

Baroness Elles
C/O House of Lords
London
SW 1A OPW
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Baroness Elles,

MALAWI : AID DEBATE - 26TH JANUARY, 1993

With a particular sense of gratitude, I would like to draw your attention to the debate that you initiated, concerning the resumption of aid to Malawi. If anything this country has been unduly punished when you try and compare with what is going on in other countries. Us, the ordinary people are paying for a political price caused by a few individuals who are interested in political power in this country.

In appreciation of your personal interest in the well being of this country, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to you personally, Baroness, for the love, concern and care that you have for us the people of this country. I have no doubt, that you found a lot of encouragement and comfort, from the support that was rendered to you, by Lord McColl, Baroness Park and naturally and historically Baroness Mama Macleod. As a peace loving Malawian and a disgusted African with what is happening in most of the African countries, I feel greatly indebted to them, and you, Baroness and please convey my special vote of thanks to them.

This debate was going to be impossible, Baroness, if it was not for the concern that the Noble Lady, Baroness Chalker has for Malawi. She is always extremely busy due to undiscrifiable hostilities that Africa is going through; the wind of change, if I may borrow the term.

Her wish has come true, the entire hansard has been left free for anybody interested to read. It is my hope, Baroness,

that this move alone, should answer the question of freedom of the press and freedom of expression, as highlighted in the debate, by Lord Resesdale, Lord Bishop and Lord Judd. Their perception about this country, I am afraid to say is wild, biased, inaccurate, and pathetic, based on a lot of inaccurate information made available to them.

My Noble Lady Baroness Elles, your analytical mind about the sequence of events in this country is so remarkable. However, despite the stand taken by the noble lady, Baroness Chalker, I have no doubt, in my mind, Baroness, you must have found her observations and acknowledgement about the positive steps the government has accomplished within a record period of six months or so, to be very encouraging. Management of change is not easy, especially when the change that you would like to bring about is not properly explained to the people who are going to be affected by that change. Change, as we all know, brings gains and losses and that explains why even your own country is still in a predicament about Maastricht Treaty.

Having acknowledged the good fight you had put up for us ordinary people of this country, Baroness, I will not be dwelling on what you have already put on record; my objective now is to try and come up with some remarks following the contributions made by Lord Resesdale, Lord Bishop and Lord Judd.

There is a number of issues that the Lords highlighted about this country, in a spirit of openness, but characterized by little or lack of knowledge about us Malawians and therefore partial, in my opinion. I would, however, like to thank them so much, because it is through debates of this nature that we are able to appreciate other peoples' perception and conception of issues at hand and what measures to take to correct misconceptions.

Baroness, what Lord Resesdale, Lord Bishop of Coventry, and Lord Judd, should fully well know is that their attitude is pushing this country to war, their approach is tearing this country apart. With the problem of employment in your country,

the people who are being hurt are the ordinary Britons and ordinary Malawians, at least in my opinion. Your country through the members above is destructing what your predecessors had worked for. By the end of the day, you might loose the whole part of Africa that was formerly yours to United States, without you even realising. It is not my business to analyse the financial benefits you are drawing from Africa. I would beg with them to first carry out some home work and then come and try to assist Malawi.

I am a catholic, for your information, but currently the majority of us feel it is the church itself that is more desperate for change in this country, more than us the ordinary people, for reasons best known to themselves. It is particularly annoying, because the issues raised in the terms of reference (pastoral letter) are worse within the church. When one speaks about wages, for example, employees within church organisations are the least paid in this country. But yet, priests are changing brand new cars every after two years. Is this a fair distribution of worth? Is the church being exemplary? It is a well known fact in this country that Bishops and some priests have lots of real estate properties and they are in receipt of lots of sums of portfolio income in their own rights, despite the vow of poverty, and they are rendering no tax returns, are they participating in the redistribution of worth? Where is their conscience?

Baroness, if these Lords are sincere people, they should accept that it is the church which is undemocratic, it is the church which cannot accommodate dissent, this is why until up to this present day we have the Church of Scotland, Church of England and Anglican Church and the Catholic Church etc. To illustrate this point better how rigid some people can be in this world, I would like to draw your attention to the remarks in the hansard about Rev. Father Njaidi and Rev. Father Tenthani. I am shocked with the perception of the speakers in the debate. Is it wrong in a society for a priest to render pastoral services to members of the police in a country? Father Njaidi, a qualified priest, and dedicated to his work, does not deserve the remarks

made about him. If anything, he requires encouragement, being a priest to members of police, I should think is not that easy. As a matter of contrast, his counterparts because, of may be they have got little work, they have suspended their pastoral work and they are busy preaching about multipartyism. And if Rev. Father Tenthani chose to differ with the opinion of the authors of the pastoral letter, probably, because he knows that its all hypocrisy, does he deserve the criticism targeted at him? Where is the freedom of expression that these Lords and the Bishop claim to be fighting for. It is partiality like this that is causing concern in a lot of people in this country. Lord Resesdale, Lord Judd and Lord Bishop of Coventry should not think people of this country are stupid.

By the way Baroness, there has been another pastoral letter, and the real message is to ask all catholics in this country to vote for multipartyism, not democratically, but because this is what His Holiness the Pope recognises as a good system of government; interestingly, and ironically in his empire the vatican does not want to entertain multiparty system. This is overindulgence by the church, it is partisan and abuse of our human rights. The church is a dictator in this country. I think high scholars like you, would find this whole move by the church, highly undemocratic, signifying a high level of ignorance which runs into direct conflict with meaning of the referendum itself. Through God's guidance, the leadership of this country and the entire government has been more than tolerant, but the ordinary people know that the church has certain political ambitions to achieve and it wants to use us as a vehicle to meet its goals.

My Noble Lady, Baroness, perhaps, what Lord Resesdale and his team should know is that we Malawians, who nurse no political ambitions, we are guided over this issue by what this country has achieved over the period of its existence since independence, no more; and I can appreciate the problems that one would have, if he has no background knowledge of this country. I think, to be honest, most of the Malawians would have no problem with multipartyism, if the system had something good to show in Africa. Baroness, you will agree with me that in Africa, over

90% of this system has proved more than a disaster; and it is for this reason, that most of us in Malawi do not think that multiparty is a panacea to the problems of the continent. We do not want us to be guineapigs, to be experimented on.

Baroness, I have noted with interest, the emphasis by the Noble Lady Baroness Chalker, that Britain is not trying to impose a system of government on this country. This is the second time I have heard her say this, the first time it was on BBC radio interview in 1991 if I am not mistaken. However, talking about radio interviews, I also listened to a radio interview with Baroness Chalker, when she claimed to have been speaking for the ordinary people in this country, this time it was in Zambia, I would like to let the Noble Lady know, Baroness, that she was speaking for political activists to a largest extent, and they are only a handful; by using a communism type of propaganda, they appear to have followers. It is wrong to take advantage of the ignorance of the people. They are promising us that our wages will go up seven times, they are promising us that everybody will be driving a car and having a pair of shoes; poor as Africa is, poor as Malawi is, where will they get the money from? It is empty promises of this nature that will bring civil war in this country, and that is why I had said earlier on that Britain unknowingly is pushing us to war, is tearing this nation apart, because of approaches such as those of Lords under discussion.

Baroness Elles, in the hansard, the debate touched on the issue of favouritism for central region, I have problems how the speaker or his informer can justify that, but proportionately, from a glance, most top managerial jobs are occupied by people from the smallest region which is in the north. And it is understandably so. This disparity came about because of the education foundation that the missionaries, long time ago, created in this country. The missionaries introduced schools in the north originally, and the country ended up with higher figure of educated people from one area. This was further badly complemented by the Minister of Education then, soon after independence, who gave a lot of scholarships to people from his own region, the north based on favouritism and nepotism.

I am happy to let you know Baroness, that the system has changed, strictly education opportunities are evenly distributed out. The University of Malawi, sticking to its minimum entry qualification principle sees to it that every district has students selected to the university. The dividend of the system is easy to see, in the near future every district, every region, will have a graduate to compete for employment opportunities. Our beloved leader, His Excellency the Life President Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda has built an Academy using his personal resources in this country and every year it is seen to it that every district has three students selected to the school for a period of study. Why then not just park the Academy with students from his own region or clan? Also about employment in the civil service, posts are given on merit but with respect to regional distribution. I am a civil servant, and I am talking through personal experience.

If anything, Baroness, people in this country, in my opinion, dread a leadership of the country to come from the north, because they are people who are full of favouritism, nepotism, tribalism and they do not acknowledge merit from anyone from another region.

Finally Baroness, may I thank you again for the concern that you have for us people of Malawi, the Noble Lady, Baroness Chalker asked if the contents of the debate on aid to Malawi would be widely circulated. Please assure her that it has been circulated, but I should also ask you to do me one favour, to share this letter with the people concerned.

Yours faithfully,

Suzgo Chinguwo
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