Allen opposed the colour bar of the orthodox American Methodist Church and established African Methodist Church. Independently, a small group of mission-trained African Methodists resigned from the South African Wesleyan Church in 1892 and formed the Ethiopian Church. The basic aim of these Churches was to break away from the vested interests of the Western Churches and to raise "an African Church for Africans" and to make the people aware of the colonial

5. Edmund, York, "The Spectre of a Second Chilembwe: Government, Missions, and Social Control in Wartime Northern Rhodesia, 1914-1918, Journal of African History, Printed in Great Britain.

policies of the British. In reaction to the alliance between their traditional overlords and the Europeans on the spot, the people of Chewa tribe resisted. It was further argued that Scottish educated English-speaking protestant elite Malawians were fighting colonial rule throughout Central and South Africa.

The British Colonial policy resulted in the emergence of nationalist ideas. The colonial policy of the British was challenged by the Malawians both traditional and new elite. The revolt initially started with the educated youth and the Africans who had been in the Europeans missionary schools. Their revolt was particularly against both, traditional conservative forces and the white rulers.⁶

In the political field, the traditional authorities wanted the continued acceptance of the hereditary principle and resisted to change in their political and social institutions. The educated elite initially accepted the values and goals of the white rulers, and desired that this acceptance should be taken at face value by white society but later they also changed their

6. M.L. Chanock, "Ambiguities in the Malawian Political Tradition", African Affairs, Vol. 74, No. 296, pp. 340-41, July, 1975.

position. However, no satisfactory account exists of the political adjustment made by the traditional rulers, the chief and headmen during the colonial period. Following the development of political awareness, many native associations were formed. They acted as political platforms. Between 1912 and 1930, there was a positive development of associations. The associations became the beginning of a consciously organized anti-colonial movement which can be traced back to the year 1912. When Southern Africa witnessed the birth of one major African mass-movement for liberation in the Union of South Africa - The African National Congress. The Malawians got inspired from the parental organization and established many political association to raise their voice and demand their rights. During the time, associations like Southern Province Native Association was established in 1922 having different centres, "The Central Provinces Native Association in 1927, 'The Representative Committee of the Northern Provinces Native Association' in 1924. The earliest Associations were the 'North Nyasa Native Association' in 1912, the 'West Nyasa Native Association' 1914 and the 'Mombera Native Association' 1920.⁷

7. B. Pachai, The History of the Nation, (London, 1973), p. 225.

All the associations had common aims and objectives based on a document prepared by Levizililo Mumba, one of the founders of the associations. These were firstly, to keep the government informed of African opinion and thus assist it in its work, secondly, to keep the Africans informed of the laws introduced by the government and thus to assist them in understanding the objects of such laws. Thirdly, to organize public meetings where matters of general or special interest to the African people might be discussed.

The 'North Nyasa Native Association', which was constituted in 1912 was the representative body of the educated men and this gave a good deal of attention to the chief judicial claims. Another important development of that year was the introduction of the 'District Administration Ordinance' in 1912 which enabled the government to appoint principal headmen to assist it in local administration. The lacuna behind the appointment of the headmen was that they were not suitable to act between the government and the Africans because of their lack of education. It was not the intention of the educated men to isolate the principal headmen or traditional chiefs but really to ensure that the African voice was truly represented and committed by those who were in the best position to do so.

The Members Native Association, formed in January 1920 was an amalgamation of both new elite and traditional leaders and expressed clearly the joint ideology of its membership. The Association aimed "making people understand the necessity and value of order, and the value of industrious labour". "In short the value of civilization as against ignorance, laziness, disloyalty and anarchy. Six year later the Association wrote that it was "... well aware that where idleness, pride, disobedience, false independence and negligence of all useful occupation is strongly rooted, there is impossibility or real progress."⁸

The first important step towards the formation of a national political body was taken when the 'Representative Committee of the Northern Provinces Native Association' was formed in Zomba in December 1924. This served as a single mouthpiece for three of the major and senior native associations in the country.

The Y.S. Mwase one of the early livingstonia graduates, who opened an independent church and educational society. He was more concerned with the working class problems. He opposed the protectorate colonial rule

8. M.L. Chanock, "Ambiguities in the Malawian Political Tradition", African Affairs No. 296, Vol. 74, July 1975, p. 331.

and held the British responsible for the inadequacy of wages. He asserted that "... the wages of a working man should be the first charge and the rewards of capital should always be second, with a warning that an underpaid man was ... not easily accessible to the message of God's grace'. He described wage employment in the conditions of the west Nyasa district in 1929 as 'Slavery in disguise', and exploitation of the native".⁹

He criticised the teaching of Christianity by Europeans and marked them as 'colonial Christianity'. Y.S. Mwase complained that mission teachers exploited the villagers economically and added darkly that '... self engrossment or monopolism in matters which are communal is an outrage against the community ... ecclesiastics stand in the way of real progress.'¹⁰

Levi Mumba, a man of country wide prominence in the Native Association, one of the leaders of the Representative Committee stressed on the social disintegration, which had resulted from the European presence: "The European came with his individualism and thrust it on the native.

9. Ibid., p. 331.

10. Ibid., p. 334.

If there is any one thing more than all others which has changed and spoiled a primitive people with no education for guidance, it is this individualism, I hate individualism, because it has suddenly torn the son from the father, or one man from another."¹¹ Mumba attacked the colonial legal system for contributing to the breaking down of traditional communalism.

While Mumba was doing his work for creating awareness about the political intentions of the organization and the government attitude towards the Africans in the North, Frederick Sangala and Lewis Mataka Bandawe and others were laying the foundations in the South for the formation of a national body. F. Sangala came to Blantyre from Zomba in 1938 and became the assistant secretary of the Blantyre Native Association. At the same time he formed the 'parents and guardians Educational Association'. Some of the Europeans were equally important in growing awareness among the Malawians. They were W.H. Timke and M.E. Lesli.

The most important political association, the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) was established in October 1944, attended by over two hundred and fifty Africans. Levi Mumba delivered the presidential address. By 1959 the Nyasaland African Congress achieved a national

11. Ibid., p. 335.

character as the sole political platform. It also achieved a status of a mass-nationalist movement. In the same year there were disturbances in entire country. Movement, against Nyasaland being dragged to join the Southern Rhodesia led Central African Federation got momentum.

In course of development of colonial administration, Nyasaland had been brought under the Federation with neighbouring countries i.e. Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia in 1953. Among these three countries, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia had been under the protectorate of the British Crown since 1891, and had been expecting grant of self-government. The Federation of the two African Protectorates with a self-governing white settlers ruled was against the wishes of the people of two protectorates. The people of the Protectorates were fully aware that by federating with white settlers' Southern Rhodesia, they would be deprived of their rights.

The Federation had been imposed against the wishes of two Protectorates. There was considerable unrest and violence against the Federation in different forms which will be discussed in detailed in the next chapter. Following the situation, the 'State of Emergency' was declared in 1959 and many nationalists leaders were arrested and put into jail. These acts of violence helped the nation-

alists in gaining momentum to overthrow the colonial power.¹²

Following the state emergency, the Nyasaland African Congress was banned and declared illegal. But the floodgates had been opened and the movement could not be held in check. Many leaders like Aleke Banda came from Rhodesia to Malawi to activate the political activities. During the agitation, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda who was practising as medical doctor in London, had been invited by the nationalists to help them organize anti-colonial struggle. Violating the emergency regulations most leaders moved around the country preaching end to Federation and the movement turned violent. Malawians expressed their readiness to sacrifice any thing for their sole aim of 'Independence'. Dr. H. Banda along with his followers was put into Jail in Southern Rhodesia under the state Emergency in 1959. Around this time other political activists came on the scene another political party the Malawi Congress Party was established on 30 September 1959. The aim of the Malawi Congress Party was to reunite the adherents of the suppressed Nyasaland African Congress which had been banned. The Malawi Congress Party demanded

12. Endre Sik, The History of Black Africa, vol. III, (Budapest, 1974), pp. 390-391.

the immediate release of the arrested political leaders and introduction of universal adult suffrage. The Malawi Congress Party also asked an elected African majority in the Legislative Assembly.

The nationalist bitterly condemned the imposition of Federation. In the next chapter, we will discuss the protest movement against the Federation, and will see the strategies adopted by the nationalist forces.

CHAPTER - THREE

EARLY PROTEST MOVEMENT AND OPPOSITION TO
FEDERATION

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EARLY PROTEST MOVEMENT AND OPPOSITION TO FEDERATION

The imposition of Federation on August 1, 1953, marked the turning point in the history of nationalist movement in Malawi. In the last chapter we had already discussed the socio-economic and political conditions and emergence of a new political awareness in that country. The nationalists were gaining momentum to overthrow the colonial rule. The Chilembwe Revolt of 1915 had laid the foundation of freedom struggle against British colonialism and racial segregation. This movement was also an expression of resentment against British economic and political policies. The Africans had raised the slogan of "Africa for Africans" and had expressed their anger against Europeans whether the latter were missionaries, administrators, Traders or planters and mine owners. The people were no longer inclined to accept and bear the economic burden and political segregation. On the other hand, British were well entrenched in central Africa and were prepared to go to any extent to protect their interests. The imposition of the Federation in 1953 was one of the tactics of the British to protect their monopoly in central Africa.

Under the federal policy, racism segregation and discrimination increased passing under the police terror,

and inhuman behaviour of the British. The Africans were compelled to revolt against them. The Federation was the greatest Challenge to the Malawians. In 1953, some of the leading chiefs were sent to London to represent the out burst of anger against the Federation. The bourgeoisie leadership stood against Federation. These chiefs were N.A. Magana who belonged to Yao tribe and Philip Gomani of ANGONI Tribe. These chiefs had served in Colonial regime.

The year 1953 was the most significant period in the history of protest movement against the Federation. The period marked the growth of nationalism and challenged to British imperialism. The Federation was imposed in 1953 against the will of the Malawians. The idea of amalgamating the three central African territories - Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia was initiated by Cecil Rhodes - an European expansionist. It gained ground after 1923 when the British Government announced that "the interests of the African natives must be paramount, if the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail."¹

The European settlers, fearing implementation on the policy, which would challenge their position, tirelessly worked to bring about Federation of three

1. This is Malawi - Independent Africa Series, Indian Council of Africa, p. 35, New Delhi.

three Central African territories. The Federation was mainly opposed by Africans because the Africans of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland protectorate were being put under self-governing white settlers of Southern Rhodesia. The people of these two countries were fully aware that by federating with Southern Rhodesia, they would be dominated politically, economically and racially by the white settlers. Consequently, people of the protectorates stood against the Federation. The imposition of Federation stimulated nationalists, particularly petty-bourgeoisie to adopt different methods to launch struggle against the Federation.

In the first five years of Federal rule, the Africans saw extension of racial administration on South African style. There was colour bar both in public and private places. Post offices retained separate entrances, hospitals separate services and in railways discriminatory laws were followed. Hotels, stores and private establishments discriminated. An industrial colour bar effectively prevented Africans from competing with whites for jobs. Even the Federal Civil Service remained a white preserve.

Economically, Malawi was deprived of minimum requirement by the Federal policy. Before federation,

the territory had its finances in better shape than Southern Rhodesia. With the imposition of Federation, Nyasaland lost all its economic identity. Southern Rhodesia white settlers spent huge amount exclusively on white development. The living conditions of African working class in Malawi had sharply deteriorated. The labour force was increased for the recruitment of plantations and industries abroad. The labours bound to sell their cheap labour to the whites and were forced to work from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. Pole tax and hut tax were increased and white working class hardly bothered about African working class. Since they enjoyed the benefits.

In 1958, the Federal government reduced the subsidy on maize and African staple, thereby increasing the cost of food for Africans considerably.

In the same year 1958 the Federal government was allotted 62 per cent of the loans, Southern Rhodesia got 14 per cent and Malawi received only 6 per cent.*

Nyasaland's share of loans between 1953 and 1958 amounted to just under £2-1/2 million whereas prior to that Malawi received £ 5½ million under the

* B. Pachai, Malawi: The History of the nation,
London, 1973, p. 264.

protectorate government. The resources of Malawi was exploited by the big millionaire companies which had branches in all capitalist world.²

The new job opportunities created by Federation did not improve the situation of the Malawian peasants and working class, rather deteriorated. The degree of their exploitation and helplessness increased. There was hardly any job opportunities for the vast masses in Federal government. Even skilled Malawians were not given jobs.

The Federal government proposed for educational facilities for Africans, but all talk on education was useless. Hardly any Africans were admitted for higher education. Even if some of them were admitted, they were attacked with silly comments and hostile remarks by the whites.

The political fall out of the move against the Federation was of utmost significance. The emergence of new political awareness among the Malawians could be judged by their actions. The Malawians were ready to die to achieve their main goal of independence. They had already observed challenge of the white racist regime. They had also seen the two world wars which resulted in

2. Endre Sik, The History of Black Africa, Vol. III, (Budapest, 1974), pp

the downfall of imperialism and rise of socialism. So, they were inspired by the socialist movement. They did not want to remain as a means to an end, or resources of economic exploitation, but rather, they wanted to be human beings and free citizens of their country. They once again raised the slogan "Africa for the Africans."

The imposition of the Federation in 1953 challenged the political rights of the Malawians. The new social and political awareness stimulated the Malawians to overthrow the White settler rule in the one hand and the British on the other. The Federal government tried to curb the freedom movement. The Federal Policy resulted into police terror, massive repression and detention etc.

On Federation :

John Gunther is of the view that the Malawians bitterly opposed federation. They do not want to see permanently under the thumb of Rhodesian white settlers or mine operators. The fact was as striking as many in contemporary African- four hundred thousand citizens of Nyasaland gave a penny or two each and raised a fund of £1,967,³ so that, they could send to London a delegation

3. John Gunther, Inside Africa, Hamish-Hamilton, London, 1955, p. 628.

of chiefs to protest against the federal scheme in 1958. They drew up a petition - a remarkably well-written and soberly worked out document and sought in all humility, to present it to Queen Elizabeth. But Queen Elizabeth could not receive them, and their petition was curtly rejected by the colonial office, which at all costs wanted to push federation through the bare-lauded, the chiefs returned to Nyasaland. The colonial government did not even listen to the chiefs who had been loyal to the British. The most respected African in Nyasaland was Chief Philip Gomani, who had been paramount chief of the Agoni for thirty-two years, had always served the British with intense loyalty and devotion and had encouraged thousands of his young men to join the King's African Rifles and fight for the British crown. Chief Gomani disliked federation, took a strong hand against it, and encouraged his people to do like wise, on the other hand, he strictly forbade violence. He wanted to register a protest, but to do peacefully. In association with him were eighty-two other Nyasa-Chiefs.⁴

4. Ibid., p. 629.

Chief Gomani was charged with abusing his powers as a Native Authority and disobeying the law. Following the incidents;

"When the chief had been brought to within a few feet of the car, the police commissioner, apparently thinking it might be impossible to get him into the car, blew his whistle and the police began to launch a tear-gas attack. The tear gas was thrown amongst the crowd who did not know what it was, and believed it to be poisonous.⁵

The Federal racist regime was directed to put down every opposition. The police deployment was increased in striking areas. The government passed the resolution to arrest the African leaders. The political organizations were banned. The African could not hold a meeting without a police permission. The Federal government also created special police forces. Even in the Schools, children were questioned about their teachers and prominent visitors. The civil

5. Ibid., p. 631.

rights of the Africans were reduced. Their franchise remained in the hands of Europeans.

In 1954, when the British Colonial secretary came on a visit to Nyasaland, the Nyasaland African National Congress submitted its memorandum to the colonial secretary. In the memorandum, the Congress, reiterated opposition to the Federation. It further said that this was against the overwhelming wishes of the African people. Stressing on protectorate status of 1891, the memorandum said that the people of this country needed self-government within the British Commonwealth or Nation.

We noticed that just after the Federation, African representation in the Federal Assembly was reduced. The qualified franchise was discriminated. The Africans were deprived of their political rights. In the legislative Assembly, demands put by the Africans legislatures were outrightly rejected by the White majority. The rejection of African genuine demand by the White legislatures was a great threat to the vast masses. This led to further intensification of agitation against European biased political leaders. The Africans pressed for their separation from Federation and intensified their struggle. They launched nationwide protest

movements. Rotberg writes that in the Chola district, Africans took up arms and blocked main and secondary roads throughout the district. They cut telephone wires, hindered police patrols. They threatened the staff of the Seventh-day Adventist mission of due consequences. They burnt down the plantations and "generally contributed to an atmosphere of disorder."⁶

To suppress the upsurge the Federal government used police force. Tear gas was used to make them disperse. Many of them were injured and killed. Even the non-political people were put into jail. It was completely a reign of terror.

But the anti-Federation campaign acquired and spread throughout the country. Africans got organized and rose up with one voice against the white regime.

In 1955, the British government came out with a tricky solution stressing on the 'constitutional Reform; the 'Reform' contained the provision of more African representation in the Legislative Assembly and the Executive Council. But the situation remained

6. Robert I. Rotberg, The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa, pp. 260.

unchanged. African representation was not increase in to effectiveness in either of the houses, Legislative Assembly and Executive council. The Malawians once again agitated against 'Reform' Policy. The British administration put the reform into Force despite the protest of the Africans.

Outbreak of anger often developed into spontaneous action which were brutally suppressed by the colonial authorities. Mostly the outburst of African was against racial policy of the British. Though the movement was at a key level but it was still in the process. The political parties Nyasaland African Congress and Congress Legislative Party and Malawi Congress Party mainly. Nyasaland African Congress was the political platform of the Africans but it was mainly dominated either by paramount chiefs, rich peasantry class or pseudo-intellectuals. During the period of political confrontation in the 1950s the political organizations were passing through leadership crisis. In the African traditional society, the Chief was considered supreme. So, older generation wanted restoration of paramountcy. The colonial generation, who had lived during the colonial era, asserted themselves not only against the white power structure but also within it. The colonial generation developed their attitude towards the fundamental political

categories of authority; equality and freedom. The traditional Chiefs and the generation oriented to their system was authoritarian and inegalitarian. The colonial generation of Africa asserted for their own rights as well. It was in fact bourgeoisie in nature while the young generation asked for a new and more egalitarian political society.

On the question of Constitutional Reform of 1955 the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) was split. One section was led by the moderates and another was extremists. The moderates wanted reform within the framework of colonial constitution. So, they submitted demand Charter and continued their passive resistance. They even condemned any kind of violence. This group was led by T.D.T. Banda⁷ and Chinyama. The moderates asked the Africans to continue their resistance in a 'Constitutional manner' and to adopt 'peaceful method': The extremists group was led by Chiume⁸ and Chipembere⁹

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7. Thamar ^DOLLION Thomas Bonda belonged to Nyasaland served as a teacher between 1930 and 1940. From 1952 he displayed political activities against Federation. He was the president of the local branch Chintechze, Nyasaland African National Congress.
 8. Murry William Kanyama Chiume - studied in Uganda, where he founded the Nyasaland student Association, served as a teacher. He left job because of his political agitation against Federation.
 9. Masaoro Henry Blasius Chipembere born in 1931, was a radical leader and campaigned against Federation.

whose activities would be highlighted in their struggle against the Federation.

In 1956, the Federal election was held in which two Congress members,orton Chirwa and Kumbikano were elected to the Federal Parliament. The Malawian representatives asked the Federal Parliaments to give them representation in the Executive Council, or let them withdraw from the Federation. But their demand was rejected by the Federal Parliament. This bourgeoisie leadership could not convince the common masses on the issue of Executive. Since their demands were rejected in Federal Parliament, at the initiative of radical Chipembere the NAC asked Chirwa and Kumbikano to resign from the Federal Parliament. Since they refused to resign, the Congress expelled them.

The white settler's government was fully aware of the anger of the Africans on the question of their representation in Legislative council and opposition to the Federation. To this end, Governor Geoffrey Colley of Nyasaland ordered the government for amendment of 1907 Order in Council so as to give Africans a greater representation in the Legislative Council of the protectorate. This proposal did not give any representation of Africans

to the Legislative.

In 1955, the Federal government decided that twenty two members, including eleven officials, should henceforth sit with the governor. Of the other eleven, Whites should elect six members directly, and the three provincial councils should together select five Africans. But no representation was given to the Africans in the Executive Council. On the hand, the militants wanted representation in both the councils.

In 1956 the Federal government announced these revisions and called for an election in 1956. Both whites and Africans agreed to the election. In the beginning the militants were not agreed to participate in the election, however, they participated since national movement was moving forward. The election took place in March 1956 five young militants, Chiume, Chipembere, Chinyama. N.D. Kwenje and Dunstan W. Chijozi were elected to the Legislative Council.

In the same year 1956, the five Congress members were elected to the Legislative Council, among them were two radical members Chiueme and Chipembere of the Congress. These leaders asked the immediate withdrawal of the Federation, they asked the Council to set up a commission

to enquiry into the condition of the working class; their wages, the housing of the African employees. "In the Council, they asked that the white settlers should be withdraw from African lands, and no permits should be issued for the recruitment of African to be employed abroad. They demanded the unification of Civil service and a stop to racial discrimination. All these demands submitted by the African Legislatures were rejected by the White settler majority. The leaders could not get any of their demands accepted. They campaigned throughout the country. The campaign reached at peak from 1957 onwards.

They organized meetings and addressed mammoth rallies in support of their demands. Chiume accused the Federal government for denying the freedom of speech and universal sufferage.

Chipembere warned the whites against the danger of Africans anger. He characterised the nature of European's materialism as based upon exploitation. According to him whatever the Europeans were earning in Nyasaland was earned on the groans and sweat of the exploited African labour. Chipembere called Europeans "blood suckers".

As a result of Federation there is conflict between the races ... "Our ... membership in the Federation is ... leased (only) on political considerations (and) ... we shall defend (our political rights) ... for ever and ever. I ask the ... Financial Secretary not to lead us into materialism, but to deliver us from his own imperialism."¹⁰

These incidents enhanced the political awareness of the Africans who stood behind their leaders for their rights. They staged massive demonstrations and agitation against the Whites. Addressing a mass rallies Chipembere confidently told that they had lost their faith in European missionaries, the Protectorate government and the government of the United Kingdom.¹¹

In 1956, TDI Banda who had been elected General Secretary of the Nyasaland African Congress, asked the British colonial Secretary Lennox - Boyd for dissolution of the Federation. The colonial secretary rejected his

10. Rotberg, Robert I., The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa, The Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1893-1964 (London, 1965), pp. 270-71.

11. Endre Sik, The History of Black Africa, vol. III, (Budapest, 1974) p. 385.

demand. In September 1957 TDT Banda wrote to the British Governor proposing for more African representation in Legislative Assembly. T.D.T. Banda who represented moderates was opposed by the militant group. The latter accused him of pushing the Congress in moderate direction. The young militants did not like his leadership. In March 1958 TDT Banda was replaced from the Nyasaland African Congress Presidency and he founded the Congress Liberation Party (CLP) in 1954; moderate by nature, he condemned violence. On the other hand, the Malawians were facing racial segregation, police terror and charges of sedition. The condition of the working class deteriorated further. They were no longer able to sustain economic burden. The barbaric and inhuman treatment was compelling the masses to revolt against the colonial regime and they were ready to take arms.

In course of struggle against the Federation the new political understanding grew and Africans launched their movement for liberation.

British oppression had given Malawian nationalism its anti-imperialist and anti-foreign orientation. Nationalism was also a reaction against racism.

Discontent and dissatisfaction amongst Africans was wide spread by the early 1950s. The NAC was weak to articulate it in a effective manner.

In 1958, a militant leader Chipembere met Dr. Hasting Kamuzu Banda.

Dr. Banda was then practicing medicine in London. He was requested by the African leaders to come back to Nyasaland and lead the Country which had been deprived of all its rights. Dr. Banda came back to Nyasaland in July 1958 and was welcomed by the Malawians.

Return of Dr. Banda to Nyasaland was historically significant in the protest movement of Federation. Addressing the people in massive meetings, he announced that the country needed self-government. He vigorously opposed the Federation.

In the following year, he was elected President of the Nyasaland African Congress at its annual meeting in 1958. He took two militant comrades Chiume and Chipembere into his leadership. His campaign against the Federation encouraged disobedience of unjust law: The new political consciousness resulted into clashes between the Congress and colonial government.

Dr. Banda also initiated dialogues with the British official for a new constitution. The colonial government again rejected the proposals. He went to Ghana to attend the Conference of African states at Accro. When he returned from Ghana, the Malawians proposed mass demonstration to welcome him at the Blantyre airport but the welcome gathering was banned by the police. This gave a new turn to Banda's popularity. It turned the movement into a new phase, as even meetings and peaceful demonstration were not allowed to be held. The colonial government deployed more police forces. The leaders were charged with sedition. Police torture was increased. The leaders were imprisoned. The working class and peasantry were charged with arsenals.

Seeing no hope for success through negotiation, the Congress held a special session on January 25, 1959. The meeting resolved that struggle that had already begun for self-government must be continued. The Congress leaders also talked of violence, and said that if it was required for their aim, the Africans could use violence. In course of January and February 1959 many demonstration took place in many towns. Meetings were called to mobilize general masses and the African population responded to the calls of their leaders enthusiastically. They did not want to

live under the barbaric rule of the British.

The people were not only against the Federation now, there was mass condemnation of racism and demanded Independence. On February 12, 1959 at the request of the British Governor of Nyasaland, the Federal government dispatched troops from Southern Rhodesia to Nyasaland to crush the African masses. The people were not allowed to attend the meetings. If they resisted, they were sent to jail and the police harassed them. The colonial policy provoked the common masses to raise unitedly against the government.

Following the situation which was getting out of control according to the Colonial government the Federal government proclaimed the state of emergency on March 3, 1959.

Ali A. Mazrui says that the police troops killed 40 Africans in the name of law and order.¹² In 1959 emergency was declared and under the emergency all leading leaders were put behind the bars. Dr. Banda

12. Ali, A. Mazrui, Nationalism and New States in Africa (Heinemann Education Book, 1984), pp. 111.

was arrested alongwith his comrades. The leaders were charged with Carnage and plots. Many women were also put into jail. The NAC was banned. The Emergency changed the whole situation. The Africans were organized in a better way into overthrow the colonial regime. It was the mass upheaval that challenged the European power.

The patriotic passion of the nationalist movement in many areas passed into war - like channels and afforts began to be made with growing success to obtain arms either by stealing them or by manufacturing them. Villagers took oath, to help one another in times of hardship and when rounded up for detention resolutely sing patriotic hymns in praise of their leaders.¹³

Colonial land and labour policy was the fundamental issue of the African nationalist political movement. Land policy on the other hand gave the best lands to the Europeans and other confined the Africans to the small areas called reserves without any room for their surplus population to spill over, creating a large number of squatters on the European farms.¹⁴

13. Vijay Gupta, Kenya: Politics of (in)dependence, (New Delhi, 1981), p. 137.

14. Ibid., p. 144.

Concluding the discussion on early protest movement against Federation, we notice that since the imposition of the Federation 1953. Malawi's situation was economically and politically deteriorated. Anti-Federation feeling consolidated Malawians to raise their voices. Throughout the Federation period, the nationalists were fearlessly organizing the African masses against the colonial policy. The question of the Constitution Reform of 1955 marked the Sharp division between the nationalists. The one group was dominated by the young energetic and educated militant Africans and the other was constituted of Chief, petty-chief, mainly petty, bourgeoisies. The arrival of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda in 1958 brought out the remarkable change in leadership. Under his leadership, militants, moderates, liberal and democrates were united.

The emergency of 1959 was another important event it posed challenges to the administration as the movement for independence speed to grassroots since under the state emergency all leaders were rounded up and put into jail.

CHAPTER - FOUR

NATIONALIST MOVEMENT FOR TOTAL INDEPENDENCE

CHAPTER - FOUR

NATIONALIST MOVEMENT FOR TOTAL INDEPENDENCE

After the proclamation of the State Emergency on March 3, 1959, all eminent leaders were put into jail. Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda regarded as a charismatic figure by the Malawian was also put under detention in Southern Rhodesia at Gwelo. The Declaration of Emergency couldn't check the political upheaval and mass uprising of African Nationalists. The year 1959 was the hallmark of the nationalist movement. With a new political awareness, the African masses revolted against the colonial and imperial government. The feeling of nationalism grew among the Malawians. The colonial administration, Church, language, movement of men to work for wages and establishment of exchange economy like one place with other through currency, banking and finance had laid the foundation of national unity and identity of purpose of struggle against foreign rulers and European settlers. This new homogeneous characters of Africans gave impetus to the rise of nationalism. In case of African nationalism, it was understood that the colour group lacked one thing common in general was common language, religion and cultural homogeneity which had facilitated the rise of nationalism.

Since new economic, political, religious and social institutions were based on social discrimination and economic exploitation. The Africans objected to the new institutions individually and collectively. The tribal, religious and cultural organizations became vehicles of protests. They highlighted land, labour taxation problem and difficulties in persuading belief. These protests were movements of peasant discontents, religious uprising and workers struggles.¹

The protests against the government were over economic, social and political questions. The question of hut and Poll tax, forced labour recruitment, registration certificate, imposition of undesirable chiefs, restriction on movements from one area to another etc. were main causes of protests. The protests against the missionaries were on account of their interference with the customary and traditional life of the Africans.²

The nationalist movements in Malawi was a form of a process similar to that which had witnessed in other areas. As referred earlier the new elites gave rise to the formation of professional bodies and cultural associations. These organizations ushered in political movements whose nationalist fervour grew in Malawi. The formation

1. Vijay Gupta, Kenya: Politics of (In)Dependence, New Delhi, 1981, pp. 109-110.

2. Ibid., pp. 110-

of the Federation and the fear of seeing the system of "White Supremacy" being extended and led the Africans to intensify the struggle, the political parties taking the initiative. The most aggressive party then in Nyasaland, was led by Dr. Hastings Banda from 1958 onwards. The party in the beginning recommended the method of civil-disobedience. We will discuss in this chapter the party programme, strategy and activities.

The national movement in Africa varied. The social economic, historical and political developments differed from region to region. In Malawi, the birth and development of nationalism had followed a different course. The national productive forces were not in a state of growth. Their development was being artificially retarded. So in a way, the Malawian Nationalist movement was a reaction to imperialist exploitation and colonial enslavement. Nationalism grew in the common political struggle against foreign oppressors. As a result, nationalism in Africa was a part of the national liberation revolution.³

During the course of political development under the colonial power, the African benefitted that the African Chiefs had participated as a representatives. But they were just consulting body. The British, in their turn,

3. The Rise of Revolutionary Movement and Growth of Nationalism, People Publishing House

had expected that African advancement to self-government would take place not within the framework of the colonial superstructure but outside, especially through the indigenous institutions. But the nationalist pressure and the weakening of the Chief's position made this argument, by the late 1940s, rather untenable. As a result, central control over traditional and local governments was gradually handed over to the nationalists.

It can also be said that, in reversing their earlier stand, the British sincerely tried to expand the arena of political participation through elections to the Legislative Council. From this, however, it does not follow that the British had wanted the Africans to advance towards self-government through a series of neatly marked stages such as appointment of "unofficial" to the legislative and later executive councils; movement towards "unofficial majority", expansion of franchise, development of ministerial responsibility, achievement of internal self-government with some powers reserved by the governor and complete sovereignty.

It can be said that by allowing political participation through election the colonial powers created conditions for the rise of African political parties.

The significance of political awareness had been noted by Hodgkin as follows:

"First, the need to contest, and if possible win, elections had been a factor stimulating parties to build up an effective machine through which to appeal to the new mass of electorate. Second, elections involved the parties in educational, as well as propagandist function.

Elections made it the task of educated Africans who ran for office to explain the vote, the choice, which the vote implied, and the concept of representation. Third, electoral needs obliged parties of all types to concern themselves in some degree with local issues. Fourth, the electoral system bestowed legitimacy on the political parties. Finally, in some territories of Africa, like, Senegal, Ghana, Malawi and Zambia, election stimulated mass movements to transform themselves into political parties - and tended to check the growth of semi-clandestine revolutionary organisations. The initial effect of the election was to "encourage the formation of small electoral groups, aiming a little else than filling the relatively lucrative new offices". In such territories parties grew "by contagion

rather than spontaneous generation".⁴

In case of African national liberation movement, we noticed that on the social sphere, the success of the nationalists denoted two types of revolution. First in these territories where the traditional and educated elites were expected to step into the saddle with the passing of colonial rule, the rise of mass parties completely disrupted the social order and in the wake of election, these groups occupied the political power.

The second type of revolution relates to the status that all categories of Africans held in the colonial set up. In those territories where European settlers deliberately kept the Africans in a subordinate position, the social order was turned upside down almost as soon as power was transferred to the later

The militancy of African nationalism could be studied in the context of the humiliation. The Negroes as a race had suffered until very recently. In 1930 Gertrude Stein wrote of the Negroes: "They did not suffer

4. T. Hodgkin, "African Political Parties" London, 1961, pp. 36-38.

from being persecuted, they suffered from being nothing". It was in this context that African nationalism assumed a global importance. In Africa, the reaction to white racism had been a part of nationalism from the moment of its birth. Whites were suspected and there was widespread hatred against whites. The African literature cultivated national propaganda. It was the fact that the African masses were oppressed and Whites were their common enemy. They began to understand that they were being plundered and humiliated. Their human dignity was abused and they were being exploited. A suppressed resentment grew against whites in general.

In context of Malawi liberation movement, we notice that Proclamation of State Emergency in 1959 stimulated the Malawians to challenge the British monopoly. And under the State Emergency all nationalist were put into jail. Police did not allow meetings to be held. Peasantry was forced to keep away from the political upheaval, the NAC was banned. In short it was a reign of terror. The common masses were charged with arsenal. On March 23, 1959 the British government published a white paper in which it accused the Congress of having planned the assassination of the Governor, the Provincial Commissioners and other high officials of the colonial administration. The slanderous propaganda of the British was spread by the govern-

ment press, yet all these British means didn't stop the mass movement. The emergence of new political consciousness among African created a new feeling. The Africans accepted that racial discrimination in social, political and economic life became the chief characteristic of exploitative machinery. Under the "operation Sunrise" in March 1959 which did not allow Africans to oppose the colonial administration. All leaders rounded up and put into jail.

According to an official report published by the colonial administration on 6 May 1959, in the month of March alone, 851 Africans were arrested, 245 of whom were released later and rest were sent to trial. Report also said that 50 Africans were killed on a single occasion at Nkata Bay, where police troops fired into the crowd.⁵

The news of 'Operation Sunrise' under which Congress leaders were arrested and the subsequent killing of more than fifty African by the police was received with profound disgust in British Parliament. On the question of national liberation, the Labour Party stood for Malawi's

5. Endre-Sik, "The History of Black Africa", Vol. III, Budapest, 1974, pp. 390-391.

independence. Labour Parliamentarian created feeling of confidence among Africans.⁶ They condemned the police terror. The month of March 1959 was the significant period in the national movement. The clashes between the troops and the African population in Nyasaland developed into a regular anti-colonialist revolt. A reign of brutal colonial exploitation set in. The right to civil liberty was denied.⁷ The national movement for independence resulted in mass uprising against the White racism and colonialism.

One of the militants leaders Chiume, who at the time of incident in March 1959, had been abroad was involved in creating a international opinion for the termination of the State of Emergency and the release of the arrested leaders. In his campaign, he emphasised on the dissolution of the Federation.

The out break of March 1959 was a sensitive issue and it pushed the nationalists to raise the slogan for independence.

6. V. Sidenko, "Revolt in Nyasaland", New Times, March 1959.

7. Peter Dalleo, "Britain's Decolonization Policy for Africa, 1945-64", Nyasaland, Ed. by Macdonald R. . . From Nyasaland to Malawi, 1975.

The British conservative government appointed a four-member commission under Patrick Devlin to investigate into the events of February-March 1959. The Commission began work on 11 April. It spent five weeks in Nyasaland and published its Report on the 16th July. The Commission recommended the right of Nyasaland to secede from the Federation and suggested speedy progress towards independence for the territory. The commission said further that in imposing federation, the Federal Government had lost its moral authority. If it was going to continue to govern on the same terms, it could scarcely afford the loss of its physical authority as well. In the opinion of the Commission, the cause of the disturbances was to be seen in the growing emergence of national movement and their anger was against the police terror.

Moreover, the Devlin Commission, after a careful examination of the evidence, declared, unanimously that, "Dr. Banda would never have approved a policy of murder and that he was quite honest in saying that he didn't approve to violence in principle". It is true that the Commission also found that some of Dr. Banda's lieutenants, particularly, Chipembera and Chisiza were parties to violence and that Dr. Banda had never categorically

condemned it.⁸ Peter Dalles is of the view that most of the violence which occurred during the emergency was as the result of the government activity. There was almost no African Resistance to 'Surprise'. The fire arms were rarely used by African resisters.⁹

The Devin Commission was described as "the government's own self-made boomerang".¹⁰ The Commission further said that since the declaration of State Emergency, there was investigation carried out by the Government. There was some difficulty, in gathering the required information for as the Commissioners reported, "Nyasaland is no doubt temporarily a police state" where it is not safe for anyone to express approval of the policies of the Congress Party.¹¹ The Davlin Commission's Report was rejected by colonial Secretary Lennox Boyd. Because he was one of the formulators of the Federation. By nature he was against Africans and he supported White supremacy. But he was soon replaced by Ian Macleod. Even the British parliament admitted the police brutalities on Africans in

8. "A Year is Up", Guardian, Manchester, 5.3.1960.

9. Peter Dalles, pp. 295-97.

10. The Economist, 192 (August 1, 1959), p. 265.

11. Report of the Nyasaland Commission of Inquiry (London, 1959), 814, 1.

1959. In the British Parliament, the Labour Parliamentarians opposed the barbaric and monopolistic attitude of the Federal government in Central Africa in general.

The nationalists had been organizing meetings and teaching the Malawian masses of their rights. Many bourgeois leaders had been active in opposing the Federal rule. They demanded their representations in both Legislative and Executive Councils. The militant group from the beginning had been working for self-government. They did not have faith in Commission and inquiry committee and constitution reforms.

At the same time, the British Prime Minister Macmillan decided to send another commission to Central Africa in the hope of dispelling the ignorance and confusions which had surrounded the Federation.

So, the MONCKTON Commission was sent to Central Africa. This commission was a fact finding body rather than a decision making one. But it was bound to be failure as once again both the Labour Party and African Populace refused to cooperate with it. Labour Party continued its complaints revolving around the lack of African participation.

While African representatives of the Nyasaland African Congress in Malawi announced their intention of boycotting the Commission. The main objective behind boycott was their inadequate representation on it. There were only 5 African representatives in the Commission out of a total membership of 26. The Congress leaders particularly the militants asked their followers to support the boycott. Having seen the reports of the previous Commission, they had lost their faith in Commission and they used the terms for Monckton Commission as the "Mock Commission" and the 'Monkey Commission'.

In spite of their boycott, the Commissioners did interview a number of Africans and most of them were 'moderates'. Even they opposed to Federation during the course of enquiry. The Commission interviewed European settlers in Southern Rhodesia and the Europeans expressed their opposition to Federation. Complaining that the discontentment was increasing among the Africans and the Europeans were afraid of disturbances. Finally the Commission suggested that the African representation should be given and racial discrimination should be dismantled.

Nationalists were simultaneously busy with their political programmes. Meanwhile Orton Chirwa¹³ was released

12. Orton Chirwa was elected to the Federal Parliament in 1956 and later was expelled from the NAC.

on September 30, 1959, (he had been arrested under State Emergency) and founded a new political organization, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). Since the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) was banned under the State Emergency, the Malawi Congress Party emerged as sole political organization. The basic aim of the MCP was to reunite the adherents of the suppressed Congress and to infuse the National character to the movements to achieve independence. He occupied the presidency of the party for the time being, as the leaders of the MCP and their fellow prison graduate were slowly released, the campaign against the British rule increased in intensity. The MCP demanded the immediate discharge of the Congress leaders, political activities and universal suffrage, and an elected African majority in the Legislative Assembly. The Party took stand against the Monckton Report as the Commissions had failed to take up the issue of secession from the Federation. The Malawi Congress Party promised 'to work relentlessly to achieve self-government and ultimate independence for the people of Malawi. It promised to work as a political vanguard for removing all kinds of oppressions, racial, political economic and social. It promised for the establishment of a democratic national government. The MCP achieved

prominence almost over night. Within two days of its formation, more than 2,000 Africans joined the Congress as paying members.

By the end of November, the New Congress (MCP) claimed about 15,000 paid up members. Chirwa himself was busy with his efforts to get his colleagues released. He went to London in December 1959 to urge the release of the political leaders, the withdrawal from the Federation and the drafting of a new constitution for Malawi. The British Prime Minister, Macmillan was on his tour of Africa and visited Malawi towards the end of January 1960. On his arrival at the airport on January 25, 1960, he was protested by a crowd of 300 demonstrators. Orton Chirwa was among them. The police fired to disperse the demonstrators. Six demonstrators had been arrested. Chirwa said the Blantyre airport incident was the first really hostile demonstration of Mr. Macmillan tour. The Prime Minister of Britain admitted that there was a emergence of political consciousness and national awakening. It was a wind of change and the leaders asked the common masses to unite and the African followed their leaders. It was staged by the Youth section of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). He referred to MCP as the caretaker organisation for Dr. Banda's proscribed Nyasaland African

National Congress (NANC).

The youth carried slogans reading "To hell with Federation", "African must be free now", "Mac take your wretched gansters home again" and "no Dr. Banda, no welcome". The Malawians had been demanding the release of their arrested leaders through demonstrations. On January 26, 1960 the British Prime Minister was hosted a dinner by the Mayor of Blantyre. The African crowds assembled around the hotel and they repeatedly asked the dissolution of the Federation, and release of the political leaders.

We noticed here that the Europeans had been enjoying their life by depriving the African masses of their own country. That's why one of the militants Chipembere referred to British as 'blood sucker'. On the other hand, the nationalists had been constantly struggling to overthrow colonialism. Since the British Prime Minister was in Malawi the colonial administration tried to calm down the Africans by appeasing the demonstrators through various ways. The colonial administration released some of the Africans in numbers. The African masses however, could not be appeased with this cheap colonial policy, rather they were committed to get their leaders released and dissolution of the Federation.

The March 1960, the 'Earl of Home' as Commonwealth Secretary held a ten day conference with the Federal Prime Minister Sir Roy Welensky and Prime Minister Whitehead on the dissolution of the Federation. The latter threatened to take counter measures, in case the British government would make concessions to the Northern Rhodesia nationalists. On the question of Nyasaland the Earl of Home said, Nyasaland was backward territory, an African slum country. The Federal Prime Minister, Welensky said that "Nyasaland was an imperial slum", which had nearly stagnated for 70 years under British rule. Neither he nor his predecessor Viscount Malvern had wanted Nyasaland in the Federation.

He said that the British government had forced it on them, and if change come, the Federation would provide its people with a much better life and standard of living than any of the territories could do individually.¹³

Sir Roy Welensky, the Federal Prime Minister was not ready for dissolution of the Federation nor was

13. "Nyasaland was Imperial Slum", Daily Telegraph, 16.3.1960.

he inclined towards Nyasaland to be separated. The Europeans exploited the natural resources on one hand and Welensky was of the view that Nyasaland was the only British African territory which had no exploitable mineral resource. He further argued that with the advent of Federation in 1953, the country began to benefit through its share of federal revenue. Sir Roy Welensky charged that Nyasaland was forced on the Federation by the British government to shed financial responsibility for the country. As so much of Nyasa labour was absorbed in the Rhodesias.¹⁴ We noticed that Welensky's remark was just opposite. The country had huge amount of economic potentialities, natural resources. As for labour was concerned, we had seen that Malawians labours were skilled and they were demanded in industries. Secondly, heavy taxes were collected from the Africans. So, the working class was bound to go to the neighbouring countries to seek jobs.

The issue of Nyasaland as African slum and backward territory as remarked by the White administrators affected the nationalists. The Malawians protested against this silly comment and demanded freedom of the country. They were arrested while criticizing the cynical

14. The Nyasaland Times, 17.3.1960.

approach of the Whites. The police threw tear gas bombs into a crowd. They were arrested on a large scale. This police brutalities excited the nationalists to wage war against police suppression. Even on ordinary issue, the colonial government ordered the police to either arrest the nationalists or shoot them. The nationalists, however, continued their campaign against the British government.

Faced by hostile circumstances the British government set up another commission headed by Macleod. Macleod considered one of his first tasks to arrange for the release of the detainees. Dr. Banda was released unconditionally on April 1, 1960. He flew home from Gwelo in Southern Rhodesia where he had been detained. Dr. Banda had talked to Macleod and the British Governor of Nyasaland. On 7 April 1960, he went to London in support of the opinion against the Federation. He addressed a rally organized by Labour M.P. Fenner Brockway. He reiterated his position on the dissolution of the Federation and asked support for self government. Dr. Banda was creating an international public opinion on the question of the racial policy and self government.

On occasion of the African Freedom Day on April 14, he spoke in New York about the racial policy and call

it "the cancer of the world". After visit to central Africa in March and April 1960, Macleod promised for the constitutional conference. The conference was held but the police repression continued. Before the Conference there was unrest and the police arrested the African and used the tear-gas.

However, the constitutional conference took place in London from July 25 to August 4, 1960. In the conference, Dr. Banda demanded, universal suffrage, withdrawal from the Federation and independence to Malawi. An agreement was reached concerning a new, provisional constitution but not a word was discussed about either independence or self government.

According to the new constitutional provision, election was held in the two separate groups. One for African voters and another for the Europeans and Asians. The voting rights was granted to the Africans by imposing different laws and regulation consequently. Only five per cent Africans were qualified for voting. The new constitution provided for a 33-member legislative Assembly and a 10-member Executive Council.¹⁵ The African

15. Endre Sik, The History of Black Africa, vol. III, (Budapest, 1974), pp. 394-95.

leaders accepted the constitutional provision as sham constitution.

By September 1960, almost all arrested leaders were released and they had been organizing the Malawi Congress Party for election which was promised by the London Conference on September-August 1960. They organized the MCP in scientific manner with party post. Dr. Banda was appointed life president of the MCP.

On the other hand the colonial administration was delaying, announcing the election. So, on the election issue and its delay on January 22, 1961 the MCP organized a mass demonstration in Blantyre in which the people demanded the holding of elections. The police again used tear-gas. Twenty Africans were injured and twelve demonstrators were arrested.¹⁶ From February 1961, till the declaration of election, the MCP leadership had been mobilizing the African masses. It was obvious that the main plank of election was the Federation.

In the meantime, the elections had been scheduled in August 1961. The elections were held in mid-August 1961. The votes were cast separately by

16. Ibid., pp. 395.

the Africans having 20 representatives by the European and Asian having 9 representatives. The MCP won a sweeping victory, 99 per cent of the Africans electorate voted for the MCP. The MCP thus gained all 20 African seats and it managed to secure three reserved seats for Europeans and Asians. In the new legislature thus 23 seats were secured by the Malawi Congress Party, 5 went to Welensky's United Federal Party and 5 representatives were Colonial Officials appointed by the Governor. The MCP managed to secure the two seats it contested in upper role. Dr. Banda was himself elected for the Legislative Assembly and became Minister of Natural Resources and Local Government and was appointed to the Protectorate's Executive Council. Soon after assuming the office, the MCP leaders created new working team, expanded the long neglected system of secondary education, revamped the Native Court, ended the Tangata, reformed the existing produce-marketing arrangements, introduced popularly elected district councils in place of chiefs. We had seen the introduction of many new policies by the MCP leaders, but they did not bring out any concrete policies on the working class. The MCP leadership was in the hands of petty bourgeoisie who compromised on many issues with the Whites - they extend to issue of labour and their wages, land redistribution, employment of expatriates

on salaries higher than Africans, housing and health problems.

In February 1962, British Commonwealth Secretary Sandys visited Central African Federation and met Dr. Banda. On the Federation issue, Sandys tried to persuade Dr. Banda to give up the demand of withdrawing from the Federation. But he failed to persuade him. A month later, R.A. Butler, then the Secretary of State for Central African Affairs, promised in principle to permit Nyasaland to secede from the Federation. Butler acknowledged the continued opposition to Federation and the MCP's demands for secession.

In between the leaders of the Legislative Council and the Executive Council of the Malawi Congress Party had been carrying out a number of reforms to promote the cause of independence. A Constitutional Conference was held in London between November 12 and 24, 1962. The negotiators arrived an agreement under which Nyasaland was to attain self-government on February 3, 1963. Later, at an unspecified date, it was scheduled to win independence no date was fixed for withdrawal of the Federation, but it was discussed in the constitutional

conference that very soon Nyasaland would be withdrawn from the Federation.

On the other hand, Sir Roy Welensky, the Prime Minister of the Central African Federation had been campaigning against the withdrawal. He openly criticised the British government and Malawian nationalists for their efforts of withdrawal. The White settlers said that the Federation of the Central Africa could be decided only by a common agreement of all interested governments of three countries - two Rhodesians and the Nyasaland. The Secretary of State for Central African Affairs, R.A. Butler announced in British Parliament that Malawi would be withdrawn from the Federation. The White settlers had on the other hand, charged the British Government and accused the negotiator's step as 'betrayal'. They had racial hang-over in their mind.

The Secretary of State of the Federation R.A. Butler visited Nyasaland. A meeting had been organized and attended by distinguished leaders and Banda was granted self-government. Dr. Hasting Kamuzu Banda took oath along with his MCP colleagues.

The Malawian Congress Party, held a meeting in Limba in which the leaders expressed their future

course of action. The White settlers were still opposed to grant of self-government to Malawi.

The following months, another negotiation was held in London.

Report of the Central Africa Conference- 1963:

"The federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which has been in precarious existence for the last ten years, is now nearing its logical end. The Central Africa Conference held at Victoria Falls, Southern Rhodesia, from 28th June to 3rd July 1963 was attended by delegations from the governments of Britain, the Federation, Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and observers from Nyasaland. The Conference fixed 31st December 1963, as the target date for the dissolution of the Federation and decision on several other vital problems such as the Federal Public Service, Public Debt, Inter-territorial Collaboration, Defence, Citizenship etc. As the Conference was an important event in the colonial history of Africa, the text of its report presented to the British Parliament by the First Secretary of State, Mr. R.A. Butler."

J.T.A. HOWARD-DRAKE
SECRETARY-GENERAL

R.A. BUTLER
CHAIRMAN

Victoria Fall's Hotel,
Southern Rhodesia, 17
3rd July, 1963."

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17. D.K. Chisiza, "Congress Party, Nyasaland, Plural Societies, Multiracial government, Racial Partnership", Africa Quarterly, April-June, 1962, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 5-9.

British Government discussed the financial and economic measures. In November 1963 the Banda government announced that the general elections will be held soon. On July 6, 1964, Nyasaland adopted new name and Malawi, became a fully independent commonwealth nation with a parliament of 50 elected general roll members and three special role members. All Europeans were to be elected by the European voters registered on a special roll.¹⁸ On July 6, 1964, the Protectorate of Nyasaland became independent state of Malawi.

The radical nationalists, were largely absent from Malawi in the year of independence. Because the main aim of the Malawi Congress Party was to break the Central African Federation rather to bring any radical change. Some of the progressive section of the leaders like Chipembare did not succeed in their mission to gain real independence. He continued to launch a movement against the government headed by Dr. Banda who had compromised on major national issues. On 6 July 1966 Malawi became a republic and a one-party state. Dr. Banda became its first president.

18. This is Malawi - Indian Council for Africa, Independence Africa Series, 1970, p. 39.

CHAPTER - FIVE

CONCLUSION

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To conclude, we can say that liberation movement of Malawi was anti-colonial and became a guiding force for the other Third World countries in their struggle to liberate themselves from the colonial yoke. African nationalism was the goal of the African people to share the fruits of freedom and democracy which is the fundamental right of every individual. The national movement was the reaction of African people against being treated as slaves, as beast of burden or "civilized" people bared from participation in many activities. Malawi nationalist movement was a direct threat to the British racial and imperialist policies. The African came to notice that the racial discrimination was a denial of humanity and insult to his dignity and pride. The common masses had no alternative but to join with those forces which were fighting for the restoration of his self-respect.

By coming into contact with various political development in the world as a whole, Malawians were bound to realize their social, economic and political rights. A new political consciousness emerged among the Africans and this new spirit challenged the dominance of European

powers. They were no longer ready to live under the paramountcy of the white settlers and got united on a common point i.e. independence.

In course of anti-colonial struggle, the nationalist remained ideologically divided. This was one of the major weaknesses of the leadership. With the emergence of class system within the country, elite dominated the political scenario. Their interests differed from that of the oppressed. Thus the internal contradictions weakened the anti-colonial struggle. The nationalist adopted different methods to unite the common people to fight against the colonial powers. In course of struggle, a new idea developed and the ideology of revolutionary nationalism diffused which gave them a unity of purpose in overthrowing the colonial regime.

We notice that though the country got independence after a prolonged struggle, yet the nationalists had been fighting against authoritarian government. The government headed by Dr. Hastings Banda is to be considered as puppet government in the hand of the British government even today. At the initiative of the British government, Dr. Banda charged the nationalist with sedition.

The next important issue is the maintenance of relationship with South Africa - an Apartheid government.

Almost all third world countries had cut off their relationship with South Africa on the question of freedom to Africans, racial discrimination, and segregation. While Dr. Banda maintained his relations with Pretoria regime and held South Africans responsible for disturbance.

Finally, the nationalists had been fighting for an egalitarian society and oneday they will have it.

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