

"Strictly Secret"

18/8/61

My dear Atate,

On behalf of all the Malawi prisoners here (now roughly 150) I wish to congratulate you upon your resounding electoral victory. It must rank as one of the historic elections of Africa——so vast were the majorities scored by your candidates throughout.

As you have been so busy, I refrained from writing to you to let you know how I am getting on. I have been in sound health throughout, and my morale has never flagged. You have contributed towards this state of mind more than anyone else, for, through Kanyama, I have been kept informed of your concern for my welfare. I have also been very much touched and heartened by the regular assistance which Malawi gives to my dependants at your command. Above all, your clear determination to ensure that I should remain one of your top lieutenants has given me much encouragement, and my earnest prayer to the Almighty is that I should continue to deserve this great esteem that I enjoy from you.

Your soldiers inside these walls are no less worthy than those outside. With them, Kamuzianism is now a religion and not just a patriotic cult. I am still rigidly isolated from them, but the 156-strong African staff here is 100% pro-Kamuzu, and so Musopole and Chikwakwa and other leading chaps are often smuggled through the dividing gates to my section and we talk things over. The conditions, particularly for my friends, continue to be poor, largely because the Federal Government is too bankrupt to provide the money needed to improve things. But the officers are no longer brutal——they dare not be. They fear you like thunder! Understandably, since the elections they have been throwing their weights about,

just to save their faces — they must show that they are still in authority! But we are not responding or reacting. We know losers must act like this. In fact, I will be surprised if a few D.C.'s don't do similar or worse things in the villages to save their faces.

At the hour of our parting in February, you ~~intentionally~~ intimated that you would, some time after the Election, be asking the Governor to exercise his power of Executive Clemency on us. Since you have shown, through questions you've sent Sacranie and Orton to ask me, a keenness to consult me on matters affecting me, I am now making a few suggestions. My attitude is the traditional one of "the Doc knows best," and I am making the suggestions only because I fear you might need them.

Firstly, I would like to emphasise that I wouldn't be happy to see the nation paying a great price for our release. I found all Malawi prisoners here already believing that you will take them out of here soon after the Election. But I have fought this belief and have had great success. Everybody now realises that the release of political prisoners will have to take its proper place among the priorities that you have set before yourself for the benefit of the whole country. We, of course, are soldiers and can bear our suffering bravely. But we cannot say the same about our relatives; to these we hope Malawi will keep explaining the position. District and branch leaders will have to make people understand that although Kamuzu is now the Government, the release of prisoners already tried and convicted is a complex matter which will require patient negotiation. This should be done early, lest

some hot chaps begin an irresponsible fuss and agitation about it.

Secondly, I suggest that the whole matter of our release should be left entirely in your hands and that it should be a secret affair, not a public issue. Not only do I fear that Sir Glyn might, if the matter is made public, be compelled to give a 'No' from which it will be embarrassing for him to retreat soon after, but I have to be honest and say that I still fear the intentions of "Our friend" about me. (Kanyama will explain when he returns). I wouldn't like "Our friend" to have a hand in the matter.

Thirdly, since Sir Glyn (or Mr Macleod) is bound to refer to me particularly (when you negotiate our release) as a "security risk", I would like to emphasise that I am, as always, completely loyal to you and that I will NOT resort to any methods not authorised by you. Of course, I am alleged to have indulged in "violence" when you were away in London in December last year. But what has been deliberately overlooked is that while uttering violent words as a result of temporary defeat by my own passions, I always urged my ~~own~~ listeners to obey your appeal for peace and calm, and it is significant that all my crowds dispersed quietly, without a single stone being thrown or an insult hurled at the police officers present. I addressed nearly 10 such meetings and they all ended quietly. (The Chester Katsonga house burning incident is ~~now~~ cited against me, but it had no relation to my speech; indeed, it is still believed that it is U.F.P., the Special Branch and liberationists who burnt it in order to discredit Malawi).

If you will order us to take action, of course, I will be at your service, but otherwise, I will do ~~at~~ what I did at your ^{com}mand during the two months between your return from the Review and my imprisonment—bury myself in some office and refrain from crowds. If you so desire, I might even leave the country for a study tour to Ghana, Nigeria or United States—just to be away during the more critical months—lest I'm tempted to incite.

I hope Sir Glyn will find it easy and wise to ~~demand~~ accept your demand. Nyasas being what they are, our prolonged stay here could inflame feeling. Your power to keep the people peaceful must not be wasted on such small matters. Let the people get embittered by really important things; ^{like Federation;} our release is a small matter which should not be allowed to assume crisis-proportions through sheer procrastination on the part of the Colonial Office. May God guide Sir Glyn and Mr Macleod.

We here fully support your demand for secession and control of the Executive Council. You have been enthusiastically endorsed as the only leader and acceptable ruler of the people of Nyasaland. I hope they will give you now the two official portfolios that are meant to pass into unofficial hands later, plus the one higher roll portfolio that you now deserve through your huge "bite" into that roll—totalling 6 portfolios.

Sorry for this long letter & the time that it will waste for you. I hope it is the last letter for the next few months.

Your loving son, Masauko.

P/S. Enclosed are suggestions as to manner of Release.

Suggested Alternative Plans for Release of Prisoners and Conditions of Release

Either 1. Release of All first offenders (i.e. people without previous convictions).

This will automatically cause every political offender to be released, for, I am proud to say, all Malawi prisoners are first offenders—a fact which shows that apart from their political convictions they are all law-abiding citizens.

Under this plan, some non-political offenders gain release (e.g. men accused of theft, fraud, tax defaulters, etc.) This will have the advantage of ~~now~~ preventing any grumbling that only "Dr Banda's party" followers have been released" and any allegation that the Amnesty has been "discriminatory on political grounds."

Or 2. Release of All First Offenders and reducing by a half of the sentences of persons with previous convictions.

This has again the advantage of including non-political men in the scheme of release, it also covers a larger number of men, and, above all, it releases people whose only previous convictions are ^{for} tax-default and ^{Bad} Driving, etc. But it brings in some hardened criminals. To avoid this danger, it can be specifically provided that all men with three or more previous convictions shall be excluded from the Amnesty.

Or

3. Release of Political Offenders only

In view of the increase in cases of housebreaking, robbery, theft, etc. the police may feel that the release of non-political prisoners will increase the wave of crime; in that case this plan could be adopted.

(The danger of this is that the non-political criminals, ~~some~~ of them very patriotic men, will feel that they are forsaken. In fact, some of them have been uttering silly threats — that if they are left behind, it will mean that they are regarded as foreigners and will play havoc when they come out — ~~and~~ more! No Government can bow down to such threats; but it is my duty to record them).

Conditions of Release.

Either 1. Unconditional Release with only a promise to obey Dr Banda's appeal for peace and calm.

Under this, it could be arranged that Dr Banda comes to address the prisoners on the eve of their release.

or 2. Merely Suspend the sentences of the released Prisoners — the suspension to turn into a complete cancellation of the sentence after 12 or more months if the released prisoner does not break any law.

If he commits any ^{new} offence ^{within 12 months,} he shall serve his sentence in respect of the new offence, plus the suspended sentence.