

Personal & Confidential.

District Education Office,

Mzuzu,

1st January, 1961

Dear Doctor Banda,

You will recall that when you were in London for the Nyasaland Constitutional Conference last August I sought an interview with you, but it could not be granted due to your pre-occupation with the Conference business.

I had a few things on my mind I wanted to mention to you and, time permitting, discuss same with you. Some of the things or matters I wanted to discuss with you were connected with the Conference itself. What was worrying me at that was the attitude some of the other members of the Conference had adopted. I thought it was very unfortunate that some of these people saw it fit to attack you when their role would have been to sink any differences between you and your Party on one hand and themselves on the other and present a united front. What I wanted to suggest to you Doctor was that you meet all these people and advise them to forget everything about these differences and approach the British Gov. as one people from Nyasaland. I thought that with your power of persuasion this was ^{not} an impossible

task at all and I think more would have been achieved. Anyway, in spite of all that you were still able to impress the Secretary of State for the Colonies who in his final speech specially paid tribute to ~~you~~ you for your spirit of give and take. The result was an advanced constitution for Nyasaland which will for the first ^{time} have an elected Legislative Council.

The next thing I wanted was more or less personal. I wanted to acquaint you with the circumstances which led me to join the Monckton Commission in the face of opposition of my people. Because of this opposition I wrote to the Chief Secretary on 28th December, 1959, to the effect that in view of the fact that my people were totally against my serving on the Commission he should ask the Governor to revoke my appointment. I said that I was opposed to serving on a body which all the people in Nyasaland could not approve. I further told him that I had attended the pre-Federation Conference at Victoria Falls in 1951 because I had been sent there by the chiefs and the other representatives of the people assembled at Zomba as a Protectorate Council which is now defunct. They also sent

sent me to London in 1952. On both occasions I stood against Federation - giving expression to my people's opposition to it. Unfortunately I had had no reply to this letter. The only reply I got from Zambia were travel ~~and~~ documents which reached me the second week of February, 1960.

As a Civil Servant I was in a dilemma. Those were bad times as you will remember. Many of our people ^{were} under detention including my own son. As far as I was myself concerned there were only two alternatives open to me. Either resign my appointment in the Civil Service in protest of membership on the Commission or obey what amounted to an instruction of the Governor. I was between the devil on one hand and the deep blue sea on the other - a harassed man at that.

Well, having been forced on the Commission there was nothing I could do but serve on it. With the other African members we were instrumental for the inclusion of the Secession Recommendation against solid opposition from the

the European members, especially those from the Rhodesias. They maintained that the Commission's Terms of Reference did ^{not} include Secession and therefore it would have been going outside these Terms. We pointed out that the British Prime Minister had said that the Commission could consider anything. In any case the majority of African witnesses who ^{had} appeared before the Commission had demanded it. To settle the matter the Commission agreed to refer it to Lawyers for expert legal advice. It was referred to Lord Shawcross who advised that though nothing was specifically provided in the present constitutional arrangement for the secession of any one of the countries constituting the Federation the British Government had the power to dissolve it or allow anyone country to opt out. Though the majority recommended conditional secession we told the Commission that secession should have an immediate effect since the Africans of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia wanted it that way.

The people in Nyasaland think and say that my joining the Commission was due to my desire for its ^(Federation) continuation. Nothing

nothing could be further from the truth. As a Civil Servant I cannot speak out my mind in public one way or another. I have always been opposed to this Federation and never for one moment have I advocated it. I was one of the witnesses who gave evidence to the Bledisloe Commission in 1938 against Amalgamation and when in 1949 the idea of Federation was first mooted you Doctor I convened a meeting of all Central African students then in London. We all condemned it and you were asked to produce a pamphlet setting out reasons why we hated any closer association with Southern Rhodesia. You produced a very admirably instructive pamphlet which did a lot to educate ^{public opinion of} our people both in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia against Federation.

I would not exaggerate if I stated that of all the students then in London I gained the most from you both morally and politically so that when I returned to Nyasaland my people quickly detected this ability of stating clearly and rationally the evils which would attend the introduction of Federation. Hence my inclusion in the delegation to Victoria

Falls Conference despite the fact that I was not a member of the Protectorate Council. It now pains me when I hear people labelling me a 'stooge' by which they mean one who is in favour of Federation.

I have no confidence in any other political leader in Nyasaland besides you. I did not want to write you at all. I wanted to discuss all these things with you in person and told my son Vincent this when he asked me whether I had acquainted you with the circumstances that forced me to serve on the Commission. I do not know ^{how} I could work against you now when one thinks of those old days in London when you and ~~me~~ I could bury ourselves in your house discussing and planning for Nyasaland. You may not know. When Federation had been imposed I was approached by certain officials to stand for election for membership to the Federal Parliament. I said that I could not do ^{that} because it would appear funny for a man who had stood against ^{Federation} to become a member of its Legislature. One gentleman travelled all the way from Zomba to Rumpi where I was then stationed to persuade me to stand, I again refused and suggested to him to try

by Mr Kumbikano which thing he did. It is things like this that hurt me when people say I have sold Nyasaland to Europeans because I am after money. In 1953 my salary was less than £300 and if I had joined the Federal Parliament it was to shoot up to £1,200 (Twelve hundred pounds) ~~£~~ plus allowances. This was mentioned to me as a bait, and I turned it down. Why now?

Wishing you the best and success
for 1961.

Yours sincerely
W. Gondwe