

Revolt of the Ministers  
The Malawi Cabinet Crisis  
1964–1965

COLIN BAKER

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## Revolt of the Ministers

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# Abbreviations

BHC	British High Commission
BSAP	British South Africa Police
CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
CDP	Christian Democratic Party
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CRO	Commonwealth Relations Office
DC	District Commissioner
DPP	Director of Public Prosecutions
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
KAR	King's African Rifles
LMY	League of Malawi Youth
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MLC	Member of Legislative Council
MP	Member of Parliament
NAC	Nyasaland African Congress
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OHMS	On Her Majesty's Service
P&DA	Provincial and District Administration
PC	Provincial Commissioner
PDP	People's Democratic Party of Malawi
PMF	Police Mobile Force
UFP	United Federal Party
WNLA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

# Glossary

Askari	African soldier
Atate	Father
Bambo	Father
Boma	District headquarters
Bwana	Sir, Mister
Chimkango	Big lion
Chisilu	Traitor
Coloured	Person of mixed race
Kamuzu	Dr Banda's forename, literally 'little root'
Katundu	Luggage
Malawi police	Dr Banda's private bodyguard
Mankhwala	Medicine
Mbadwa	A political party in opposition to the MCP
Mchona	A person who left his home long ago
Ngwazi	Title given to Dr Banda, literally 'warrior'
Singanga	Native doctor

# Note on Terminology

The names of countries and places are spelled as they were at the relevant time, and not in their present-day form where this is different. For example, Nyasaland, Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia, pre-independence, are so called and Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia, post-independence. Similarly, places such as Port Herald and Fort Johnston are so called instead of Nsanje and Mangochi as they subsequently became.

# Preface

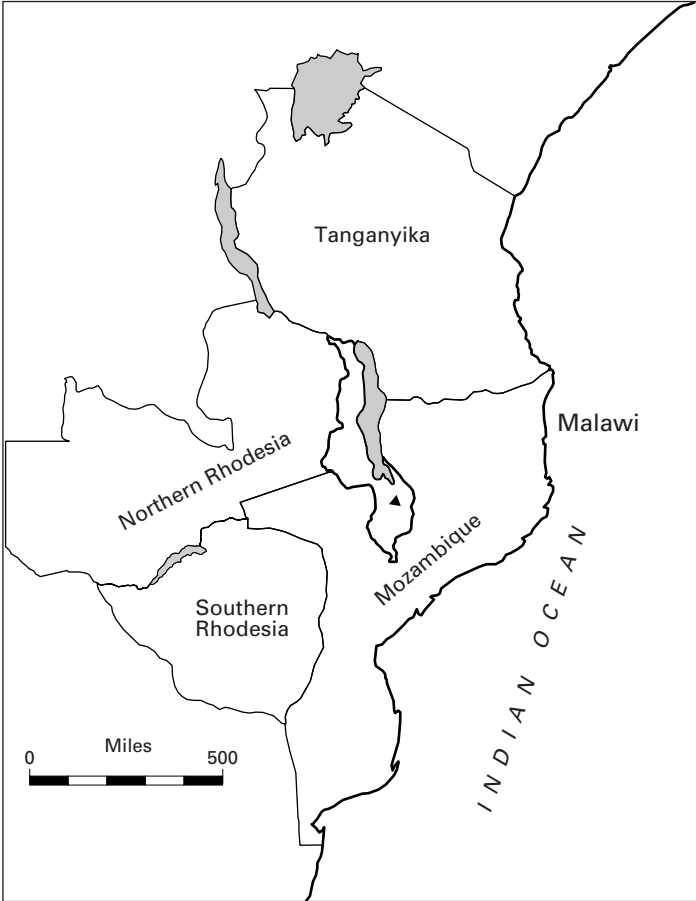
Exactly six years after he returned to the country of his birth in 1958, following forty-three years' absence, vowing to secure Nyasaland's withdrawal from the Central Africa Federation and its independence from Britain, Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, having secured the Federation's abolition six months earlier, became prime minister of the independent state of Malawi.

The course to sovereign status had not been smooth. Following mounting violence, civil disruption and fears of a plot to murder senior government officers and Africans loyal to the government, a state of emergency had been declared nine months after Banda's return, and more than 1,300 members of Congress had been detained. Banda himself had spent over a year in Gwelo prison in Southern Rhodesia. He had been released in April 1960, though his principal lieutenants had not been freed for a further six months. With an alarming amount of politically inspired violence, including brutal murders, the country had moved swiftly towards a de facto one-party state: at the last elections before independence none of the seats for the legislature had been contested. Despite these and many other worries, the general impression was that the country was firmly united behind its powerful, if somewhat unusual, prime minister and that he headed a unified, solidly loyal and progressively dynamic cabinet, devoted to the country's progress. The government was adopting a realistic approach to the fragile state of its finances and economy, and the country's political stability, under Banda's strong, pro-Western leadership seemed beyond question.

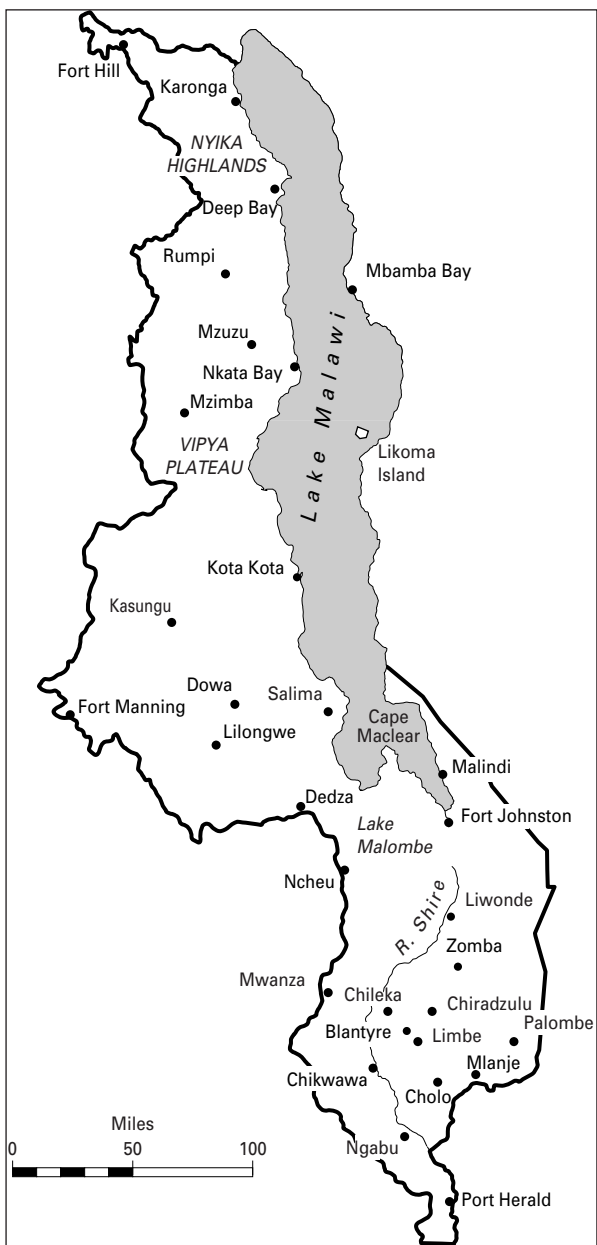
Yet, well within three months of Malawi becoming independent, all save one of his cabinet ministers resigned or were dismissed. All but one of the former ministers fled the country. A number of actively pro-Congress Europeans, including a former cabinet minister, fearing for their lives, followed them. Severe fighting, including killings and arson, occurred between the followers of the former ministers and Banda's supporters. The cabinet, composed almost exclusively of university graduates, each with significant experience of government, was replaced by a largely non-graduate cabinet in which only the prime minister and one

colleague had ministerial experience. Many African civil servants openly opposed Banda, and the business of government was, for a while, disrupted and left exclusively in expatriate hands, without political guidance. Friendly countries were alarmed by what was happening, and much distress was experienced by those who had placed great confidence in Malawi's future as a member of the community of nations. For a while, the former colonial master, the British government, which had staunchly backed Banda and which was keeping the country afloat financially, hedged its bets as to which side to support.

It is the purpose of this book to examine how this apparently sudden and potentially catastrophic state of affairs came about, how it was handled by the major participants and what the aftermath was. The bulk of the book is devoted to the cabinet crisis itself, but it is preceded by a study of the elements that accumulated over the years and ultimately led to the crisis. It is followed by an examination of the longer-term fate of the principal individuals involved and of the country itself as a result of the ministers' revolt.



*Map 1* Malawi in Central and East Africa



Map 2 Malawi: Location of places mentioned in the text



Map 3 Malawi: the Southern Region

## CHAPTER I

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# Introduction

THE British government declared a protectorate over the Shire Highlands on 21 September 1889, primarily to prevent the Portuguese moving into the area. The declaration was in response to strong representations made by the Church of Scotland, which had established mission stations in the area from 1875 onwards. The Church took a keen – and often proprietorial – interest in the government of the country ever thereafter. On 14 May 1891 the protectorate was enlarged to cover present-day Malawi, and a Commissioner and Consul-General appointed. In 1907 the protectorate's name was changed from British Central Africa to Nyasaland, the Commissioner was restyled Governor and executive and legislative councils were created. Various piecemeal changes resulted, by the early 1950s, in an entirely European executive of three *ex officio* and two nominated official members, together with two non-officials; and a legislature of ten European officials sitting with ten non-officials – six European, three African and one Asian – all nominated by the Governor. With the Governor as president of the legislative council, there was still an official majority, and the Africans – first appointed in 1949 – were in a marked minority on the non-official side of the house.

Further constitutional development was complicated and retarded by the imposition in 1953 of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland against the long, consistent and strongly expressed opposition of the African population. It was accompanied at its inauguration by riots in which eleven Africans were killed and a large number injured, and it was followed by a period in which the Nyasaland African Congress, founded ten years earlier, went into decline.

Although the introduction of the Federation complicated and retarded constitutional advance in Nyasaland, it did not stop it. At the end of 1953 two additional non-officials were appointed to the legislature, one European and one African. In 1956 a new constitution provided for a legislature of eleven officials and eleven non-officials – six Europeans and five Africans. The Africans were still in a double minority in the

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legislature: with the Governor in the chair, the non-officials formed a minority and within that minority the Africans were still outnumbered by Europeans. The executive council was unaltered: five officials and two non-officials – all European. It had taken six and a half decades for Britain to advance the Africans to this stage of preparation for governing themselves. The successful Africans were H. B. M. Chipembere, M. W. K. Chiume, N. D. Kwenje, J. R. N. Chinyama – all four Congress candidates – and D. Chijozi, a Congress sympathizer.

Their success did much to restore Congress's self-respect, and it took on a more militant mien. In the Legislative Council, Chipembere and Chiume ... required answers to awkward questions, demanded an end to discrimination, vilified Federation, and generally made life difficult for the Government. Among educated Africans, *Hansard* quickly became a best-seller; no one before in Nyasaland had dared to question so openly the motives and methods of colonial autocracy.<sup>1</sup>

Chipembere, born in 1930, had been at university in South Africa and returned to Nyasaland in 1955. He acknowledged his militancy and admitted to holding violent views: 'I certainly had very extreme views, very violent views ... and I certainly did advocate at the time extreme methods.'<sup>2</sup> He joined the civil service as an administrative assistant and then resigned to stand for selection to the legislature. Chiume, born in 1929, had been to school in Tanganyika and to college in Uganda. He taught for a while in Tanganyika before returning to Nyasaland at the very end of 1954. He started a coffee farm at Chikwina in the northern province and then campaigned for selection to the legislature.

Chipembere and Chiume realized that, despite their success and militancy, they needed a person older than themselves to lead Congress: 'a man of about fifty or sixty, an intellectual, with a character combining nationalism with honesty, self-denial and a spirit of cooperativeness'. They knew the man for the job. Dr Banda, already almost sixty years of age, had left Nyasaland in 1915, worked in South Africa and went to high school and university in the USA, where he qualified as a doctor. He lived in Britain from 1939, became a successful and respected medical practitioner there, campaigned against the introduction of the Federation and in 1953 moved to Ghana, where he continued to practise medicine. While Chipembere and Chiume could have managed without Banda, they recognized that it would take them very much longer than it would him to turn Congress into a mass movement and persuade Britain to hand over the reins of power. They, particularly Chipembere, set about persuading him to return to Nyasaland. Of all the letters written to persuade him, Chipembere's were 'by far the most urgent'. He was dissatisfied with the current leadership of Congress, primarily because

on the last day of 1956 it had overwhelmingly rejected his and Chiume's strong urging that the Nyasaland members of the federal assembly should immediately resign. That Chipembere and Chiume pressed this point, against Banda's clear advice that the members should remain in office for another two years, indicates that they were concerned more with his potential leadership than with actually accepting his views and acting on them. Chipembere could see that 'although it [was] wrong to be led by a single man placed in such a powerful position, still human nature is such that it needs a kind of hero to be hero-worshipped if a political struggle is to succeed'.<sup>3</sup>

[He] said quite frankly that Dr. Banda's reputation would have to be built up. He told him that he was known as a name, as an African highly educated doctor in London of Nyasa birth, that ... little was known about him among the masses. He must not be frightened if he was heralded as the political messiah. Publicity of this sort could be used with advantage; it would cause great excitement and should precipitate almost a revolution in political thought.<sup>4</sup>

Eventually, the doctor agreed to return to Nyasaland, but only on the adamant condition that he should be made president of Congress and given an unfettered hand to run it as he wished.

Earlier, Lennox-Boyd, Colonial Secretary, had urged Welensky to prohibit Banda entering the Federation, but the federal prime minister had not done so.<sup>5</sup> Banda arrived back in the country of his birth on Sunday 6 July 1958 and received the tumultuous welcome of three thousand Africans gathered at Chileka airport to greet him. In introducing him to the crowd, Chiume said that the doctor came not only to lead but to carry out the wishes of the people, and he, like anyone else who did not follow their wishes, would have to go. He repeated this point later in the day at a public gathering at Soche: 'Dr Banda should be our leader so long as he toes the party line.' That evening Chiume, Chipembere, Dunduzu Chisiza and other Congress leaders met secretly and agreed that Banda would remain their leader as long as he accepted their policy, but no longer. From the outset, the lieutenants' views on Banda's role were clear.<sup>6</sup>

Although present when the first two of these statements were made, Banda may not have fully grasped what was being said, for although he very soon became competent in Cicewa – much more so than he let on – it may be that, after so many years' absence, his ear was not immediately attuned to the language. In any case, since it had been agreed that he was to be president of Congress, with complete freedom to run things his way, he may not have much minded what Chiume was saying.

.....

## Banda and His Lieutenants: Early Relationships

BANDA had been away from Nyasaland for over forty years. Whatever the political, economic and social changes that had taken place during his absence, they have to be set against the infinitely greater changes he had personally experienced. His experience of the First World War was in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa; that of the inter-war years, including the Depression, was in the USA; that of the Second World War was in Britain; and his post-war experience was in Britain and Ghana. He left Nyasaland as an impoverished teenaged schoolboy and returned as a well-educated and highly qualified professional man, widely travelled and much respected in the West. In many ways he was more European than African. Chipembere wrote of Banda's lack of understanding of African life, and his general treatment of Africans, in contrast to Europeans:

At his party residence in Blantyre he had a living room in which he received only Europeans, including officials working under us. Africans were invariably received in the inferior living room, except for selected visiting dignitaries. When an African visitor had a call of nature, he was shown the toilets at the servants' quarters; a European was shown the bathroom inside the residence. At one time he told one of us: 'I trust Englishmen; they never lie.' [This demonstrated] Dr. Banda's lack of understanding of African life caused by his prolonged absence from Malawi, and ... the aloof and aristocratic life he led. [His] leadership philosophy is that: 'familiarity breeds contempt. A leader must live above the people. He must be different from them. They are proud of him when they know that he is someone different and exceptional.'<sup>1</sup>

Although, particularly during his later years abroad, he stayed in touch with his home country, his expectations of what he would find on his return were not fulfilled. His recent personal experience of Africa was in Ghana, from 1953 to 1958, and this did little to prepare him for Nyasaland,

which was much less advanced politically, educationally and economically. He was disappointed with the level of development in these spheres in Nyasaland. Within a few weeks of his return, he told a district commissioner that he was appalled by the low level of Nyasaland's advancement, and exclaimed, 'What am I to do?'<sup>2</sup> It was to be expected, therefore, that he would welcome and pin his hopes on any indications of promise in individuals whom he encountered.

Before he returned to Nyasaland, Banda had met relatively few people from the country. Governor Armitage had made a special point of inviting the doctor to visit him in London in June 1958 when he was on leave, and a few other members of the administration had called on him. Over the years, too, a number of Nyasalanders had visited him but few of the currently significant Nyasaland African political leaders had met him. Chipembere had, but not Chiume, who recalled:

A few weeks before he came [back to Nyasaland] some disquieting murmurs still circulated the country, centred round the criticism that Banda was a *mchona* [one who left the country long ago, had not returned and was out of touch]. It was therefore decided to send a delegation to Banda in May to brief him on the situation in Nyasaland and the sort of difficulties he might encounter. The delegation [consisted of] Mr Chipembere and Chief Kuntaja.<sup>3</sup>

Chiume soon set about consolidating any gains he had made through being one of the small group who had pleaded with Banda to return to Nyasaland and lead Congress, and making up any loss he may have suffered through not having previously met him. It was he who made the introductory speech at Chileka on 6 July. Three weeks later Congress held its annual conference at Nkata Bay, and Banda stayed with the Chiumes at their home. He was struck by what he saw there and wrote that Chiume was 'one of the few sensible young men who realised that Nyasaland is an agricultural country'. They had a fifteen-acre coffee farm and the doctor took a stroll each morning, noticing the coffee berries ripening, and he enjoyed drinking the coffee that was 'grown, roasted and ground by hand on the farm'. In a rather Western way, he found it 'most delicious, far more tasty than the stuff one buys from shops'. Mrs Chiume, who showed him round the farm and provided refreshments each day, was 'a charming and very industrious young lady'. He wished there were more couples like them in the country. Chiume had been inspired by a plea made at the 1955 annual Congress meeting that 'all present should go out and help bring economic betterment to Nyasaland' and he had immediately begun working with the local chief in the Chikwina area to encourage the villagers to grow coffee.<sup>4</sup> Banda was clearly most impressed with the Chiumes.

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Banda was elected president-general of Congress at the conference and given sole power to appoint other officers and the members of the central executive. He appointed Chipembere treasurer, Chiume publicity secretary and Dunduza Chisiza secretary-general. He appointed the four other members of the executive committee and in general 'ignored the older, more experienced and more moderate leaders and took on the younger, more volatile and extreme people'. The Devlin Commission, which inquired into the 1959 state of emergency, had 'no doubt that the real power on the executive committee was concentrated in the hands of Mr Chipembere, Mr Chiume and Mr Chisiza'. On the other hand, Chipembere told Devlin that Banda did not always accept the advice he and Chiume gave him. Also, from the very time of his arrival back in Nyasaland there were signs that Banda was intent on being the boss and demonstrating this to his colleagues. When, soon after his arrival, he called on Armitage, Chipembere was with him and pulled up a chair, clearly expecting to stay, but Banda immediately told him to leave, much to Chipembere's obvious surprise and displeasure. Later, when Banda visited Portugal, Chiume, who accompanied him, was made to wait outside 'like an office boy' while Banda talked to the minister of foreign affairs and shortly to Salazar.<sup>5</sup>

A change in Banda's attitudes to social contacts with Europeans can be seen between the short period before the conference and thereafter. Within a few days of his arrival in the country he made courtesy calls on the Governor and other senior officials.<sup>6</sup> On his way north to the conference he went to his home district, Kasungu, and while there he accepted an invitation from the district commissioner and his wife – a fellow doctor – to dine with them:

He came and visited his home, Kasungu, and we asked him to dinner and he came. He was very interesting. He was then talking of setting up his dispensary in Blantyre, and my wife, being a medical officer, he asked her many questions about drugs, and local illnesses and so on, and she agreed that she would make out a price list of drugs for him. He was then going up to the Nkata Bay conference, so we asked him to stay with us on his return. He was very friendly and charming. Then he came down and I heard that he had arrived. We waited for him and he did not come. We heard that he was staying nearby, so I sent over a letter asking if he was coming over to us, but we got no reply. Then I wrote the next day and said that we still had not heard: 'Do come and stay with us if you like.' We still had no reply. The third day I sent a messenger again and said 'Give this letter actually to Dr. Banda himself.' The messenger said that he [Banda] opened the letter and he was sitting next to Mr. Chiume and he handed the letter across to Chiume and said, 'Right,

there you are.' Then he tore the letter up, threw it on the floor and said, 'Right, as you say, no further relations with Europeans,' and told the messenger to go back and say there was no reply. [He returned the letter torn in half.] But the first time, as I say, he was very interesting, very charming.<sup>7</sup>

At this time, too, Banda failed to turn up, without sending an excuse, at a cocktail party arranged by the provincial commissioner at Blantyre to meet members of the judiciary and a number of fellow medical practitioners. Jones, the Acting Governor, intended to have a quiet word with him about this breach of civility, but in the event did not do so.<sup>8</sup>

Two or three months previously, Chiume had spoken of his attitude towards social relations between the races to a visiting American, who recalled:

I asked if he had noted any improvement in the inter-racial situation, and Chiume said he could think of no successful inter-racial activities now. How about the colour bar in hotels, I asked; isn't it in fact possible for Chiume now to go into Ryall's Hotel in Blantyre? Chiume said he wouldn't go into Ryall's Hotel (and implied that he would despise any African who did). 'I'm not interested in the small advances; I want the things that really matter.'<sup>9</sup>

In December 1958 Banda and Chiume attended the All African Peoples Conference in Accra, Ghana, and the doctor subsequently made a number of interesting remarks about their attendance:

The flight from Johannesburg to Accra was uneventful ... but at Leopoldville the plane on which I travelled picked up a number of delegates ... And to my surprise Kanyama Chiume among them. It was more of a surprise to Kanyama to see me than it was for me to see him. He did not know I was attending the conference ... I had already sent him away when I decided to go to Accra ... [During the conference I] deliberately kept in the background and allowed Mr Chiume to do all the work on each committee on each of the items on the agenda. Since I took over the supreme responsibility of directing the affairs of the NAC, it has always been my policy to give my lieutenants and subordinates as much work and responsibilities as possible. I believe in teaching others who must succeed me one day, by allowing them to do things and share responsibilities with me now, as much as possible ... In the case of Mr Chiume I knew he would be equal to the task imposed on him. He is a very able and energetic young man, who thrives on hard work, as a committee man and as a negotiator. Few in NAC are his equal and none is his superior ... As it turned out, I had never been more right in any decision in my life than I was in allowing Mr Chiume to do the majority

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[of the work] for Nyasaland at the Accra conference – who acquitted himself with credit to himself and Nyasaland, and made an excellent impression on all those with whom he worked or came in contact, and they were many.<sup>10</sup>

Banda was clearly still much impressed with Chiume, despite the general view that the doctor himself had given a poor performance at Accra and might well have been overshadowed by Chiume. Chiume had been away from Nyasaland, and out of Banda's critical view, during much of the time since the doctor's return to Nyasaland, so he was continuing to enjoy the good opinion which Banda first formed of him. Indeed, he did not return to Nyasaland for another eighteen months: he was outside the country when the state of emergency was declared in March 1959 and did not return until May 1960, when the emergency was about to be lifted. He was not present at the emergency meeting of Congress in January 1959, though he allowed Congress to use his private box-body truck extensively during his absence, among other things for transporting members at the emergency meeting.<sup>11</sup> At this meeting, it was alleged, a murder plot was hatched to assassinate the Governor, senior government officers, and other Europeans and Africans loyal to the colonial government. Chiume thus neither suffered the hardships of detention nor benefited from the political kudos which it conferred. He spent most of the interim period in Britain, working and lobbying on Banda's behalf – and in the process enhancing his international reputation – while Chipembere and Dunduzu Chisiza and part of the time his brother, Yatuta, were detained in Gwelo prison with Banda.

Being impressed with Chiume did not prevent the doctor being critical of him when occasion demanded. As Chipembere recalled:

There was a time when Nasser donated £10,000 to our freedom struggle and it was Chiume who received it just before Dr. Banda was released, and he banked it in the name of the Malawi Congress Party in London ... When he reported it ... Dr. Banda was angry with him and said, 'You should have opened it in my name.' There were no explanations. It is possible that he felt that money was safer when the money was controlled directly by him.<sup>12</sup>

Like Chiume, Chipembere was one of the small group responsible for persuading Banda to return to Nyasaland, and he played a large part in building up the doctor's reputation as a messiah: 'I became one of [Dr Banda's] right-hand people and ... in the first years he was very much grateful to me and one or two of my colleagues who took the initiative to call him from abroad to lead the independence struggle.'<sup>13</sup> He was a leading figure and speaker at the January 1959 emergency meeting of

Congress. He was arrested on 3 March 1959 and detained in Gwelo prison. When they were together in prison, Banda and Chipembere got to know each other better. This had both benefits and disadvantages for Chipembere that Chiume did not share. The doctor later referred to those who were in Gwelo with him as his 'immediate top lieutenants'.<sup>14</sup> Banda seems to have entrusted even some domestic and personal affairs to Chipembere, who many years later recalled:

As a result of this very close relationship I was able to know the man very thoroughly and can explain some of his deeds in terms of what I was able to observe in him at close quarters especially during the time that he and I and two friends – the Chisiza brothers – were locked up together in [Gwelo]. For fourteen months we were together, apart from the first three weeks in which we were not allowed to communicate, in which we were all in solitary confinement. We spent the rest of the time together most of the day, a little reading in the morning and the rest of the afternoon discussion and so on. We got to know the man very thoroughly during that time – the changes of mood, philosophy of life. It is impossible to conceal your feelings from somebody you see every day for fourteen months, talking together.

We were in Gwelo and planning what he was going to do. His former nurse had got married. [She was] a relation of his – and he was just thinking who was going to take her place. He asked me to find a good girl who might take the place of that other one. I wrote to [Cecilia Kadzamira]. She was about to get married but such was the patriotism in those days that she said, 'O.K. I am willing to delay my marriage so as to work for the old doc.' She thought that after working for a few months or years she would be able to get married. The Doctor told me to tell her that she would be sent abroad for training – I don't think he intended that and he has never done that. It created an additional attraction for her to take up the job.<sup>15</sup>

Banda had begun to know Chipembere quite well before they were detained, and there were aspects of his make-up which disturbed him, particularly his occasional losses of temper and the immoderate behaviour that accompanied them. For example, at a public meeting in Zomba in mid-January 1959, Chipembere was so upset at the arrest of a number of women supporters that he delivered a speech that was violent in tone and in which he made obscene remarks about the royal family. Banda was sufficiently disturbed by this as to tap him on the back and tell him to quieten down. Later that day he delivered a reprimand to Chipembere for his unseemly behaviour.<sup>16</sup> Banda was aware, too, that Chipembere lost his temper from time to time in Gwelo prison and, for example in December 1959, 'he had, in a moment of irritation, thrown some doubt over the

ancestry of the prison superintendent [who] had thereupon removed all privileges for two weeks, including seeing visitors'. While in detention he spent so much time reading that his warder – who thought him 'the most likeable' of the detainees – chided him and thought he would 'crack' if he did not do something else. Thereafter he relaxed by making fishing nets, which he enjoyed: 'I naturally find net-making a reviving change from long hours of pacing round my cell or our yard or sitting down for hours reading all the conflicting things that the great brains of this world have to say about ideal constitutions and systems!'<sup>17</sup>

The early change in Banda's attitude towards social contact with Europeans may have been the result not only of Chiume's but also of Chipembere's influence. Devlin was given a good deal of evidence that Chipembere was anti-European and 'rabidly racist', including that of two district commissioners with whom he worked before standing for selection to the legislature. The first found:

He was an extreme fanatic, especially over his relationships with Europeans, and I have always said that he is mentally most unstable. He would get into the most dreadful rages and harangue against Europeans, and on many occasions I said, 'If you think like this, why on earth are you working for the Government?' He told me that when he was at school he was once caned by a European, and he said that from that date to this, so far as he was concerned, Europeans were dogs ... Apparently one day I passed his wife in the street and he asked me, 'Why did you not take your hat off to my wife?' I said I was very sorry, but I had not seen her. He harangued for a long time. He would never come to my house, never ... and on several occasions I asked him to dinner. He never replied. When I taxed him with it he said, 'No. In my position I cannot be seen mixing with Europeans.' As I say, I have always thought that he is mentally most unstable. One day he will go off his head. He gets into these dreadful rages, almost like a fit, but he is undoubtedly a very intelligent man.<sup>18</sup>

Devlin found this evidence 'most valuable and helpful'. When asked about Chipembere's attitude towards Europeans, the second district commissioner told the commission: 'When I knew him I would say that he accepted them as a rather unpleasant form of life ... he just had nothing to do with us towards the end.' Youens, later secretary to the prime minister and cabinet, attributed Chipembere's attitude to his having been boxed over the ears by a European schoolmaster for some misdemeanour. He was reputed to have had the floor of his office painted white so that he could walk on it daily. Chipembere routinely rejected invitations from Europeans to attend social functions, as did Chiume. Chiume felt, for example, that when Armitage was entertaining African members of the

legislative council he was trying to 'mellow [them] from the twin objectives of secession and independence [but he] was left in no doubt that he could not succeed in his policies ... by traditional methods of being nice to the Africans'. Later Chiume said, 'We did not intend to be softened so easily and ... refused to attend [his] luncheons.'<sup>19</sup>

Chipembere was not released from detention until September 1960, with the other members of the elite group of 'camp finalists'. Again, his long confinement and late release had physical disadvantages and political benefits, which Chiume did not share.

The other lieutenant detained in Gwelo with Banda was Dunduzu Chisiza. Born in 1930, he went to school at Uliwa and Livingstonia in the northern province of Nyasaland. In 1949 he went to Tanganyika and worked briefly in the police as a records clerk. He then went to college in Uganda and spent two years touring the Congo. He returned to Uganda and then went to Southern Rhodesia, where he worked as a clerk in the Indian high commission. He was deported to Nyasaland in July 1956 for political activities. He was appointed Congress's organizing secretary in 1957 before going off to Britain to study economics. He was recalled to Nyasaland in 1958 and made secretary-general by Banda. It was Chisiza who was primarily responsible for initiating and organizing the January 1959 emergency meeting of Congress. He was arrested and detained on 3 March 1959, but a little later in the day because he was not at his usual house when the police arrived to arrest him. During the morning he telephoned the officer in charge of police and asked him – unsuccessfully – to provide a vehicle and to come personally to take him into detention. He also contrived to have his arrest witnessed by journalists and photographers of the international press. In Gwelo he spent a good deal of time studying economic development and pondering Nyasaland's economic future. In addition to reading several economics texts he also particularly asked for a copy of Dale Carnegie's *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*. He remained with Chipembere in detention when Banda left Gwelo and was not released until the camp finalists were freed on 27 September 1960.<sup>20</sup>

Yatuta Chisiza, Dunduzu's elder brother, had served in the Tanganyika police force, where he reached the rank of assistant inspector. During that period, he was asked by the Tanganyika government

to infiltrate and report on the activities of the Tanganyika African Union (TANU). This he did but when TANU suspected these activities, he was posted from Iringa to Tukuyu. From there he left the police force and returned to Nyasaland in 1957. He pretended to do so in the nationalist cause of Nyasaland but in reality, Chiume believed, he was fleeing from TANU.<sup>21</sup>

In January 1959, at the emergency meeting of Congress, Yatuta was appointed to be Banda's private secretary, paid for by Congress, and to do 'some personal work for [him] at his house', paid for by the doctor.<sup>22</sup> In effect, he became Banda's personal bodyguard and was with him when he was arrested. Although he was not incarcerated in Gwelo all the time, he did spend a portion of his detention there with Banda, Chipembere and Dunduzu. The Devlin Commission found him to be lying when he denied all the violent passages in the transcript of a speech he made in February 1959. Devlin then played the tape recording of the speech – which indeed contained many violent statements – to Chisiza, who still declined to reconsider his evidence. Devlin concluded that there was no point in continuing the questioning.<sup>23</sup> Yatuta was a prison graduate and a camp finalist.

In the three or four years leading up to the creation of the Federation in 1953, one of Banda's most frequent correspondents was Orton Chirwa – born in 1919 – who strongly opposed federation. 'In the villages and townships mass meetings were held at which Orton Chirwa, wearing academic robes, stirred up a ferment of anti-federal feeling the like of which Nyasaland had never seen before.' He then added a barrister qualification in London to his arts degree from South Africa. Armitage recorded that Chirwa 'was known to have been in close association with Dr. Banda while in the UK and since [his] return [late in 1958]'. He acted as legal counsel for Congress but did not become a member of the executive committee, possibly, it was thought, because 'he was afraid that Banda's entourage would take decisions which he, as a lawyer, could not condone'. In March 1959 he was detained, but only for a short period. He was not accommodated with Banda, Chipembere and the Chisiza brothers at Gwelo. He was not arrested on 3 March as were the other lieutenants, but a few days later with other members of what the government saw as the second eleven: John Msonthi – who was authorized by Chisiza to take over the secretary-generalship of Congress in the event of members of the executive being arrested – Dr Harry Bwanausi, Willie Chokani, David Rubadiri, Moir Chisuze and Vincent Gondwe. Indeed, Chirwa was disappointed at not being arrested on 3 March, and, at his request, was allowed to accompany Chipembere and others to Chileka airport – but no further – prior to their being flown to Southern Rhodesia. The arrest of this second eleven – all graduates – and especially Chirwa, caused much concern in Britain, where a number of parliamentary questions were asked about it.<sup>24</sup>

Shortly after his release Chirwa founded the Malawi Congress Party with Aleke Banda. Aleke, then aged only twenty, had been born in Northern Rhodesia and educated in Southern Rhodesia, and had recently been deported to Nyasaland, as a political agitator. His parents' country

of origin was Nyasaland, but they had left there twenty-five years earlier. The Chief Native Commissioner considered his security file 'so shockingly subversive' that he 'just could not take a chance on keeping him in Rhodesia'. Chirwa and Aleke in effect re-created the proscribed Nyasaland African Congress under a different name, openly saying they were creating, expanding and keeping it going ready for Banda to take it over when released. In this respect Banda owed a good deal to them. Unlike Chipembere, Chiume and the Chisiza brothers, they were moderates. Chiume tried to prevent Chirwa creating the MCP, fearing that he was entering into a deal with the government in which he, Chirwa, would become Nyasaland's first prime minister. It was alleged 'that he had been visited by a Nyasaland Government official when he was detained in Zomba prison, and offered his freedom' if he would form a new party. This is most unlikely to have been the case. Chipembere confided to an American visitor to Gwelo gaol in September 1959 that 'Orton Chirwa's idea of forming a new party is not approved by us', and when he was asked if this included Banda, he said, 'Yes.'<sup>25</sup>

While Banda and his leading colleagues were still in gaol, Chirwa became the principal representative of Congress. During the last two months of 1959, in particular, he enjoyed a public role he had not experienced before. He had meetings with the Governor and accepted an invitation to visit the Colonial Office in the middle of November. There were two meetings, both with Iain Macleod, secretary of state. Chirwa was very self-confident, speaking, as it were, on behalf of the Nyasaland Africans. Although he had prepared a memorandum, he preferred 'an informal meeting in which he could develop freely the various points he had to make'. He told them that through his professional and personal relationship with Banda he was able to influence him and, having provided an instrument for non-violent political activity – the MCP – he felt he could keep Banda on a constitutional path. Despite Chirwa's confidence – bordering on arrogance – Macleod, Armitage and Colonial Office officials saw him as 'certainly not a political leader', not that this mattered because Chirwa was 'perfectly ready to admit that the party had been specially created as a vehicle for Banda'.<sup>26</sup>

Banda was released from detention on 1 April 1960. This was done without the knowledge of those detained with him in the same prison; they did not accompany him to freedom. He was taken to Government House to meet the Governor and the Colonial Secretary. A little later in the morning Chirwa and Aleke Banda were brought to Zomba to meet him. They were the first Africans to know of his release and he was in effect entrusted to their care when later that morning they took him to Blantyre.<sup>27</sup>

A week later Banda went to Britain and the USA and was away for

several weeks. He did not take any of his colleagues with him. Shortly after his return, the state of emergency was brought to an end, but not before legislation was passed to ensure that about a score of the hard core were kept in detention, including Chipembere, the Chisizas, McKinley Chibambo – who had been in restriction in Port Herald from 1953 until his detention in 1959 – and Gwanda Chakuamba, one of Banda's 'staunchest young supporters'.<sup>28</sup>

Chiume returned to Nyasaland on 8 May, and with Chirwa and Aleke Banda accompanied Banda to the Lancaster House constitutional conference in July and early August. The doctor had vowed not to go to the conference unless the remaining detainees were released, but Armitage talked him out of this, apparently with no great difficulty. The agreements reached at that conference were arrived at without Chipembere's and the Chisizas' participation and fell well short of what they strongly wished to secure, despite Chiume's presence.

In the period up to September 1960, the old guard – men like the other members of legislative council, Chinyama, Chijozi and Kwenje, and former office-holders in Congress, Thamar Dillon Thomas Banda and James Frederick Sangala – passed into virtual oblivion and were rarely heard of again. The membership of the new guard, Banda's principal lieutenants, became clear: Chiume, Chipembere, Dunduzu Chisiza and Chirwa. The individual parts played by the leading members of Congress varied a great deal.

Chiume got off to a good start in his relations with Banda. On the positive side he was one of the small group instrumental in bringing the doctor back to Nyasaland; he and his wife created a highly favourable impression on Banda at a time when he was disappointed in the general level of advancement that he found on his return to Nyasaland; his performance at Accra impressed the doctor on an occasion when he wished personally to keep out of the limelight but did not want Nyasaland to be so treated; he kept the flame of Congress alight in Britain and internationally when the NAC was proscribed; and he accompanied Banda to the Lancaster House constitutional conference. On the negative, but none the less beneficial side from his point of view, he was away from the country for long periods when any defects were less likely to come to Banda's notice. He seems to have been sufficiently influential on Banda as to induce him to change his attitude towards social contact with Europeans. Indeed, one of the non-official members of executive council told the Governor that Chiume was intercepting Banda's mail and insulating him from moderate European opinion.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, although he offered to return to Africa and join his colleagues in detention – an offer Banda declined<sup>30</sup> – not being detained with them, and especially not being among the elite last group to be released, deprived Chiume of

the politically important titles of prison graduate and camp finalist. It deprived him, too, of membership of the small group in Gwelo which planned Nyasaland's future. While Chiume was unable to learn more about Banda through close association in Gwelo, Banda was not able to learn more about Chiume – which, on balance, was probably to Chiume's advantage.

Chipembere also got off to a good start by being one of those inviting Banda to return to Nyasaland, and he was especially influential in persuading him to do so. It was he who agreed to Banda having sole power to control Congress as the price for his agreeing to return to Nyasaland. He was primarily responsible for ensuring that the doctor was built up as the saviour and messiah – though the actual building up was done mainly by Chiume. When the state of emergency was declared, he was flown in the same plane as Banda, with no other detainees, to Southern Rhodesia – indeed the plane's departure was delayed until he arrived at the airport – and he was incarcerated with Banda for the next thirteen months. During this period he was able to learn a good deal about the doctor – who also learned a good deal about him – and, with Dunduzu Chisiza, frequently discussed and planned with him Nyasaland's future. For the first six months in Gwelo he joined Banda in financially helping the Chisiza brothers, who had no money with them. When his legislative council salary was discontinued, however, he was no longer able to help in this way.<sup>31</sup> He was the longest imprisoned of all those detained, being among the first to be arrested and the last to be released: he was both a prison graduate and a camp finalist.

Dunduzu Chisiza's start was also good. Before going to Britain for further studies, he had joined Chipembere and Chiume in a delegation in September 1957 to press the Governor for constitutional advance. He was specially chosen by Banda to be the secretary-general of Congress and had to abandon his studies to take up the post. He accompanied Banda, Chipembere and Chief Kuntaja to make representations to the Colonial Secretary in London in June 1958. He was arrested on 3 March, and was able to learn a good deal about Banda – and he to learn about him – while spending thirteen months in Gwelo with him. He spent long hours discussing and planning Nyasaland's future economic development with the doctor there. He continued the study of economics, which he had abandoned when he was called back from Britain, and, in effect, he became Congress's economist. He, too, was a long-serving prison graduate and enjoyed the prestige of being a camp finalist.

Yatuta Chisiza's position as Banda's personal bodyguard placed him in close contact with the doctor, who must have reposed considerable confidence in him, at least physically. He did not, however, share the sort of confidence enjoyed by Chipembere and Dunduzu and he did not join

in their discussions planning Nyasaland's future, possibly because he was somewhat less well educated than they were. When they discussed with Banda in Gwelo gaol the cabinet to be formed on self-government, they excluded Yatuta, 'to his intense annoyance'.<sup>32</sup> Though a prison graduate and a camp finalist, he was not one of Banda's principal lieutenants.

Orton Chirwa had been active in supporting Banda's strong opposition to federation and he kept in contact with him while the doctor was in Ghana. His not having been long detained, and especially not being a camp finalist, was compensated by his co-founding the Malawi Congress Party and building it up ready for Banda to take over. Consequently, when Banda was released he had a ready-made party organization to use in continuing the fight for secession and independence. Chirwa's studies in Britain made him, in effect, the Congress lawyer, and in this capacity he accompanied Banda to the Lancaster House conference.

Although Chiume and Chirwa were free when Banda was released from detention, it was not until September 1960, when Chipembere and Dunduzu Chisiza were freed, that the principal lieutenancy became complete.

## CHAPTER 3

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# Banda Consolidates His Power: August 1960 to September 1961

BY early August 1960, Banda's power was already considerable. Its initial source was the British government which, without reference to any electoral test, accepted him as the Nyasaland Africans' leader. As early as February 1959 Macmillan had foreseen that the British and Nyasaland governments would have to deal with him.<sup>1</sup> By September that year many outside government were convinced that the stalemate produced by the emergency could be broken only by recognizing him as the Nyasaland leader and including him in the processes of government. Macleod reached this conclusion within a few weeks of becoming secretary of state. But there were other strong sources of Banda's power. He had been asked back to Nyasaland specifically to lead Congress. He had been given sole power to run the party and had selected his own principal and other lieutenants. He had a well-organized and fast-growing party ready and waiting for him on his release from detention. He had the sympathy of many influential people and organizations throughout the world, who felt that his long incarceration without trial was harsh and unjustified. He had been built up as a messiah. Devlin had been far more critical of the Nyasaland government and of his principal lieutenants than he had of him. As the Africans saw it, he, and not the government, had been right: he was at least the match of any white man. He had devoted his period in Gwelo prison to planning the future and to influencing – and assessing – two of the principal lieutenants, Chipembere and Chisiza. Within a few months of his release he had secured for Nyasaland a new constitution that gave Africans a dominant position in the legislature and a significant presence in the executive. His standing as leader of the Nyasalanders was very high indeed. He spent the next twelve months consolidating and furthering his personal power over his party and his lieutenants, and to extending it to encompass the head of government himself, the Governor.

Armitage went on leave early in August 1960, and Jones, the chief secretary, was appointed Acting Governor. Macleod's tactic was so to handle Banda that he would become involved in the work of government by joining executive council. In this way he hoped the doctor would learn that federation had distinct benefits for Nyasaland. To achieve this the government had to strive to create an environment in which he could gradually move towards the centre – politically in the sense of a non-violent, more moderate, more democratic approach and leadership, and constitutionally in the sense of a more balanced approach to continuing association with the Rhodesias, in particular being prepared to consider the Monckton Report and attend the federal review conference scheduled for December 1960. Whatever attitude Banda might take to these ideas, it was clear they would be utterly unacceptable to his lieutenants.<sup>2</sup>

Banda raised the question of his membership of executive council with Youens, the deputy chief secretary, two days after Armitage left. He was 'willing, indeed anxious' to accept nomination, but neither he nor any of his colleagues could possibly accept appointment or 'sit in the same room' with the current 'nominated stooges' – the four nominated African legislative councillors and the two executive councillors. Furthermore, if they 'were not dispensed with',

he certainly would not take a seat on either council, nor could Government hope to get the cooperation from him which he was willing to accord ... If the Government would not act reasonably in this way, then ... the former pattern of events would be repeated. The Government would be 'pig-headed' and he would be 'pig-headed'. Tension would increase and stability would not be achieved.<sup>3</sup>

Four days later, the doctor discussed the matter with Jones. He was adamant that the existing nominated African members would have to be removed before he would take a seat. Jones, knowing Macleod considered it unthinkable that he should accede to this demand, simply asked Banda to think about it carefully and discuss it with him again. Banda agreed, but held out no hope that he would change his mind. There the matter rested, mainly because a related and more pressing matter overtook it.<sup>4</sup>

In his conversations with Youens, Banda had hinted that in his view 'the time had now come for the Government to declare a general amnesty in respect of all those presently detained, to restore Chipembere and Chiume to their rightful places in Legislative Council'. On the day he himself had been released from detention Macleod and Armitage had assured him that if peace and order were maintained 'they would consider not only the question of the release of the rest of the detainees, but also lifting the whole state of emergency'. It is likely that he thought the former would be easier than, and would precede, the latter, and he was

puzzled that this did not turn out to be the case, although the remaining detainees had been moved from Southern Rhodesia to Kanjedza in Nyasaland. It was this assurance that persuaded him that day to agree to broadcast a message calling for peace and calm.<sup>5</sup>

A few days before Armitage went on leave he had discussed with Jones and Youens how to handle a query from Macleod about how to deal with those still in detention. As Armitage recorded: 'We want to play the game as slowly as possible ... We don't yet know what Banda really wants.'<sup>6</sup> The doctor, however, was quick to make clear precisely what he really wanted and he certainly did not want the game played slowly.

On 5 September Banda had separate meetings with Youens and Jones and again raised the question of releasing the remaining detainees. On the one hand, it had been made more difficult for the government by recent physical attacks on Banda's political opponents and their intimidation and vilification by MCP members. On the other hand, Banda was under considerable pressure from Chiume. The MCP annual convention was shortly to take place at Kota Kota and Chiume warned him that:

already there were open murmurings against his having agreed to be released ... without the knowledge of his colleagues and leaving them behind. His standing at the Convention certainly would [be] lowered if they [were] not ... released before or at the Convention [and I] put before him forcefully, the dissatisfaction of the people and the Party in the continued detention of the [remaining detainees].<sup>7</sup>

The first meeting was with Youens, who found it 'an uncomfortable interview'.<sup>8</sup> Twice the doctor 'evinced an intention of abandoning it but though he got near the door, in the event he never actually went through it'. Banda was 'utterly dismayed' at the government's 'entirely unreasonable' attitude, which showed a complete lack of appreciation of the difficulties he had to overcome and the compromises he had to make with his own conscience in going to the Lancaster House conference and accepting the agreement there. It was clear to him that all the government's talk about making a new start and creating the circumstances in which all could work together was so much 'hypocritical eyewash'. Did the government seriously think he could come on to executive council and cooperate while they kept his followers 'rotting indefinitely in gaol without trial'? Such a situation made the Lancaster House agreement quite worthless. He would prefer to join his followers in prison. If the government failed to see sense he would have to abandon any plans for cooperating with them. Instead, he would concentrate on organizing the MCP with a view to putting the differences between him and the government to a 'final test'. 'It will be back to March 3rd 1959 all over again.' Banda was pushing this question hard and was using the most powerful

of threats: a return to emergency conditions and the reimposition of an impasse – eventualities he knew Macleod and Jones would do almost anything to avoid.

Youens told the doctor that it was in his own power to improve the situation to an extent that would be conducive to further releases. He could, for example, make it publicly and consistently clear that he condemned and abhorred all acts of violence and intimidation. He could also require his followers to respect the freedom of belief and expression of all people, and he could give instructions to his party explicitly prohibiting acts of violence, molestation and intimidation against political opponents. 'This theme', Youens told Jones, 'was played to the accompaniment of numerous expostulations by the Doctor and a sally towards the door.' Banda continued to dig his toes in, they got no further and at 4 p.m. Banda left for Government House to see Jones.

Banda was still steamed up after his meeting with Youens, and although a great deal of flak had been drawn from his attack, there was still a good deal left. He gave the Acting Governor a rough ride. Jones recalled:

Banda went into the attack immediately ... against the Government and against me personally for continuing to detain people in Kanjedza. He said that he was disappointed to see that I was becoming infected with the Zomba virus; he had hoped to see a new policy initiated by me with a total release of people detained for political reasons without trial but he was sorry to see that I was the same as all other civil servants in Zomba ... He displayed considerable emotion at this stage.<sup>9</sup>

Jones had arranged that Banda should take tea with him, his wife and his daughter after the discussion, but the doctor – following Chiume's warnings about the dangers of 'the traditional methods of being nice to the Africans' – said he could not drink tea with them when he was so distressed about Jones's refusal to see his point of view, and about his complacency in thinking there could ever be peace in Nyasaland while any of his followers remained in detention. Jones tried to soothe him by saying they were releasing detainees as the situation warranted and he had no intention of keeping them all in detention indefinitely. Banda retorted that he could not accept gradualism: they must all be released at once. While any remained in detention his people felt so upset that it was impossible for them to avoid creating incidents and impossible for him to impress upon them a respect for law and order. The only way to achieve tranquillity was to release all the detainees. 'Their continued detention made a mockery of the Lancaster House agreements and he would not participate in the new constitution if they were not released.' This last remark was designed to put additional pressure on Macleod,

whose reputation for having pulled off a masterstroke in securing the agreements would be in tatters if Banda decided not to let it work. Similarly, his comments about Jones being infected with the Zomba virus and being like all other civil servants in Zomba were designed to put additional pressure on the Acting Governor whose personal position in Nyasaland depended on his being seen to be different from more reactionary colleagues. He, as Banda well knew, would have been particularly concerned about these personal jibes.

Jones eventually concluded that prolonging the discussion would lead to their parting with hard feelings and might prejudice their future relationship. With great difficulty he enticed Banda into the drawing room, where he had tea 'and went off the boil'. This was the first time Banda used angry, threatening and indeed rude language in his contacts with Jones. On no occasion did he act in a similar way with Armitage, and though he became angry and used threats in his subsequent dealings with Jones, he was never rude. He was, however, keenly aware of the efficacy of 'shouting at and denouncing' those who did not accede to his demands.<sup>10</sup>

Two days later Banda asked to see Youens urgently. This time he was in 'an entirely different mood'.<sup>11</sup> He acted reasonably and quietly, there were no explosions or emotional outbursts and they departed, after taking tea and toast together, amiably. Banda said his position with his followers was becoming daily more impossible. When he told his colleagues he had made no progress over releasing the detainees, they responded violently and vowed to organize a large crowd to release them by force. Only after a heated discussion in which he said their proposed action would lead to bloodshed and could not possibly have the ultimate effect they desired, was he able to dissuade them. Clearly, at this time, Banda's lieutenants – led by Chiume – were not averse to telling him what they thought and to pressing a course of action upon him. Banda now asked that Youens and Jones should try to see things from his perspective. He was keen to cooperate but they had to realize it was impossible for him effectively to advocate cooperation without showing something tangible for it. Banda begged that Jones should see sense, and if he did not, then he must accept that the situation would inevitably degenerate to emergency conditions similar to those of the previous year. There would be nothing he could do to prevent it. If they were released, he was confident he could ensure their good behaviour.

After long discussion with his official advisers, following this meeting, Jones concluded that he should consider the early release of the remaining detainees and lifting all the remaining control orders. He would make it clear to Banda that, if he did this, he would expect him to cooperate with the government and control his followers. He hoped that

this would produce an atmosphere in which Banda would consider some form of continued federal association.<sup>12</sup>

Macleod had not expected Banda to raise the detainees question to crisis point, but now that he had, he agreed on balance with Jones's proposed way of tackling it, so long as there was any prospect of inducing the doctor to adopt a reasonable attitude towards federation. He expected, however, that with the release of the final detainees, especially Chipembere and the Chisiza brothers, there would be increased pressure on Banda to raise his demands as high as possible about implementing the new constitutional arrangements before the federal review conference and about accepting a seat on executive council.<sup>13</sup>

When Banda saw Jones on 15 September, he was hostile, but once he was persuaded that his representations were being taken seriously he quietened down.<sup>14</sup> He was grateful to Jones for consulting Macleod on this vital matter because it was making it 'impossible for peaceful conditions to emerge'. He repeated that he would publicly call for peace and denounce violence once he received an unequivocal assurance that all detentions and restrictions would be lifted. He guaranteed that the 'three Cs' – Chipembere and the Chisiza brothers – would be amenable to his influence and would cause no trouble. Jones, privately, was not convinced: 'One would have to accept that for what it was worth.'<sup>15</sup>

A week later they met again.<sup>16</sup> Jones started by saying that, if the discussion proceeded satisfactorily, he had great hopes the doctor would be satisfied the government was doing all it could to ease his situation and to remove all bitterness remaining in MCP minds. In the course of the next two hours' discussion he explained his difficulties, including the great anxiety that if Chipembere and the Chisizas were released, they would revert to their known bitter and violent tendencies.

I then said that if I was to revoke the detention and control orders, I must be given a very solemn assurance that this would not lead either in the immediate future or later on to disturbances ... What I was proposing to do was an act of faith in Banda and I relied on him to be insistent that all his followers throughout the territory should keep the peace. He gave me his solemn assurance on this point.

When Jones raised the question of his cooperating by joining executive council before the elections, Banda said it was not an important issue for him. His tactic of linking the releases with membership of council had succeeded: he had secured the former and now dismissed the latter.

Jones then told him he would revoke the remaining detention and control orders. Banda thought they should be released early on 27 September and taken secretly to Kota Kota where the annual MCP conference was to be held. They could then be delivered to him and he

could give them 'strong advice' as to their future behaviour as soon as possible: this would remove the danger of demonstrations in Blantyre-Limbe as a result of their release. It would also ensure that Banda could claim all the credit for the releases, and his colleagues none.

The exercise to release the detainees was codenamed 'Operation Stunt'. Three hundred and fifty control orders were lifted at the same time.<sup>17</sup> Banda kept the secret entirely to himself and there was no leaking of information about the operation. During 26 September, Youens visited Kanjedza and interviewed the detainees there because, Banda felt, the government was not fully satisfied with his assurance that he would control the detainees if they were released. He particularly spoke with Chipembere. As Banda shortly said:

In the eyes of the Government ... Chipembere, the two Chisizas, especially Yatuta Chisiza, and [Kapombe] Nyasulu [Banda's factotum who spent part of his detention in Gwelo] were the most dangerous or still are the most dangerous. In all my negotiations, it was Chipembere that I was always asked first if, when he were free, he would keep the peace. In fact ... they did not want to release these men ... and they maintained that Chipembere, even more than the other three, would not keep the peace, once they were out. I told the Acting Governor and others ... they had the wrong impressions of ... Chipembere, the Chisiza brothers and Nyasulu.<sup>18</sup>

In the early hours of 27 September the remaining detainees in Kanjedza were placed in the camp bus and told they were being taken to Kota Kota, where they would be formally released.<sup>19</sup> They were encouraged to keep their heads down as they travelled through Blantyre at the beginning of the journey so that no one would recognize them. They entered into the spirit of the secret and made no noise as they left the camp, still in the dark. They kept quiet throughout the whole of the journey. As the bus travelled through Lilongwe, one of the camp officials travelling with them suggested they duck down so as not to be seen. This they did and successfully passed through Lilongwe with no one knowing about them. A few miles south of Visanza, Banda passed the bus in his car, without the occupants of either vehicle making the slightest sign of recognition. Five miles short of Kota Kota, they stopped at the house where Banda was staying and were then handed over to him. Even then, no one in Kota Kota knew what was happening. They had been in detention just short of nineteen months.

Back in Blantyre-Limbe, no news of the releases became known until about 4.30 p.m., when Chirwa was told by someone in the MCP office. Expressing great surprise and pleasure, he immediately rushed to Kanjedza so that he personally could take them to Kota Kota. He was

astonished – and no doubt somewhat deflated – to learn that they had left fifteen hours earlier. Soon after they arrived in Kota Kota, Banda presented them to the assembled MCP conference.<sup>20</sup> This was a major political coup and further strengthened his standing as leader of the party. Chiume, who had been reinstated as publicity secretary of the MCP and officially number two in the party hierarchy, was virtually in charge of the convention and was already at Kota Kota. He recalled: ‘The detainees, as well as the convention, were overwhelmed by [the releases]; no wonder Dunduzu Chisiza ... was so emotionally carried away that he [took the step] of declaring Banda, before the crowd of over 100,000 people, Life President of the MCP, without prior consultation with the others.’<sup>21</sup>

The camp finalists were dressed in red prison graduate gowns, an idea proposed by the Zomba branch of the MCP Women’s League. These gowns were, to Banda, ‘the outward, visible and tangible expression of the honour and esteem’ in which the detainees were held in the country. He wore a black gown, given to him by the Zomba women three weeks earlier to indicate that he was ‘Prison Graduate Number One’. He was not, it seems, going to let the finalists steal his thunder and he was at pains to tell his audience how strongly he had emphasized his desire himself to be the last detainee to be released, when the chief secretary had visited him in Gwelo. In the course of his speech Banda referred to Youens’s visit to Kanjedza on the eve of the detainees’ release, and asked Chipembere to repeat before the huge audience the assurance of good behaviour he had given Youens three days earlier. He did so.<sup>22</sup> He was then reinstated in his former post of treasurer-general, Dunduzu Chisiza was reinstated as general secretary and Yatuta Chisiza became administrative secretary of the party. All the lieutenants were now free.

Banda went off to Nigeria on 21 November and then to the federal review conference in London. In Nyasaland the security situation deteriorated almost as soon as he left. The review conference started on 5 December and Banda was joined by Dunduzu Chisiza and Chirwa. No doubt miffed at being left behind in Nyasaland, Chipembere and Chiume were extremely worried that Banda would agree to the country remaining in the Federation. Chiume recalled:

There were three of us, Chip[embere], Augustine Bwanausi and myself. We toured the whole country by car, train, boat and air to mobilise the people against a heavily rumoured possible sell-out by Banda at the conference. There were strong speculations ... that Banda would have agreed to Nyasaland being part of a modified Central African Federation ... In the circumstances we felt it our duty to forestall this criminal deal and thus the campaign to expose it before the people and prepare them for an inevitable showdown should Banda, in the teeth of African opposition,

have decided to accept the imposed and detested federation however modified.<sup>23</sup>

There was a general feeling that Banda did indeed succumb to Macmillan's charm during the conference – which was adjourned and never reconvened. As Short put it: 'the principal delegates were invited to spend the weekend at the British Prime Minister's country house, Chequers. Alone with Macmillan, Banda set out to be at his most engaging. The two men got on well, sharing a love of history and a peculiarly English sense of snobbery.'<sup>24</sup> On Banda's return to Nyasaland Armitage remarked on the way in which Macmillan, and no longer Macleod, was the doctor's hero. The Governor, too, thought this was snobbery. Later, Banda was to say both that going to London allowed him to 'meet a great Prime Minister' and also that he did not want to be subjected again to 'the Chequers treatment'.<sup>25</sup> Chiume had given early warning of the dangers of the 'traditional methods of being nice to the Africans'.

The first dangerous incident after Banda left for Nigeria was at Port Herald on 1 December. The LMY attacked a police van, stones were thrown, tear gas was used and riot squad reinforcements were called in. Chipembere and Chiume were 'making a lot of rabid speeches condemning ... government and stooges' and threatening to deal with them severely once Congress got into power. Soon Finney, head of Special Branch, was reporting on how active the LMY was being and how they were causing trouble also in Nkata Bay and Karonga, where they were 'very anti-police, anti-government and anti-European'. He believed Chipembere's and Chiume's tactics were to 'keep up the task of frightening the government', confident that Macleod would not allow force to be used against them again.<sup>26</sup>

Following a particularly vigorous speech by Chipembere in Blantyre, the police were stoned and two constables injured. After the crowd was dispersed by tear gas, a mob of about eighty stormed the house of Chester Katsonga, founder and leader of the recently formed, Catholic Church-backed, Christian Democratic Party. They burned his house to the ground, and he, his wife, father and three children were only just able to escape from it. Chipembere later, in attempting to defend his actions, told Banda the 'it was the UFP, the Special Branch and [the Congress Liberation Party] who burnt it in order to discredit Malawi'.<sup>27</sup> Armitage, returning from leave in November, wondered why Chipembere and Chiume were behaving in this fashion and concluded, correctly, that they feared Banda might compromise in London and cooperate with the Europeans. He also thought they were angry at not having been taken to London and were trying to undermine Banda and show him where the real power lay.<sup>28</sup>