

Malawi will make Independence work

JAMES CURREY

"THE MOST IMMEDIATE problem is the Independence celebrations." The young Malawian's answer to a question about the country's difficulties was serious. The Minister for Independence, Mr. M. W. K. Chiume, was away from Zomba, Malawi's green and pleasant capital. People were waiting for instructions. But Dr. Banda has been keeping Mr. Chiume on the move ever since he took away from him the more important portfolio of Education and gave it to Mr. H. B. M. Chipembere, a man more guarded in action and word. The Independence Office, beside the National Assembly, has only rarely seen its master.

Young Malawians cite "seventy-two years of colonial neglect" as the cause of all the country's problems. On occasion one might feel that Britain had made their small amount of coal low-grade and that the Southern Rhodesians had put bauxite at the top of Mlanje, their highest mountain. But Britain has not looked on Nyasaland with much favour since the Scottish missionaries and Sir Harry Johnston talked Lord Salisbury into declaring it a Protectorate to forestall the Portuguese and the Arab and Yao slavers. Federation was an excuse to stop everything beyond handing out a few C.D.C. loans to the tea plantations and running the administration. The Southern Rhodesian-dominated Federation spent some money in Nyasaland. It tarred the road between Blantyre, the commercial centre, and Zomba, the capital. It built the splendid Blantyre school for Coloureds—to try and justify their spending a great deal more money per head on the education of White children. But it didn't plant money which grew. It didn't put money into schemes which would produce new wealth such as fish from Lake Nyasa, and cotton and sugar from the Shire Valley. The Southern Rhodesians preferred to retain Nyasaland as a labour reserve and a duty-free market for goods made with Kariba electricity.

ON LAKE CHILWA fishermen punt their dug-out canoes Cambridge-style. The logs have been brought over miles of country to the lake. Two lines of tug-of-war men rhythmically pull in the nets, full of wriggling fish. So little is known about the economics of the country that it is not certain how these fishermen operate. It seems likely that entrepreneurs run the trucks into Blantyre or Zomba and

Nyasaland became Malawi on 6 July 1964. On that day Dr. Banda put into operation the revised Five Year plan based on that of the late Dunduzu K. Chisiza.

bring these fishermen from their villages to work for them on the lake.

The Federal and British governments only just began to develop the lake fishing industry. The Southern Rhodesians preferred to rail Frikkie Fish Sticks from the South African coast. A certain amount of research is being done; unfortunately a Rhodesian-born research officer recently offended Malawians by talking of Lake Nyasa as "my lake". When Lake Kariba was created by damming the Zambesi the Federal Government spent millions bulldozing trees which would disappear beneath the waters so that in time to come fishing boats would not foul their trawls. If they had put an equal amount of money into trawlers, refrigerated trucks and a canning factory in Nyasaland, a profitable industry would already be developing. As it is, the delicately flavoured chambo, and other fish from this deep lake which has formed in the Great Rift Valley, do not get to profitable markets.

The Legislative Assembly in session, Zomba



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A money economy is only just starting. The sellers in Zomba market sit, each behind little piles of potatoes, flour or beans. Each person sells a single commodity. Nobody pesters you to buy in this cool early morning beneath the trees. The wives of English civil servants and American A.I.D. men buy strawberries. They have to wait for their bowls to fill slowly as the women empty tiny punnets at 2d. a time; there are no scales and the sellers do not seem to have had the idea of using larger punnets. An entrepreneur could fly these strawberries to Johannesburg where people are willing to pay five shillings a helping in the off-season.

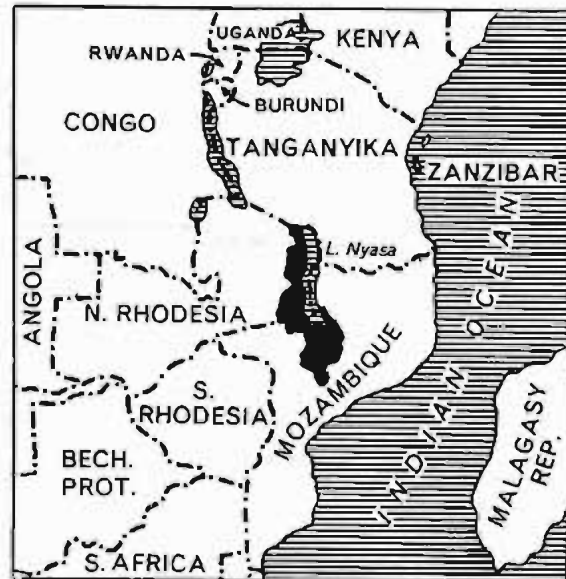
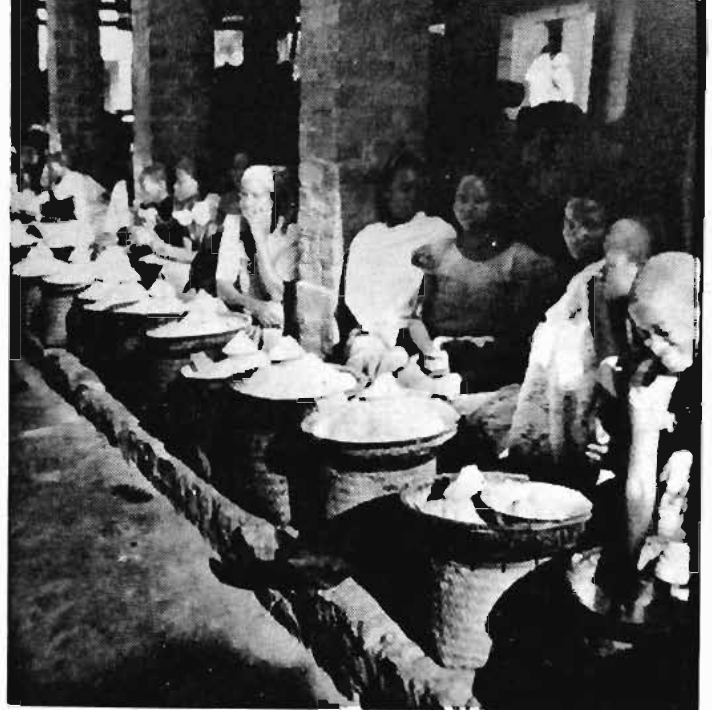
There are about three farms in Malawi run by Europeans, and so there have been few examples of non-subsistence farming. The idea of growing a surplus to sell is only being grasped slowly. And as in all countries an agrarian revolution is needed before a real industrial revolution can take place. Malawi needs agricultural demonstrators and tractor stations more than anything else.

Down river from the ferry at Liwonde, Frankpile thump piles into the foundations of a control barrage for the Shire River irrigation, hydro-electric and drainage scheme. The earth coffer dam looks fragile against the tearing green power of the river. Work has started again after the rains and, due to a miscalculation over the likely level of the river at the time, part of the coffer dam has had to be opened up. This scheme should already be in operation, as should the Kafue scheme in Northern Rhodesia. But Federal effort got tied up with Kariba. Now Kariba can produce electric power for industry which does not yet exist. Meanwhile, the agriculturally rich soil of Shire and Kafue has not been exploited. The development of agriculture first moves money in the economy. This creates the demand for the beer, boots and bricks of secondary industry. These small factories can use the electric power Kariba produces. The order of priorities was wrong.

In the insect-laden afternoon the Malawian mahoot rides his elephantine bulldozer. It mud-eats its yellow way through the rich earth. And like an organist the driver plays the spindle levers and clutches, and the steel beast spins as easily as a top on sunbaked earth. The watchers are watched: a child eyes us thoughtfully as he chews wild sugar cane. He doesn't know that Malawi once did not have bulldozers. And he does not know that £4m. are being invested in growing sugar. And that by the time he is old enough to understand what is happening he may be able to replace his tattered vest with clothing made from cotton produced in this valley.

"My country is not poor, it has merely been neglected," says Dr. Banda. In such ways as have been mentioned Malawi is trying to catch up with the economic neglect. On the road between Blantyre and Zomba visitors are shown the bridge where Dundera Chisiza was killed. Many of these plans were his.

A PRESBYTERIAN-TRAINED Inspector looks at us fiercely over her tea and is scathing about the standard of the Primary School she has just inspected. But the problem of education which seems to vex her more than any other is that some of the teachers suckle their children in front of the class. Although Malawian herself she is far more shocked



The High Court at Blantyre



by this than her English and Scots audience. They know that it is difficult for a teacher to concentrate on her teaching in such conditions; they also know how difficult it is to find replacements.

Lilongwe Girls' High School is surrounded by a seven-foot high fence to keep the girls in. Soon after self-government a member of Legco asked whether the fence was high enough to keep out the police, who are camped next door. Such are the problems of education in the new Malawi; overtly different but basically the same as at D.S.G. To what extent is discipline good? Malawian parents, whose daughters are often in their twenties by the time they leave secondary school, are pleased that the chances for their daughters to become pregnant are confined to the school holidays. The parents do not want the school careers cut short: a secondary school education improves the girls' marriageability.

Dr. Banda is determined to squeeze an educated élite out of the schools before he provides for universal primary school education. There are under a hundred Malawian graduates. The new University of Malawi will almost certainly be an "O Level" University, like Zambia's, aimed at providing for the immediate and technical needs of the country. It was originally planned that the University would occupy the old Church of Scotland Mission station at Livingstonia. But, since one can only reach the site by Land Rover, staffing would be a problem. An American team has been touring the country to report on the needs of a university; they will probably recommend that it is placed closer to the Zomba-Blantyre axis.

TOURISM SHOULD BE a useful form of income for such a beautiful country. But there is so much to be done. The lakeside road would be desirable and yet all communications have developed to and from and not along the lake. Would it not perhaps be more sensible to spend the money on roads which would enable the lovely Malawian timbers to be transported to furniture factories? There is also a contradiction in developing tourism. Another American team reported that one of the greatest charms of the country was that it was unspoilt. They then went on to recommend many tourist facilities which will remove this very charm. Nevertheless it is one thing to wish the job of being a quaint and picturesque peasant on somebody else and quite another thing to be a peasant oneself.

And development of the country sometimes takes unusual forms. The "Miss Independence" contest has been supported by the Department of Community Development as a means of giving confidence to the women of Malawi. It is seen as a tool of emancipation of the women, without which no country can develop properly in the modern world. "Miss Zomba" was a schoolgirl and thus one of the emancipated.

Certain Malawian social customs do not help the development of a modern industrialised society. Some of the tribes are matrilineal. A man does not look after his own children but after a sister's children. But if he is more ambitious for his children than his wife's brother then he may find himself landed with paying for the education of both a sister's children and his own children. Such tensions await a Malawian Chinua Achebe.

DR. BANDA obviously has maintained something of the position of the Chief. Young Malawians look to him for a lead; so often they preface answers with "The Kamuzu announced that . . ." John Msonthi, the Minister of Trade and Industry, is in many ways typical of the men in their thirties who form the Cabinet. He comes from the first generation which had secondary education generally available. He is the only Roman Catholic in the Government and went to University in Bombay. Most of his colleagues are Church of Scotland products. He says with smiling frankness as he stands on the ferry beside his black car: "Who knows? The Doctor may have a Cabinet reshuffle tomorrow." But he is not really unsafe because Dr. Banda has already drawn upon almost all the men of Cabinet calibre. But the atmosphere is very much that of "All gifts flow from the Doctor". He personally selected the fifty new members of Parliament from the second rank of local party officials because he did not want to take away the trained men from the Ministries.

Recently the Prime Minister has told his Cabinet Ministers that loose talk must cease. The discipline is not so remarkable as the fact that he made the statement in public. He is the General who gives the orders and statements in the campaign to develop Malawi. He will, and does, order short cuts to be taken on the march to the objective. The end justifies the route taken; and he is probably anxious to get there before he dies. "If it is in the interests of my Malawi people," he said the other day, "I will make an alliance with the devil." He is, of course, the judge of what is in fact good for "my" Malawi People. His approach is pragmatic and the route taken is sometimes surprising as when he shows himself ready to accept the Portuguese as camp followers.

THE ELECTIONS — or really the "non-elections" — in April showed the extent of support for Dr. Banda not only among Africans, who were to vote on a "General Roll", but also among Europeans and Asians who were provided with a "Special Roll". Since there was no successful opposition, the only means Malawians had of showing their approval of Dr. Banda and the Malawi Congress Party was by registering on the General Roll, if they were African, and by refusing to register on the Special Roll if they were Asian or European. 1,863,00 people registered on the General Roll. 800 or so Europeans showed their opposition to Dr. Banda by putting themselves on the Special Roll.

The Minister of Transport, Colin Camron, pointed out to the Prime Minister that the racist constitution in fact prevented Asians and Europeans like himself from showing support. First of all Asians were allowed to register on the General Roll. And then later those Europeans who had not registered on the Special Roll were allowed to join the General Roll if they wished; over 600 did. This strange procedure in fact deprived Colin Cameron of the chance to stand for Parliament but Dr. Banda has used his powers which enable him to co-opt a maximum of three non-Members into his Cabinet.

NKRUMAH USED TO MEET in Dr. Banda's house in London. In Malawi one finds some of the cross-fertilised results of

this friendship. Dr. Banda's handling of justice and the press show his philosophical affinity with his protégée. A single party avoids the wasteful bickerings at the time when the need is for a crash programme of economic development; although there is a difference between the situation in the two countries since a middle class has only just started to develop in Malawi while in Ghana a more fully-fledged bourgeoisie makes an official opposition more necessary.

There is a Young Pioneer Corps in Malawi just as in Ghana. However though it was an Israeli Colonel who flew in, gave heart-warming advice, flew out. Within days of leaving he sent back a thick roneoed report. Pages of it were concerned with parachute jumping, an activity which is hardly relevant with the strength of Air Malawi at no more than six. Only when civil servants got to the closing pages did they find some direct references to Malawi; the rest of the report was a standard hand-out. The Young Pioneers have been in trouble on one of the Mozambique borders; they taunted the Portuguese traders and one of their number was shot dead.

One of the members of Banda's government teased one of the retiring British magistrates at a party by saying that Malawi's justice was going to be "much better than Ghana's". Standards seem likely to drop since not one of the British magistrates will be left. Inexperience may lead to some travesties of justice especially when the interests of the party are involved. Some Nigerians have been borrowed but they are in disfavour at the moment, chiefly because of the noisy parties they hold. After one of these they showed what they had learnt from the students of London and St. Andrews by turning signposts round.

DR. BANDA DOES NOT ALLOW a free Radio and Press. The news bulletins of Radio Malawi are reasonable in themselves, especially since a European employec was prevented from over-filling them with praises for the Ngwazi. But the radio does leave out news when the Doctor wishes them to. *Malawi News* is the Malawi Congress Party newspaper and proudly proclaims at the top of the front page "The Only Newspaper in East, Central and Southern Africa owned, Printed and Published by Africans themselves at a Press that is owned and Managed by Africans themselves". It runs true to the form of so many other party papers, especially when it advertises, in May, "1964 calendars now available". *The Times* appears twice weekly. A large headline proclaims UFITI IS DEAD. This turned out not to be an elderly chief but a local chimpanzee which had made good in Chester Zoo in England.

Papers and radio were silent about Banda's visit to Northern Mozambique at the beginning of May. Over tea one morning a missionary's wife said: "And where do you think the Doctor has gone to? He flew off this morning and wouldn't tell journalists where he was going." Supposition and rumour over the next days were split between the possibility of Banda's doing a deal with Tanzan and visiting the Portuguese. Nobody in Zomba seemed to know. There was no mention of his absence in the press or on the radio. Next evening a plane of Air Malawi was seen flying from the north over Zomba, far away from the regular air route. It was commonly agreed that it could

only be Banda returning from the north. Supposition in Zomba still continued. A day or so later a high-up member of the Malawi Congress Party let slip that Banda had been to Mozambique.

Rumours again went around. One of the wildest (repeated in the *Natal Mercury*) was that Banda was bargaining for a strip of land down to the mouth of the Zambezi at Chinde. It could be that he was bargaining with the Portuguese for the completion of the railway to Chinde. But he visited Nampula and Nacala near the town of Mozambique in the North Province. It could be that he is bargaining for favours from the Portuguese in return for promises that Malawi will not become a guerilla base. The Tanganyikan border is a long one and already the Portuguese have more troops in Mozambique than in Angola. Whatever are Dr. Banda's objectives he has already shown that he is more willing to deal with the Portuguese than with the Southern Rhodesians or South Africans. But apparently he does not particularly want this known in Malawi. His country interlocks with Portuguese Africa and it is necessary to maintain reasonable relations; maybe he does not expect his people to understand the situation sufficiently clearly.

TRAINED PEOPLE have always been short in the country. And now a good many expatriate civil servants are leaving. Some of them are leaving in a spirit of malevolence; it is said that all the top officials in one town are resigning together to make it as inconvenient as possible for the Malawians. But even those who are genuinely sympathetic have to think twice about staying. The logic of African Nationalism is Africanisation of the Civil Service. This means that the prospects of a career for Europeans are almost totally removed; a young Englishman in his thirties has to consider whether, before he gets any older, he ought to leave Malawi and start another career.

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It is not that the Malawians do not want white people. Dr. Banda has encouraged expatriate civil servants and technicians to stay. Young Malawians positively resent the exodus of Europeans; one young civil servant said that they ought to be ready to make a sacrifice for Malawi. But in future expatriates are going to be hired on contract rather than as career men. This will mean that Malawi will only get, on the one hand, young men with a spirit of adventure who will leave as easily as they came, and, on the other hand, expensive experts. The country is going to miss the experience of middle rank people who have spent years making the administration work.

The government has recently followed the recommendations of the Civil Service Commission of Enquiry which had T. M. Skinner as Chairman. This has prepared the way for Africanisation. It will no longer be assumed that the Administrative Grade are expatriates. Those Malawians who have, for the last year or so, benefitted from this, will now find that, due to increased superannuation, they will receive less. Rent for their housing will be economic and there will be no loans for buying refrigerators or building houses. They will no longer receive the long leave which was necessary to attract people from Britain on paid passages; it had in fact become an embarrassment since a civil servant would have to vacate his house while on leave and either travel, which is expensive, or go to his village, which could be equally expensive.

Last year the Ministers cut their own pay by 10%. As Dr. Banda says, "We must depend on our own resources to achieve our aims".

IN SUCH WAYS Dr. Banda will run the country on a practical level. He is not going to be tempted into schemes for the sake of newspaper prestige. Unfortunately, he under-rates public relations. He is gruff and rude to pressmen and they are correspondingly gruff and rude about Malawi. The incident on the Blantyre-Zomba road, when some white people were manhandled by the police when they failed to get out of the way of the Prime Minister's car, was given wide coverage. Sympathetic pressmen would have understood how the incident happened. The tarmac is twelve feet wide and has twelve feet wide shoulders. The police move the traffic off on to the shoulders for the Prime Minister; it is a reasonable precaution taken to safeguard the most important person in the country on a road which killed Dunduzu Chisiza. Obviously, both the people involved and the police contributed to the incident. The importance of the incident is that it is isolated.

THIS ROAD is perhaps the measure of the smallness of Malawian society. Just after one passes the bridge where Chisiza crashed one tired night, one sees D. S. Arden, the Bishop of Nyasaland, going in the opposite direction. He, like the Governor Sir Glyn Jones, who is on the road on another day, has gained the confidence of Malawians. Orton Chirwa, the Minister of Justice, drives past just before Peter Mackay, the man who resisted Federal conscription. They are all people who are going, in spite of the numerous problems, to make independent Malawi work in a practical and unspectacular manner. ●

Verwoerd's South African 'Commonwealth' Solution

A Moderate View

N. BARNEY BOLOANG

IT WOULD BE in everybody's interests to settle the race problem in South Africa; but a fair settlement is today more difficult than ever before. The old British policy aimed at the satisfaction of the African without injury to the future of Europeans. African contentment in those days was due not so much to what the British Government had achieved for their benefit as to the clear intention of the statesmen to give the African a square deal. Today, however, the Africans are entirely unconsidered except as the lawful prey of the pass and tax police.

Under the Government's control the Africans have no rights of citizenship, but they are conscious of their right to oppose an openly oppressive Government, although they are impotent to assert it. They are being crushed into a perpetual dull acceptance of their helplessness, and they feel the urge for a better condition only when the United Nations protests against apartheid. Even then, they find themselves confronted with the *animus* of White government officers who intensify influx control and job reservation, which, respectively, forbid free movement and entry into White crafts and professions.

In the towns the Africans are in a rather better position than those in the Bantustans, where the land is woefully arid or inadequate. The position in the towns is relieved by the regular wages they earn, whereas in the Bantustans there are virtually no industries nor any work to be had. Doubtless, the uplift of the Africans will not be an important feature of the Government in the foreseeable future, as instanced by the "one man, one business" law, which the city councils are so anxious to enforce. The Bantustan Africans will never cease to clamour for work in the towns. Their constant contact with civilized conditions in towns will make them conscious of their many disabilities, this resulting in further dissatisfaction.

The race policy cannot be made to fit fairly into the country's economic organisation unless it is released from colour and party considerations. Moreover, it is essential

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