

Regional Learning

Makerere, Mau Mau and the Anti-Federation Campaign

This society offers you just the rightful ‘stage’ on which you can rehearse your political performances [...] The eyes of East and Central Africa are looking to us for leadership. [...] I believe that the solution to international understanding in East and Central Africa today[sic] lies in our hands. [...] If we are to prove our worth we have to show it here and now under University atmosphere.

E. D. Sawe, Presidential Address to the Makerere College Political Society (1953)

E. D. Sawe’s insistence that his Makerere peers were pivotal actors in East and Central African political developments was more than simply a display of bravado by a freshly elected student president.¹ Sawe spoke at a moment, during the early 1950s, when education institutions and party politics came into unprecedented dialogue in this region – most dramatically so at Makerere University College in Kampala. As Sawe addressed his peers, the buzz of a recent student strike could still be felt. Between monthly dances and formal dinners, Makerere students were launching political clubs, societies and publications, taking up correspondence with schoolteachers, party leaders and faraway allies.² It was in

¹ E. D. Sawe, ‘Presidential Address to the Makerere College Political Society’, *Politica*, 1:1 (May 1953), Makerere, AR/MAK/57/5.

² A sense of the social life at Makerere in the period can be gleaned from autobiographical and fictionalised accounts including Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Birth of a Dream Weaver: A Writer’s Awakening* (London: Harvill Secker, 2016); Kanyama Chiume, *Kwacha: An Autobiography* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975); Mwangi Ruheni, *Future Leaders* (London: Heinemann, 1973).

this space of cross-fertilisation between the spheres of formal education and party politics, elaborated in this chapter, that the notion of a region encompassing Zambia, Uganda, Malawi and mainland Tanzania came into focus (Map 0.1). So too did a role, imagined in historic and global terms, for a generation of this region's political actors. That this role was exaggerated – a performance in Sawe's words – was itself critical to the emergence of an anticolonial culture that championed activism abroad.

As this chapter explains, young people in East and Central Africa carved out this role as they looked to the region's edges and beyond them. The years 1952 and 1953 witnessed twin regional crises in the form of the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya and the imposition of the Central African Federation, governed from Salisbury. In the face of widespread African opposition to the amalgamation of Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia, and following a transnational campaign against it, the Federation officially came into existence in August 1953, almost a year after the declaration of a State of Emergency in Kenya. Both crises directed international press interest towards East and Central Africa. The region appeared poised between a future of settler rule along the lines of South Africa, under apartheid since 1948, and one of democratic reform along the lines of Ghana (then the British Gold Coast), where elections under universal suffrage in 1951 placed self-government on the horizon.

Within East and Central Africa, these crises provoked discussions about forms of protest in the face of white settler incursion and about the imperative of maintaining, in practice, the distinction between protectorate and colony. One thing that Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Uganda (protectorates), and Tanganyika (a UN Trust Territory), had in common was the absence of settler populations with the demographic, economic and political strength of those in the colonies that bordered them: numbers of white settlers increased from 30 000 to 50 000 between 1948 and 1952 in Kenya and from 82 000 to 135 000 between 1946 and 1951 in Southern Rhodesia; in both cases, these settlers controlled disproportionate expanses of cultivable land.³

³ On Kenya, Hélène Charton-Bigot, 'Colonial Youth at the Crossroads: Fifteen Alliance "Boys"', in Andrew Burton and Hélène Charton-Bigot (eds.), *Generations Past* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 94. On Southern Rhodesia, Enocent Msindo, 'Settler Rule in Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1979', in Lorenzo Veracini and Edward Cavanagh (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2017), 257–258. Approximate comparable populations for 1956 (using colonial racial categories) were: 6 700 Europeans, 8 500 Asians and 2 600 000 Africans in Nyasaland; 65 000

The role that schools, colleges and students – as well as formal learning itself – would play in anticolonial organising was shaped by changes within the education sector and by an open question about what these meant in a global context. The early 1950s witnessed significant, if uneven, expansion of a complex, inadequate, sexist and racially segregated education system in this region.⁴ Primary schooling was overwhelmingly under missionary management, with attempts to start independent African-run schools stifled; junior and senior secondary schools were few in number and included mission, government and government-assisted institutions.⁵ In Northern Rhodesia, for example, by 1958, only around two per cent of those who began primary school proceeded to secondary school, despite the almost tenfold increase in secondary school enrolment in the previous decade.⁶ Most secondary schools did not provide enough years of classes to sit the standard School Certificate, let alone the Higher School Certificate necessary for most foreign degree courses.⁷ Numbers of African students taking and passing the School Certificate grew during the early 1950s – from 57 in 1951 to 170 in 1958 in Tanganyika – but these figures nevertheless remained in the tens in Northern Rhodesia and

Europeans, 5 500 Asians and 2 190 000 Africans in Northern Rhodesia; 8 400 Europeans, 54 300 Asians, 2 000 Arabs and 5 500 000 Africans in Uganda. See *Summaries of Information transmitted to the UN Secretary General for 1958*.

⁴ Numbers of primary pupils in Uganda, for example, doubled during the 1950s, but there were still places for only forty per cent of school-aged children by the end of the decade, far fewer for girls. See Wendell P. Jones, 'An Overview of East African Education', *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 41:4 (1960), 180–181.

⁵ On TANU schools, see Aude Chanson, 'L'instruction: Un Enjeu Stratégique Pour La Tanganyika African National Union Dans La Préparation à l'indépendance Du Tanganyika (1954–1961)', in Damiano Matasci, Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, and Hugo Gonçalves Dores (eds.), *Repenser La 'Mission Civilisatrice': L'éducation Dans Le Monde Colonial et Post-colonial Au XXe Siècle* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2020), 175–190. On two Zambian attempts to start schools in the mid-1950s, see B. W. Matthews Phiri to Mary Benson (Africa Bureau London), 17 June 1954; Phiri to Michael Scott (Africa Bureau London), 6 June 1958, both in Bodleian, Records of the Africa Bureau and related organisations (MSS. Afr. s. 1681) Box 241 File 9 (hereafter in format 241/9), ff. 7, 9; Kenneth Kaunda to Chief Secretary Lusaka, 3 September 1954; Kaunda to Seteleni Banda, 19 July 1955, both in British Library, London (hereafter BL), Endangered Archives Project, Digitised Records of the African National Congress party of Zambia (hereafter EAP1211) EAP1211/1/3/8.

⁶ Irving Kaplan, *Area Handbook for Zambia* (Washington: American University, Foreign Area Studies, 1974), 165. Secondary enrolment for African students was 147 in 1947 and 1 198 in 1955–1956, see Michael J. Kelly, *The Origins and Development of Education in Zambia: From Pre-Colonial Times to 1996: A Book of Notes and Readings* (Lusaka: Image Publishers, 1999), 62–64.

⁷ The number (and naming) of school years differed between countries, while some universities (in India and South Africa especially) accepted the standard School Certificate. Munalu offered the Higher School Certificate from 1957; Dedza from 1959; Tabora from 1959.

Nyasaland and in the hundreds in Uganda; the Higher School Certificate was generally unavailable, or only taken by pupils of South Asian heritage, until later in the decade.⁸ Teacher training and technical training colleges struggled to recruit from the inadequate school system, while Makerere was the only institution in the region to award university degrees.

Demands for improved school and training opportunities, including those specifically for women, had been a key terrain for interwar political mobilisation, typically predating national-level political organisations.⁹ These demands had distinct, new resonance in an era of UN-driven colonial development policies.¹⁰ Petitions from Tanganyika to the UN, for example, were dominated by the issue of education facilities.¹¹ Pressure to respond to such demands ushered in the birth of international development as a policy field and the arrival of ‘development governors’ in East and Central Africa.¹² Education, then, was brought into the fold of development discourses, but the slow pace of educational investment and expansion laid bare the contradictions and failures of colonial development thinking: administrations were wary of creating an intellectual proletariat of young people who were overqualified for the work (or lack of work) that racist colonial employment opportunities allowed them to pursue.¹³

⁸ Betty Grace Stein George, *Education for Africans in Tanganyika: A Preliminary Survey* (Washington: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1960), 32. An impression can be gained from annual reports of the respective education departments, available via *British Online Archives*, ‘Governing Africa’ series. See also William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara, Revised 1956* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 1165–1176; E. Giffen and D. H. Alexander, *Higher Education in East Africa* (Entebbe: Government Printer, 1956); Gatian F. Lungu, ‘Educational Policy-Making in Colonial Zambia: The Case of Higher Education for Africans from 1924 to 1964’, *The Journal of Negro History*, 78:4 (1993), 207–232.

⁹ Letters by Emily Mkandawire (1933, Malawi), Martha Kapanga (1936, Zambia) and E. Akapelwa Inambwae (1937, Zambia), in M. J. Daymond (ed.), *Women Writing Africa: Vol. 3, The Eastern Region* (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2003), 122, 132.

¹⁰ On education as development, see Valeska Huber, ‘Planning Education and Manpower in the Middle East, 1950s–60s’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 52:1 (2017), 95–117.

¹¹ Ullrich Lohrmann, *Voices from Tanganyika: Great Britain, the United Nations and the Decolonization of a Trust Territory, 1946–1961* (Berlin: Lit, 2007), 223–224.

¹² Corinna R. Unger, *International Development: A Postwar History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 49. On development governors, see Colin Baker, *Development Governor: A Biography of Sir Geoffrey Colby* (London: British Academic Press, 1994); Ronald Robinson, ‘Andrew Cohen and the Transfer of Power in Tropical Africa, 1940–1951’, in W. H. Morris-Jones and Georges Fisher (eds.), *Decolonisation and after: The British and French Experience* (Abingdon: Frank Cass, 1980), 50–72.

¹³ On (educated and uneducated) unemployed youth in mid-1950s Tanganyika, see Andrew Burton, ‘Raw Youth, School-Leavers, and the Emergence of Structural Unemployment in Late Colonial Urban Tanganyika’, in Andrew Burton and Helene Charton-Bigot (eds.),

The relationship between education and the expansion of political rights thus remained unclear. As Zambian postal worker Eliphias Darius Lungu wrote to the Northern Rhodesia African National Congress (NRANC) in 1955, 'how[ever] highly, moderately or little an African may be educated under the white rule, he/she shall never be respected to any extent. The Europeans will still continue saying an African is a barbarian'.¹⁴ Emerging political parties were wary of reiterating a colonial discourse of formal education as a political rite of passage. Uganda National Congress (UNC) co-founder Ignatius K. Musazi warned that a lack of qualified Africans was a colonial excuse and strategy to delay independence: political rights, he insisted, must *precede* the growth of educational infrastructure.¹⁵

It was in this context that a regional cohort of educated young people attempted to pin down their own role, developing modes of expression and practices of publication that freely crossed the increasingly blurry divide between the realms of party politics and student life. Exploring this process is not about reifying the centrality (long since robustly challenged) of a university-educated elite in anticolonial politics.¹⁶ Instead, it is about scrutinising the construction of this very narrative.¹⁷ These students' initiatives, as we shall see, were not about aspirations for nationalist leadership: they responded more than anything to perceived regional

Generations Past (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 108–134. Colonial discussions referred to the phenomenon of the *babu* class in India, see Clive Whitehead, 'The Historiography of British Imperial Education Policy, Part II: Africa and the Rest of the Colonial Empire', *History of Education*, 34:4 (2005), 442. On *babu*, see Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995). On response to returnee demands, see Andreas Eckert, 'Regulating the Social: Social Security, Social Welfare and the State in Late Colonial Tanzania', *The Journal of African History*, 45:3 (2004), 476–477.

¹⁴ Eliphias Darius Lungu to Congress, 6 April 1955, BL EAP1211/13/16, f. 34.

¹⁵ Press Conference at House of Commons, 6 May 1954, Bodleian, MSS. Afr. s. 1681, 28/2, f. 31.

¹⁶ See, in the case of Malawi, Owen J. M. Kalinga, 'Resistance, Politics of Protest, and Mass Nationalism in Colonial Malawi, 1950–1960: A Reconsideration', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 36:143 (1996), 443–444. See also Dan Hodgkinson and Luke Melchiorre, 'Introduction: Student Activism in an Era of Decolonization', *Africa*, 89:51 (2019), 4–6.

¹⁷ In this, I follow Thomas Burgess and others in recognising youth as a constructed political identity, see Thomas Burgess, 'Introduction to Youth and Citizenship in East Africa', *Africa Today*, 51:3 (2005), vii–xxiv; Thomas Burgess, 'An Imagined Generation: Umma Youth in Nationalist Zanzibar', in Gregory Maddox and James Leonard Giblin (eds.), *In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority & Dissidence in Tanzania* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 224–230. On education and the making of an (anti)colonial elite, see Daniel Tödt, *The Lumumba Generation: African Bourgeoisie and Colonial Distinction in the Belgian Congo* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), especially 164–167.

and global imperatives. Far from being an isolated hotbed, Makerere, the institutional thread of this chapter, was a central node in a much broader political and educational world that is intrinsically beyond the scope of histories of nationalism. This web of actors and institutions encompassed secondary schools across the region, student associations further afield in South Africa, publications within and beyond universities, and emerging political organisations yet to settle on the responsibility that the young and educated should hold.

QUESTIONING THE CONSTITUTIONAL AT THE MAKERERE STRIKE

In August 1952, two months before Governor Baring declared a State of Emergency in Kenya, and several hundred kilometres from the centre of the Mau Mau uprising, almost the entire student body at Makerere College in Kampala went on strike. Mau Mau and the Makerere strike were not just simultaneous episodes. They were linked – if largely indirectly. By the middle of 1952, students were well aware of escalating tensions surrounding militant trade unionism in central Kenya and probably (by way of Gikuyu students at Makerere) of the intentions of Mau Mau to launch a full-scale rebellion.¹⁸ They could not have known, of course, that the uprising, and the violent British response of the Emergency period, would act as a reference point for discussions of violence and counter-insurgency for years to come.¹⁹ But, like Mau Mau fighters, striking students confronted the fundamental limits of ‘constitutional’ protest – of protest according to the rules. For Abu Mayanja, the strike also marked the beginning of a decade of transnational activism that this book follows.

The Makerere of the early 1950s was a truly regional institution: most of its growing student body were men from Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika, with fewer from Zanzibar, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Ethiopia. There were very few women and rarely students from West, North or Southern Africa.²⁰ In this respect, five students who passed

¹⁸ This was common knowledge across Kenya, according to Caroline Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Pimlico, 2005), 30.

¹⁹ Martin Thomas, ‘Réflexions sur les conflits coloniaux. Perceptions françaises sur le mouvement Mau Mau et perceptions britanniques sur la guerre d’Indochine, 1952–1955’, *Revue historique des armées*, 264 (2011), 75–92.

²⁰ J. E. Goldthorpe and M. MacPherson, ‘Makerere College and Its Old Students’, *Zaire: Revue Congolaise*, 12 (1958), 347–363; Bernard De Bunsen, ‘Higher Education and Political Change in East Africa’, *African Affairs*, 60:241 (1961), 494–500. The first female student entered Makerere in 1945 but by 1961 less than ten per cent of students

through the college in this period and will reappear throughout the book – Abu Mayanja, John Kale, Kanyama Chiume, Arthur Wina and Sam Kajunjumele – were typical. Opened as a colonial technical college in 1922, Makerere had recently expanded to become a higher education institution in line with late colonial development plans: in 1949 it was granted the status of a University College, affiliated to, and soon able to award degrees from, the University of London (alongside preliminary courses to compensate for lacking senior secondary provision).²¹ It remained the only institution with this status in the wider region until the opening of the ‘multiracial’ (and overwhelmingly white) University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1956.²² As such, a notable proportion of cabinet ministers in independent East Africa, and to a lesser extent Central Africa, were ‘Makerereans’, as Makerere graduates were known. The institution’s reputation as a training ground for future leaders crystallised in the immediate post-independence period, around Kampala’s flourishing transnational literary scene.²³

The strike of August 1952 – the most disruptive protest in the institution’s pre-independence history – was called following ‘A Mammoth petition for a better diet’.²⁴ The petition, signed by 206 of Makerere’s 270 students, was anonymously posted on the college noticeboard in mid-August. It demanded an improvement in the food served in the ‘mess’ (canteen) which it deemed to lack ‘foresight, knowledge of preparation,

were women and just over ten per cent were ‘non-African’ in colonial racial terms (mainly African-born students of Arab and South Asian heritage).

²¹ On universities and development, see Timothy Livsey, ‘Imagining an Imperial Modernity: Universities and the West African Roots of Colonial Development’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 44:6 (2016), 961. Histories of Makerere include Frederick K. Byaruhanga, *Student Power in Africa’s Higher Education: A Case of Makerere University* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Carol Sicherman, *Becoming an African University: Makerere, 1922–2000* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005); Margaret MacPherson, *They Built for the Future: A Chronicle of Makerere University College, 1922–1962* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); J. E. Goldthorpe, *An African Elite: Makerere College Students 1922–1960* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1966); David Mills, ‘Life on the Hill: Students and the Social History of Makerere’, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 76:2 (2006), 247–266. See also the file of notes and articles in Makerere, AR/MAK/1/2.

²² Clayton G. Mackenzie, ‘The University of Rhodesia: A Re-appraisal’, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 19:2 (1987), 62–71.

²³ Mahmood Mamdani, ‘The African University’, *London Review of Books*, 40:14 (2018), 29–32.

²⁴ Other published accounts of the strike are Byaruhanga, *Student Power in Africa’s Higher Education*, 42–49; Mills, ‘Life on the Hill’, 257–260; Sicherman, *Becoming an African University*, 30–34. Byaruhanga argues that the strike was not ‘grounded in any ideological thought’, 49.

interest, sympathy and imagination'. Alleging that complaints published in the student newsletter *Current News* and submitted to the mess committee had been ignored, the petition demanded that these complaints were 'given attention within 7 days'.²⁵ The college principal, Bernard De Bunsen, removed the petition, deeming it in 'bad taste' and told the student body that there seemed to be 'some misunderstanding as to the channels through which undergraduates should bring their views to the Principal', given the existence of an elected Student Guild.²⁶ Students boycotted canteens and lectures, forcing Makerere to close for the holiday a week early. Six were expelled.²⁷

During the week that followed, letters written by students, from family homes across the region, travelled to De Bunsen in Kampala. In order to return to Makerere, students were required to agree in writing that, in relation to the strike, 'the methods employed were wholly wrong' and that, in relation to the six students expelled in its aftermath, 'authority resides wholly with the college'.²⁸ Most students agreed, many wished the Principal a pleasant holiday, and ultimately only one Gikuyu student chose to stay at home rather than reply.²⁹ Nevertheless, around one in ten responses expressed reluctance to agree that the calling of a strike and the petition that had preceded it were 'wholly wrong'. One student, Mr Muthiga, wrote that the college had 'created a condition where students had to resort to such means', and Mr Okova said that he had felt 'driven to [these methods] by imperative circumstances'. Another student maintained that the 'idea' of the strike was defensible, even if the methods were wrong. Mr Aley agreed that the methods were 'unconstitutional and, in that sense, wrong', constitutionality being not the sole measure.³⁰ The letters opened up an array of questions about how far 'normal channels' and constitutional methods could be effective and what was left when they were not.

The student expelled for orchestrating the strike (five others were dismissed for intimidating fellow students) was Abubakar K. Mayanja, a well-known name in histories of Ugandan and Bugandan nationalisms

²⁵ 'A mammoth petition for a better diet', Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

²⁶ De Bunsen to students, 13 and 17 August 1952, both in Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

²⁷ Andrew Cohen to L. P. Wilkinson, 14 October 1952, National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew (hereafter UKNA) Foreign and Commonwealth Office and predecessors (hereafter FCO) FCO 141/18246.

²⁸ De Bunsen to students, 26 August 1952, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

²⁹ De Bunsen to East Africa High Commission (Nairobi), 29 September 1952, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

³⁰ These four responses are among the bundle in Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

with a relatively unexplored biography beyond this.³¹ When Mayanja arrived at Makerere in 1950, he was one of only two Muslim students to have entered the university.³² More typically for the Makerere intake, Mayanja had attended Buganda's elite protestant secondary school King's College, Budo, a key 'feeder' schools for Makerere. Baganda students had a reputation at Makerere for being academic and politically active.³³ Not incidentally, British investment in Ugandan education had been focused on the historically powerful kingdom of Buganda since the 1900 Buganda Agreement: in 1951, almost half of all Ugandans attending secondary school were in Buganda, despite the fact that the Baganda accounted for only seventeen per cent of the Ugandan population.³⁴ Makerere was fittingly built in Buganda's capital, and numbers of Baganda at Makerere had always been disproportionately high.³⁵

With this in mind, despite Mayanja's expulsion, he was invited to participate in the 'staff-student discussion group' set up to review the strike. Here, the issues that students had raised in correspondence with De Bunsen, about channels of complaint that were 'constitutional' or 'wrong', came into focus. Certainly, staff (who were overwhelmingly European) acknowledged that there was a material basis for the strike: a report written two years earlier concluded that food quality was poor, the beans were 'riddled with weevils' and students were forced to 'take their tea in a miscellaneous collection of vessels' for want of sufficient cups.³⁶ One staff member insisted on the decisive nature of food in the 'peasant community mind' and suggested an anthropologist revise the menu.³⁷ Most, however, took an approach that chimed better with students' letters to

³¹ Born in Ziba, 1929. For a brief biography, see Ronald Segal, Rosalynde Ainslie, and Catherine Hoskyns, *Political Africa: A Who's Who of Personalities and Parties* (London: Stevens and sons, 1961), 175. For a more recent and detailed treatment, see Jonathon L. Earle, *Colonial Buganda and the End of Empire: Political Thought and Historical Imagination in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 140–176.

³² Andrew Cohen to L. P. Wilkinson, 14 October 1952, UKNA FCO 141/18246. On Muslims at Makerere, see Sicherman, *Becoming an African University*, 44–45.

³³ MacPherson, *They Built for the Future*, Makerere, AR/MAK/11.

³⁴ Cherry Gertzel, 'Kingdoms, Districts, and the Unitary State: Uganda 1845–1962', in Alison Smith and Donald Anthony Low (eds.), *History of East Africa. Vol. 3* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 65–67.

³⁵ Gertzel, 'Kingdoms, Districts, and the Unitary State', 65–67; J. E. Goldthorpe, 'An African Elite: A Sample Survey of Fifty-Two Former Students of Makerere College in East Africa', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 6:1 (1955), 31–32.

³⁶ Report by Eileen M. Lockhart, 1950, Makerere, AR/MAK/63/2.

³⁷ Goldthorpe to De Bunsen, 21 August 1952, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6; Goldthorpe to 'friends', 13 October 1952, Bodleian, Higher Education in Anglophone Tropical Africa, MSS. Afr. s. 1825, 37/2.

De Bunsen. Staff highlighted students' 'dissatisfaction with the channels of communication', institutional failure to respond to complaints issued through 'normal channels' and a system that failed to clarify where students stood in relation to college authorities.³⁸ Discussion of resolutions also fixated on what was appropriate and constitutional, rather than notions of justice. Councillors of the Student Guild, including Kanyama Chiume from Nyasaland and Arthur Wina from Northern Rhodesia, signed a letter asking De Bunsen to reconsider the expulsions, given that all students agreed with the actions at the time.³⁹ De Bunsen replied that he admired the 'form' of this letter, but would not reconsider. Nor would he adopt the suggestion of a Muganda intellectual (and Makererean) to employ an African headmaster to work under him.⁴⁰ Instead he invited Student Guild councillors to join him for a weekly lunch, an outcome that reflected one staff member's suggestion to give students 'proof that constitutional methods can work' – of which students appeared doubtful.⁴¹ The strike allowed students to disrupt the categories of protest presented to them and, A. B. K. Kasozi argues, it had long-term repercussions for student participation in university management.⁴² Most of all, the episode made clear that 'normal channels' were not effective if the constitution or rulebook precluded genuine participation.

This framing of the strike around questions of form over content was not simply a quirk of institutional discipline but a discussion that went to the heart of political upheaval across East and Central Africa. The 'unconstitutional' methods of Mau Mau fighters loomed in the background, with De Bunsen fearing that Gikuyu students would form a coordinated response to his letter, despite having identified Mayanja as the organiser.⁴³ In Buganda, where, for the Baganda, petitioning their

³⁸ Alan Wilshere[?] to De Bunsen, 21 August 1952; Philip Powesland to De Bunsen, 21 August 1952; Maurice Evans to De Bunsen, 21 August 1952, all in Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

³⁹ Student Guild to De Bunsen, 29 October 1952, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

⁴⁰ E. M. K. Mulira to De Bunsen, 25 August 1952, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

⁴¹ De Bunsen to Arthur Wina, 13 October 1952, Makerere, AR/MAK/63/2; Philip Powesland to Kenneth Baker, 2 September 1952, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

⁴² A. B. K. Kasozi, 'Political and Academic Management Lessons to Learn from the 1952 Makerere College Students' Strike', unpublished paper, Makerere History and Archaeology Seminar, 17 November 2021. On disrupting categories, see Louisa Rice, 'Between Empire and Nation: Francophone West African Students and Decolonization', *Atlantic Studies*, 10:1 (2013), 131–147.

⁴³ De Bunsen to Stapleton (East Africa High Commission, Nairobi) 29 September 1952, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

ruling elite had been the norm for the first half of the twentieth century, demands were shifting to participation through elections.⁴⁴ In Central Africa, channels of protest were being urgently discussed too. The campaign against the Central African Federation brought official delegations of African representatives to London and produced one memorandum after another, in the hope that this was more effective than direct action in the form of a strike – or a popular uprising. The international press placed the anti-Federation campaign in direct dialogue with Mau Mau, with the Baltimore *Afro-American* warning that the imposition of the Federation ‘could sow seeds for second Mau Mau’.⁴⁵ This was a moment when the form of protest was under urgent discussion, beyond any simple moderate-radical divide and before (non-)violence took on diplomatic might in pan-African circles later in the decade.⁴⁶

The strike’s relationship to these wider debates had at least one direct link in the form of Abu Mayanja. Not only had Mayanja co-founded the UNC (Uganda’s first nationally framed African political party) five months before organising the strike, he was also in touch with Peter Wright, a teacher in a school for Asian pupils in Nairobi who was embroiled in events surrounding Mau Mau.⁴⁷ In July 1952, Wright was planning his resignation from government employment in Kenya, in order to play a more active role in regional politics, specifically by starting an institute to collect and disseminate information across East and Central Africa.⁴⁸ Wright was already a member of the Kenya Study Circle, the research vehicle for the Kenya African Union (KAU) that was soon to be banned under emergency regulations.

In April 1952, between founding the UNC and calling the Makerere strike, Mayanja travelled to Nairobi at the invitation of the Study Circle, where it seems Wright was his host.⁴⁹ After the strike, Wright wrote

⁴⁴ Carol Summers, ‘Grandfathers, Grandsons, Morality, and Radical Politics in Late Colonial Buganda’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 3 (2005), 431–432.

⁴⁵ Chatwood Hall, ‘Central African Federation Could Sow Seeds For Second Mau Mau’, *Afro-American (Baltimore)*, 2 May 1953, 3.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 4. On the compromise-rebellion tension, see Miles Larmer, *Rethinking African Politics: A History of Opposition in Zambia* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 21–51.

⁴⁷ ‘Action against Kenya Teacher, Serious Step’, *Times of India*, 11 November 1952, 6. On the UNC, see Sallie Simba Kayunga, *Uganda National Congress and the Struggle for Democracy: 1952-1962* (Kampala: Centre for Basic Research, 1995); Zaid Sekito, ‘The Rise and Fall of Uganda National Congress (UNC) in Uganda, 1952-1962: A Historical Perspective’ (Makerere University MA thesis, 2013).

⁴⁸ Wright to Michael Scott, 24 July 1952, Bodleian, MSS. Afr. s. 1681, 291/16.

⁴⁹ On the conference, see Bildad Kaggia, *Roots of Freedom, 1921-1963: The Autobiography of Bildad Kaggia* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975), 100. De Bunsen

an article in the *East African Standard* (Kenya's largest newspaper) suggesting that the episode was a response to colonial policy more broadly, not just college food. His claim attracted debate in British parliament.⁵⁰ In September, Wright wrote at length to an anticolonial sympathiser in London about the situation in Kenya, closing with the promise he would follow up with a separate letter on 'the Makerere affair' which he thought 'deserves serious attention' – astonishingly so given he wrote from the apex of the Mau Mau uprising.⁵¹ Soon, Mayanja was describing the strike to the same London contact.⁵²

SCHOOLTEACHER-ACTIVISTS AND THE SQUEEZED SPACE OF POLITICAL LIFE

Despite colonial attempts to maintain the Makerere strike as an internal, college episode, it became the subject of legend for new students arriving from secondary schools.⁵³ This enmeshed the event in wider discourses of the educational strike as an anticolonial symbol. The late 1940s witnessed a wave of labour strikes across West and East Africa, including in Kampala and Dar es Salaam.⁵⁴ While strikes in higher-education institutions in British-governed Africa were not commonplace (one occurred in Khartoum in 1947), they were frequent in secondary schools across East and Central Africa.⁵⁵ The fact of having taken part in a school strike, or led one as a teacher, is a common motif in (auto)biographical accounts of political figures. Henry Chipembere organised a food strike in 1950 as a pupil at Blantyre Secondary School, where pupils also were part of a Nyasaland-wide boycott of coronation events in 1953; John Tembo organised a school strike when he was the only African teacher at the

states Wright hosted Mayanja, but does not mention on what occasion, in a letter to Philip Rogers (Colonial Office), 2 December 1952, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

⁵⁰ 'Mr. Peter Wright (Expulsions)', debate in the House of Commons, 26 November 1952 vol. 508 cc.51-3W. Online at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1952/nov/26/mr-peter-wright-expulsion#S5CV0508Po_19521126_CWA_43; De Bunsen to Philip Rogers (Colonial Office), 2 December 1952, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/6.

⁵¹ Wright to Michael Scott, 20 September 1952, Bodleian, MSS. Afr. s. 1681, 291/16. On Scott and the Africa Bureau, see Chapter 2.

⁵² Africa Bureau to Mayanja, 16 October 1952, Bodleian, MSS. Afr. s. 1681, 294/6.

⁵³ 'Many freshers are very inquisitive about the strike' wrote Joseph S. Wanyonyi to De Bunsen, 30 March 1953, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/7.

⁵⁴ Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 226.

⁵⁵ Ashley Jackson, *Buildings of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 194–219. On school strikes in Southern Rhodesia, see Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons: Africans' Education in Southern Rhodesia, 1918–1940* (Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2002), 3–58.

recently opened Robert Blake Secondary School in Central Nyasaland; Oscar Kambona and Kanyama Chiume (who took part in the Makerere strike) were forced to resign as teachers at the Dodoma Alliance Secondary School, Tanganyika, in September 1954 after encouraging a student strike.⁵⁶ The term 'strike' became an umbrella for all sorts of political activity: Kavuma-Kaggwa and his classmates at Namilyango Catholic College near Kampala were given permission to miss lessons to welcome the returning Kabaka in 1955, an event that he later described as a strike.⁵⁷

These strike stories suggest the extent to which African schoolteachers, especially those few working at senior secondary schools, came to play an important role in the networks that linked higher-education institutions like Makerere, nascent political parties and the construction of a regional cohort in the early 1950s.⁵⁸ The political role of schoolteachers, like that of other professional groups who mediated between the colonial state and ordinary people, has been recognised as an ambivalent one in contexts across the twentieth-century colonial world.⁵⁹ Even where teachers were direct employees of the colonial state and took no active role in politics, they nevertheless, in pursuit of upward social mobility, participated in a larger social process that political mobilisation relied upon.⁶⁰ Equally, close contact and familiarity with the colonial state could enable teachers to target effective political demands.⁶¹ The Uganda African Teachers Association, for example, held among their aims: 'To make representations to the Government [...] for safeguarding and promoting the moral, social and economic life of [its] members'.⁶² The colonial state

⁵⁶ Earl H. Phillips, 'HBM Chipembere, 1930–1975, Malawi Patriot', *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 7:1 (1976), 5–18; Interview with Catherine Chipembere, Lilongwe, 18–20 July 2017; Interview with John Tembo, Lilongwe, 18 July 2017; Tanganyika Police 'TANU Personalities', 1 November 1956, UKNA FCO 141/17916.

⁵⁷ Interview with Kavuma-Kaggwa, Seeta, Uganda, 16 August 2017.

⁵⁸ Including, most famously, 'Mwalimu' (teacher) Nyerere.

⁵⁹ On intermediaries more generally, Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts (eds.), *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

⁶⁰ On this process in Indonesia, see Agus Suwignyo, 'The Making of Politically Conscious Indonesian Teachers in Public Schools, 1930–42', *Southeast Asian Studies*, 3:1 (2014), 119–149. On évolués, schools and teachers in French West Africa, see Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 73–106; Pascale Barthélémy, *Africaines et diplômées à l'époque coloniale (1918–1957)* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010), especially chap. 5.

⁶¹ Glassman, *War of Words*, 75–81.

⁶² Founded 1944. See S. M. E. Lugumba and J. C. Ssekamwa, *A History of Education in East Africa (1900–1973)* (Uganda: Kampala Bookshop, 1973), 95–96.

in early-1950s Northern Rhodesia attempted to clamp down on what it described as ‘politician-teachers’ in government employment – the same sorts of figures who proved pivotal to the community leadership that Kate Skinner has described in the context of Togoland.⁶³ Nevertheless, the degree of independence from the state afforded by missionary schools was not missed: ‘Everything should be concentrated on schools’ wrote London-based sympathiser Thomas Fox-Pitt to Kenneth Kaunda in 1956 in relation to the NRANC campaign in rural Northern Rhodesia.⁶⁴

The role of schoolteachers takes on greater specificity when we turn to the relatively small number of East and Central African teachers working in senior or higher secondary schools in the 1950s. This distinction was important: in 1953, a rift formed in the Uganda African Teachers Association, between the majority of members who taught in primary or junior secondary schools and those few graduate teachers working in senior secondary or teacher training schools – who had disproportionate power in the Association.⁶⁵ While (vernacular language) primary schools throughout the region had been staffed by African teachers for decades, the 1950s saw significant numbers of African teachers take up employment in secondary schools, often still under European head teachers.⁶⁶ In Uganda in 1955, for instance, fifty-seven new junior secondary teachers entered the profession, more than double the figure in any previous year.⁶⁷ The numbers were smaller, but still growing, for senior secondary teaching. Crucially, these teachers were now being recruited from the ranks of African secondary and university graduates who *themselves* had experienced the education system during the post-war period. During the early 1950s, a

⁶³ ‘Teachers Warned against Politics’, *Africa Digest*, 2:3 (1954), 13 (extracted from *Rhodesia Herald*); Skinner, *Fruits of Freedom*, 33.

⁶⁴ Thomas Fox-Pitt to Kenneth Kaunda, 7 February 1956, BL EAP121/1/5/9. On Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia, see Joey Power, *Political Culture and Nationalism in Malawi: Building Kwacha* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010), chap. 6; Summers, *Colonial Lessons*, chap. 3.

⁶⁵ Lugumba and Ssekamwa, *History of Education*, 97–98.

⁶⁶ This trend is evident from the information on non-self-governing territories transmitted to the UN, although precise figures are often concealed when no distinction is made between ‘African’ and ‘European’ teachers. According to the 1954 information for Northern Rhodesia, the numbers of African secondary schoolteachers were eighteen in 1951, twenty-six in 1952 and twenty-seven in 1953. Numbers were higher in Uganda and Tanganyika. For Nyasaland, figures from the Department of Education Annual Reports (online through *British Online Archives*) suggest there were just four African teachers in Nyasaland secondary schools in 1953 compared to twenty-five by 1956.

⁶⁷ Uganda Department of Education Annual Report for 1954, 49. By 1957, there were 659 and 161 African teachers in junior and senior secondary schools, respectively. See Uganda Department of Education Annual Report for 1957 (online through *British Online Archives*).

critical mass of these teachers coincided with the consolidation of political parties and developmentalist language in the colonial and international spheres, lending a self-awareness to the teaching profession.

Such self-awareness is clear in Kanyama Chiume's account of his teaching career. Following his graduation from Makerere (and his request to De Bunsen to reconsider the expulsion of the striking students), Chiume took up a teaching post at Dodoma Secondary School, Tanganyika:

The political heat that had been generated in us through the Makerere College Political Society, the gallantry of the Mau Mau freedom fighters and the anti-African stand of the European settlers both in East and Southern Africa, made many of us feel that we could not join the government service. We were looking for posts in schools where we could, within the limitations imposed by conditions then, air our views and get an opportunity to do some political work.⁶⁸

Written amid the radical pan-Africanism of 1970s Dar es Salaam, Chiume's autobiography describes a politically ambitious 'we' and 'us' that had already coalesced before taking up employment in schools – a counterpoint to the unnamed others who were content to work for the colonial government, complicit in settler incursions.

The straight line that Chiume narrated, between the Makerere Political Society and a generation of schoolteacher-activists, conceals the contingency of the many mechanisms that connected schoolteachers to the wider political context. Strike leader John Tembo talked in broad but animated terms about the political potential of secondary schools and their teachers, but did not remember ever having *decided* to train as a graduate teacher, at Pius XII Catholic University College in Roma, Basutoland, and then at the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in Salisbury.⁶⁹ Similarly, A. D. Lubowa recalled that it was simply assumed that he would go into teaching, and only after three years at Bikiira Teacher Training College in Uganda did he realise that he was not interested in the profession at all.⁷⁰ There were, in the end, few options for highly educated young people. Science graduates might find work in agriculture or veterinary, but careers in journalism, law or higher up in the civil service, for example, were near impossible for East and Central African graduates in the early 1950s: even in the period 1955–1960, half of Makerere's arts graduates entered the teaching profession.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Chiume, *Kwacha*, 53.

⁶⁹ Interview with John Tembo, Lilongwe, 18 July 2017.

⁷⁰ Interview with A. D. Lubowa, Maya, Uganda, 21 August 2017.

⁷¹ 'Memorandum on the Availability of Graduates 1955–60', Makerere, AR/MAK/1/3. On teaching as lack of other choices in Zanzibar, see Glassman, *War of Words*, 80.

If the choice to teach was not always as politically charged as Chi-ume implied, then, institutions and courses for higher teacher training did create space for building links between schools, universities and political parties. Teacher trainers were increasingly themselves African graduates. M. A. Chongwe, for example, was expecting to spend the summer of 1953 in Britain, having completed a course at the London Institute of Education, with a scholarship through the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. But he was called back early because his labour was ‘urgently needed’ at Domasi Teacher Training College, a Nyasaland government institution opened in 1949.⁷² There, he joined other teacher trainers, including Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) member Orton Chirwa.⁷³ Domasi quickly became a political hub – one that was less exclusively male than elite boys secondary schools and many Makerere clubs.⁷⁴ Men who trained at Domasi were often accompanied by their wives, who were taught ‘housewifery’ on site, while a handful of women undertook teacher training in their own right. Catherine Chipembere was one of six women trainee teachers around 1954. This was a default path, she suggested, for a woman who hoped to earn a living, in her case to support elderly parents. When she passed her School Certificate, ‘the principal suggested: “ok, we’re going to send you to Domasi”, which was very lucky, for teacher training. Not that I wanted to be a [teacher]’.⁷⁵ The structures around teacher training were thus one way in which educated women participated in the conversations around political campaigns – even if, like Catherine Chipembere, they did not later join the Malawian ‘Amazon Army’ of women who toured the country rallying popular support.⁷⁶ Even at Blantyre Secondary School, NAC members had expected her to attend meetings, she recalled; the same individuals coalesced at Domasi, including her future

⁷² Nyasaland Director of Education to Chief Secretary, 19 October 1953, MNA PA SMP 17839.

⁷³ I. C. Lamba, *Contradictions in Post-War Education Policy Formulation and Application in Colonial Malawi 1945–1961: A Historical Study of the Dynamics of Colonial Survival* (Zomba: Kachere Series, 2010), 31; Power, *Political Culture*, 111.

⁷⁴ Power, *Political Culture*, 111.

⁷⁵ Interview with Catherine Chipembere, Lilongwe, 18–20 July 2017. See also Barthélémy, *Africaines et diplômées*, chap. 5.

⁷⁶ On the Amazon Army, see Timwa Lipenga, *Lomathinda: Rose Chibambo Speaks* (Lilongwe: Logos Open Culture, 2019); Paul Chiudza Banda and Gift Wasambo Kayira, ‘The Contested Legacy of Malawi’s Decolonization Process, 1944–1994’, in Kenneth R. Ross and Wapulumuka O. Mulwafu (eds.), *Politics, Christianity and Society in Malawi: Essays in Honour of John McCracken* (Baltimore, MD: Mzuni Press, 2020), 215–242; Diane Whitelaw, ‘Gender and Culture in Postcolonial Zambia: The Task of Writing the Life Experiences of Yolanta Chimbamu Mainza Chona’ (York University Ontario MA Thesis, 2014).

husband Henry Chipembere, who was working for the local Assistant District Commissioner.⁷⁷

In early 1950s East and Central Africa, secondary schoolteachers were neither colonial middle (wo)men nor nationalist party servants. They were themselves highly educated school and university graduates who became enabling cogs in wider networks of political engagement: they encouraged political discussions of the sort that students would continue at Makerere, like those that Edwin Mtei remembered having with future Makererean Mark Bomani at Tabora Secondary School in Tanganyika; they provided students with newspapers that were otherwise difficult to get hold of, like Kavuma-Kaggwa remembered happening at Namityango College in Uganda.⁷⁸ It is Chiume's remarks on the 'limitations' and 'opportunities' of the teaching profession that chime best with the condition of squeezed space for political work in East and Central Africa. Across the region, new political parties were thinking about the potential that schools presented.⁷⁹ But the push for the politicisation of education institutions – and the practices that accompanied it – came not from party leadership but from within these institutions themselves.

THE NYASALAND STUDENTS ASSOCIATION AND THE MAKERERE TANU CLUB

In 1958, Stephen Mhando, a Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) member who himself trained as a schoolteacher, wrote a 'semi-official' letter to the TANU Club at Makerere.⁸⁰ Mhando had recently returned from South Asia and told the club how impressed he had been by the role of students in the 'struggle for freedom' there:

Students in Colonial Territories are watched very carefully because their political potential is tremendous. But you, ladies and gentlemen, are free to form political societies and political clubs at Makerere. You could use this concession to pass the idea onto your friends in the various Secondary Schools. I know from personal experience how difficult and almost impossible it is to form a pseudo-

⁷⁷ Interview with Catherine Chipembere, Lilongwe, 18–20 July 2017.

⁷⁸ Edwin Mtei, *From Goatherd to Governor: The Autobiography of Edwin Mtei* (African Books Collective, 2008), 30–35. Interview with Kavuma-Kaggwa, Seeta, 16 August 2017.

⁷⁹ James R. Brennan, 'Youth, the TANU Youth League and Managed Vigilantism in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 1925–73', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 76:2 (2006), 221–246; Burgess and Burton, 'Introduction', 19.

⁸⁰ On Mhando see undated memo 'Stephen Mhando', School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, Papers of the Movement for Colonial Freedom (hereafter MCF) MCF/COU129 (Box 62).

political body in a Secondary School; but such unions can exist under apparently harmless names and constitutions; the pupils need pass no resolutions; they need to have no subscriptions or entrance fee; meetings could be arranged in town during the weekends ... The main thing is to plant the idea ... This is your job. It must come from you – and we here especially through the [party mouthpiece] Sauti [ya TANU] – will fan the fire.⁸¹

Mhando described a unique role for Makerere students: using their relative freedoms of political organisation (being both inside a university and outside Tanganyika) to mobilise young people through secondary schools, in dialogue with political publications too. He assumed strong links between Makerere students and their former schools and knew that many students would soon be teaching in schools across the region.

But Mhando's ideas were not news to Makerere students, who had been advocating for the importance of educated young people in this wider picture for the past decade. Student clubs dedicated to supporting political parties, such as the TANU Club at Makerere and the Nyasaland Students Association, were one mechanism through which this happened. In the early 1950s, these were not directed from above: they were born from student determination to take on party concerns. It was often only later that party officials recognised, like Mhando did in 1958, the advantageous position of these students. Links across the region – and evoking these links – was critical to the process.

The Nyasaland Students Association formed at Fort Hare, Eastern Cape, South Africa in 1949. At the time, Fort Hare was an important institution of higher education for African students from across the continent, as well as from South Africa; it gained a reputation, like Makerere, for its production of 'future leaders'.⁸² This was a more important destination for students from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia than for those from Uganda and Tanganyika, given its relative proximity and the fact that fewer scholarships for studying at Makerere, or in India or Britain, were available for these Central African territories. In the early 1950s, the university presented – fleetingly and precariously – a radical break from the racist politics that surrounded it. But Fort Hare struggled to retain independence from the encroaching apartheid state: Central African students like Sikota Wina were active in anti-apartheid protest,

⁸¹ Stephen Mhando to Makerere TANU Club, 4 March 1958, CCM, Box 193 File S73. Underlining and ellipses in original.

⁸² Mvuyo Tom, 'University of Fort Hare as the Doyen of Pan-Africanism', *Africa's Public Service Delivery & Performance Review*, 2:2 (2014), 12–20.

for example against the 1953 Bantu Education Act, which ultimately saw Z. K. Matthews removed as director of the African Studies department in 1957 and the university nationalised in 1959.⁸³ Students arriving from Central Africa experienced a fierce contrast between the segregated train journey through Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, and Matthew's lecture hall – Wina's notebook from his Fort Hare years contained 'political notes and remarks on most African countries'.⁸⁴ It was in this context that a small group of Malawian students, including Henry Chipembere (school striker, husband of Catherine), were responsible for starting the Nyasaland Students Association and its newspaper *Nyassa*.⁸⁵

The Association's members were conscious of the uniqueness of this opening in the early 1950s. Graduating from Fort Hare, Chipembere remained one of the Association's central figures, soon making direct appeals to the colonial administration from within the Central African Federation. In October 1955, he wrote a letter on behalf of the Association to the Nyasaland Director of Education, expressing concern about shrinking scholarship opportunities for Malawian students, particularly at Makerere and Fort Hare. In 1951, Makerere raised fees for new students from outside of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, usually paid by individual governments in the form of scholarships, from £120 to £500 per annum.⁸⁶ Appeals could be made to London to help cover these fees, but in 1955, as Chipembere wrote in his letter, not a single Nyasaland student entered Makerere.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, there had been increasing concern at Fort Hare since the South African Department of Education had announced, in 1950, its intention to prevent the attendance of Africans from outside of South Africa, due

⁸³ On Matthews, see Stephen Wright (Fort Hare) to De Bunsen, 10 March 1957, Makerere, AR/MAK/3/1. On the 1953 Bantu Education Act that segregated and centralised education, Interview with Sikota Wina, Lusaka, 18 September 2017. Wina was Chairman of the Fort Hare Students Representative Council in 1952, see Donovan Williams, *A History of the University College of Fort Hare, South Africa, the 1950s: The Waiting Years* (Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), 50.

⁸⁴ Lecture notes 1952–1953, in Johannesburg, Wits Historical papers (hereafter Wits), Papers of Z. K. Matthews AD1699; Interview with Rev. E. Lynn Cragg, who found the notebook, cited in Williams, *History of the University College of Fort Hare*, 54.

⁸⁵ Andrew C. Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis: A Political History of Malawi* (Zomba: Kachere Series, 2009), 89; Power, *Political Culture*, 232 n. 54.

⁸⁶ Secretariat (Lusaka) to East African High Commission (Nairobi), 17 January 1951, MNA PA 14162 'Education of Africans at Makerere and Fort Hare' (previously 3.3.7F Box 1294).

⁸⁷ Henry Chipembere to Nyasaland Director of Education, 10 October 1955, MNA PA SMP 14282 Vol. II. In 1953 the Colonial Office paid fees for three Nyasaland students, see Minutes of the Scholarship Committee, 23 January 1953, MNA PA SMP 19034.

to limited capacity.⁸⁸ The ban was partially effected in 1953 and only one Nyasaland student was sent to Fort Hare in 1955.⁸⁹ The closing down of these international study routes directly paralleled the 1953 imposition of the Federation, widely understood to represent the northward ‘spread’ of apartheid.⁹⁰ The awarding of scholarships and bursaries for higher education, under an all-white scholarship board, became a Federal responsibility. Alert to the resulting isolation of the region from the rest of the continent, Chipembere advised that students who could no longer be sent to Makerere or Fort Hare should be found places at Roma (like Tembo was), or elsewhere on the continent at Achimota (Accra), Ibadan or Khartoum.⁹¹

Form, both that of the organisation and of its written appeals, was central to the significance of the Nyasaland Students Association. It was as a member of the ‘Uganda branch’ of the Association that Kanyama Chiume wrote (from Makerere) directly to the colonial secretary in London in January 1953.⁹² His letter outlined the Association’s ‘uncompromising opposition’ to the planned Federation, especially the prospect of Southern Rhodesia’s ‘Liberal Apartheid’ being enforced in Nyasaland. Rather than receiving a reply from London, however, Chiume was contacted by the chief secretary in Entebbe (via a government official in Buganda) to ‘remind him of the correct channel for communication with the Secretary of State’ – that is, through the chief secretary rather than directly to London.⁹³ Again, closed channels of protest were described in terms of proper procedure, while the existence of the Students Association Uganda branch lent a certain (limited) weight to what was seemingly Chiume’s personal initiative. Nevertheless, there were moments when the NAC benefited from the existence of this additional, representative – and constitutional – body, for example when both submitted memorandums to the visiting Colonial Secretary in 1957.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Clipping from *Cape Argus*, 2 February 1951, MNA PA 14162.

⁸⁹ Lamba, *Contradictions in Post-War Education Policy*, 99. Chipembere to Nyasaland Director of Education, 10 October 1955, MNA PA SMP 14282 Vol. II.

⁹⁰ Ismay Milford, ‘Federation, Partnership, and the Chronologies of Space in East and Central Africa’, *The Historical Journal*, 63:5 (2020), 1325–1348.

⁹¹ Chipembere to Nyasaland Director of Education, 10 October 1955, MNA PA SMP 14282 Vol. II.

⁹² Chiume to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 15 January 1953, Uganda National Records Centre and Archives, Kampala (hereafter UNRCA), Chief Secretary’s Office, Box 3 File 281, attached to f. 12.

⁹³ Chief Secretary’s Office to Buganda Resident, 28 February 1953, UNRCA Chief Secretary’s Office, Box 3 File 281, f. 12.

⁹⁴ Notes on the decision to let representative groups meet the colonial secretary in 1957 can be found in the front cover of the file MNA PA SMP 30007 A.

For a brief few years, the Students Association looked something like the party's political vanguard, pushing a distinctly regional and global perspective. At its peak in 1955, the Association had branches in secondary schools across Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika, as well as in Bombay and London.⁹⁵ Members made frequent comparisons with East Africa, where higher education opportunities for Africans were perceived to be more numerous, especially with Chiume back from Makerere and a pivotal figure in the Association.⁹⁶ By 1957, however, the Association appeared to have been mainly absorbed into the party – where Chiume and Chipembere were now prominent voices without the need of a student mouthpiece.⁹⁷ The small generation of highly educated young people, in their early twenties as Federation was imposed, had maintained both the Association's outward-looking political agenda and its independence from the NAC.

The Makerere TANU Club had a very different relationship with its 'parent' party during this period. The founding of TANU in 1954 was widely publicised and almost immediately Tanganyika students at Makerere sought to establish contact with party headquarters. The interest of Makerere students in politics 'at home' was nothing new: TANU's predecessor, the Tanganyika African Association (TAA), had a so-called 'branch' at Makerere from at least 1946, with whom it intermittently corresponded.⁹⁸ Students repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with TAA communication in the late 1940s, however, claiming to feel 'entirely neglected by the stem to which we attached ourselves' because TAA had failed to send replies, news and publications.⁹⁹ Students pointed out that others at Makerere had better links with national political organisations, such as the Kenya Study Union.¹⁰⁰ The same students were, nevertheless, well aware of Kenya's separate trajectory. In July 1946, they wrote a memorandum to Arthur Creech-Jones (soon to become Labour Colonial

⁹⁵ 'Background on Nyasaland Students Association' (1957), MNA PA SMP 30007 W.

⁹⁶ 'Annual conference of the Nyasaland Students Association', *News from Nyasaland*, 6 January 1955, Bodleian, MSS. Afr. s. 1681, 239/4.

⁹⁷ 'Background on Nyasaland Students Association' (1957), MNA PA SMP 30007 W.

⁹⁸ G. W. Muzamuru (TAA Makerere branch) to TAA Dodoma, 23 April 1946, CCM, Box 193 File S73.

⁹⁹ V. K. Kyaruzi (TAA Makerere branch) to TAA Dodoma, 10 February 1947, CCM, Box 193 File S73. In the same folder, see also Muzamuru (TAA Makerere branch) to TAA Dodoma, 27 July 1946; O. B. Kopoka (TAA Makerere branch) to TAA Dodoma, 28 March 1948.

¹⁰⁰ Kyaruzi to TAA Dodoma, 10 February 1947; Kopoka to TAA Dodoma, 28 March 1948, both in CCM, Box 193 File S73.

Secretary) in response to a petition by European settlers to give Tanganyika ‘colony status’ like Kenya. Students stated that ‘[i]nstead, we would highly desire, either, to be under the United Nations Organization, or to be a protectorate’.¹⁰¹ Despite the students taking it upon themselves to make direct appeals to London, TAA seemed not to imagine the Makerere branch to be of particular value, and relations soon dissolved.

Communication problems persisted in the immediate aftermath of TANU’s 1954 formation, when a group of Makerere students rallied around the new party. One student had written three times by May 1955 to ask for the TANU constitution: ‘Of course, we hear of you through the press’, he wrote, ‘but the press usually distorts matters’.¹⁰² Between colonial press permit regimes, censorship and border controls, news travelled unevenly. Miscommunication was frequent across such distances (Kampala was a two-day journey from Dar es Salaam): TANU officers became confused between this group of students, now calling themselves the ‘TANU Club’ and the Tanganyika Student Discussion Group, which had existed since 1949.¹⁰³ The Club zealously distanced themselves from the discussion group, alleging that the latter had invited to Makerere the (multiracial, pro-government) United Tanganyika Party.¹⁰⁴

Later, individual relationships shaped and legitimised the TANU Club more than party interest. The club president M. Sanga, for example, made direct contact with TANU’s Oscar Kambona, who he may have met as a school pupil while Kambona was teaching (with Chiume) at Alliance in Dodoma. Sanga regularly contacted Kambona personally instead of TANU headquarters, given the party’s poor response rate. The Club sought to prove its worth by raising donations for party campaigns and, when they asked for literature, they enclosed fees – Sanga sent money for the TANU mouthpiece *Sauti ya TANU* to Kambona directly.¹⁰⁵

To legitimise the Club’s position, Sanga, like the Nyasaland Students Association and TAA students before him, made regional comparisons:

¹⁰¹ Memo reproduced in G. W. Muzamuru (TAA Makerere branch) to TAA Dodoma, 23 April 1946, CCM, Box 193 File S73.

¹⁰² Paul Soaigira[?] (Tanganyika Students Discussion Group) to TANU General Secretary, 20 May 1955, CCM, Box 193 File S73.

¹⁰³ TANU Club secretary to TANU headquarters, 10 September 1957, CCM, Box 193 File S73.

¹⁰⁴ TANU Club secretary to TANU headquarters, 6 February 1957, CCM, Box 193 File S73. On TANU and UTP, see M. H. Y. Kaniki, ‘TANU: The Party of Independence and National Consolidation’, in Gabriel Ruhumbika (ed.), *Towards Ujamaa: Twenty Years of TANU Leadership* (Kampala: East African Literature Bureau, 1974), 8.

¹⁰⁵ M. Sanga to Oscar Kambona, n.d., CCM, Box 193 File S73.

he told TANU headquarters in 1955 that E. M. K. Mulira, who had recently founded the Progressive Party in Uganda, was visiting Makerere to talk to Ugandan students and therefore asked that TANU president Julius Nyerere would do the same.¹⁰⁶ Sanga then pushed to register the club as an official TANU ‘branch’. Kambona promised to look into this, but presumably with no outcome, as the Club continued to refer to itself as such beyond independence.¹⁰⁷

Kambona’s response to Sanga indicated growing respect for the Makerere TANU Club among TANU officials (many themselves graduates) – echoing Mhando’s letter. ‘It is upon the emancipated youth of Tanganyika that we depend for a lead in the struggle’, Kambona wrote, bolstering the students’ sense of self-importance that was characteristic of this East African generation.¹⁰⁸ Asserting its independence from the party, like the Nyasaland Students Association in its early days, the Club began to submit regular memorandums to TANU: a 1956 memorandum applauded the idea of a TANU newsletter (the *Sauti ya TANU* they would soon subscribe to) as a ‘step forward in political development’ and warned that the newspaper should operate on a small scale to avoid any need for external funding.¹⁰⁹ A two-page ‘commentary’ on TANU policy earned the Club an invitation to TANU’s landmark Tabora meeting in 1958.¹¹⁰

The fruits borne, for the Club, from these exchanges had foundations in students’ repeated efforts to involve themselves in politics as far back as 1946, the successes of which were felt when Makerere students knew TANU members personally, often through educational networks. Eventually, Nyerere did accept the Club’s invitation to visit Makerere.¹¹¹ Students were asked to arrange a meeting between Nyerere and the Ugandan politician Mulira – the same figure that students had used to convince Nyerere to come (the importance of this meeting

¹⁰⁶ M. Sanga to TANU Organising Secretary, 18 June 1955, CCM, Box 193 File S73.

¹⁰⁷ Kambona to V. M. Eyakuze (Club Secretary), 28 September 1955, CCM, Box 193 File S73; M. B. Ngatunga to TANU, 25 September 1964, CCM, Box 122 File TANU Club Kampala.

¹⁰⁸ Kambona to V. M. Eyakuze (Club Secretary), 28 September 1955, CCM, Box 193 File S73; Burgess and Burton, ‘Introduction’, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Eyakuze to TANU Organising Secretary, 15 August 1956, CCM, Box 193 File S73. On the donation of funds for TAA, see G. G. Hajivayanis, A. C. Mtowa, and John Iliffe, ‘The Politicians: Ali Ponda and Hassan Suleiman’, in John Iliffe (ed.), *Modern Tanzanians: A Volume of Biographies* (Dar es Salaam: East African Publishing House, 1973), 248.

¹¹⁰ Elias Kisenge to TANU Club, 21 December 1957, CCM, Box 193 File S73.

¹¹¹ Elias Kisenge to Mr. Colman (Makerere), 2 June 1958, CCM, Box 193 File S73.

will resurface in Chapter 3).¹¹² The Club thus served as a link to Ugandan politics for leaders based in Tanganyika – a role that students had carved out for themselves in the preceding years. The same was true in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, where a handful returning Makerere students were the primary source of information on developments in Uganda for activists in the early 1950s.¹¹³

The Nyasaland Students Association and the Makerere TANU Club played comparable roles to those fulfilled by party youth leagues in later years, providing the party with a future workforce or an alternative mouthpiece when that of the central committee was not appropriate, and performing the work of mobilising support.¹¹⁴ However, these organisations were not directed from above: students' determination to remain involved in national politics when they left to study drove (and often predated) the attention paid to them by party officials, who were more focused on building support *within* the territory, sometimes alongside full-time work outside of the party (often as schoolteachers). The comparative, regional lens through which these students constructed their relationship to the party, however, did not preclude the idea of a regional student cohort with a particular relationship to the colonial state – an idea that took hold most visibly at Makerere.

MAKERERE STUDENT PUBLISHING, 'BAD TASTE' AND WORLDLY RESPONSIBILITIES

The construction of a regional-generational role for students solidified in print. Small-scale publishing not only lent materiality to networks that linked institutions, schoolteachers and political parties (like Makerere students receiving *Sauti ya TANU*); it could also bring into being new modes of address that were distinct to the printed form, in this case those that evoked (but rarely reached) a global audience.¹¹⁵ In the aftermath of the 1952 strike, Makerere students repeatedly engaged in journalistic ventures: a 'plethora' of short-lived student publications characterised this

¹¹² Bhoke Munanka to TANU Club, 18 June 1958, CCM, Box 193 File S73.

¹¹³ Interview with John Tembo, Lilongwe, 18 July 2017.

¹¹⁴ Burgess and Burton, 'Introduction', 19.

¹¹⁵ Stephanie Newell, 'Afterword', in Derek R. Peterson, Emma Hunter, and Stephanie Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures: Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 426.

period, one staff member recalled.¹¹⁶ To some extent, this was a reaction to the strike itself: Joseph Wanyonyi wrote to De Bunsen in March 1953 proposing to write a 'factual' article dealing with the strike in the *Current News*, the organ of the Student Guild, because 'inquisitive' new students had been given false information.¹¹⁷ At stake was the way in which the strike was narrated – the ownership of its narrative by its participants.

But Wanyonyi, a regular contributor to *Current News* during 1953, had more expansive visions for the publication. In an article on Kampala's celebration of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, he described the city as 'a large bush of ribbons [in which] a black Nationalist felt there was no place for him'. Beer was served at Makerere for the occasion, but Wanyonyi questioned whether he really wanted to drink to the Queen's health. Instead, he said that if during Elizabeth's reign 'Africa is going to suffer further, then honestly I have no wish to say ... excuse me. I am stepping on dangerous ground'.¹¹⁸ The ground was indeed dangerous: De Bunsen banned the entire *Current News* publication as a result of the June 1953 issue, which (much like the strike petition) he considered 'in very bad taste'.¹¹⁹ This was partly a question of the subject matter: one author anonymously wrote, of the May holiday, that 'some [students] wish they never went home to witness the wholesome massacre going on in one particular part of East Africa right now', referring to the colonial response to the Mau Mau uprising.¹²⁰ Yet De Bunsen was not opposed to student critiques of colonial policy per se: he himself resisted demands from the Kenyan government to officially register all Gikuyu students at Makerere.¹²¹ Rather, he was sensitive to criticism of policy at Makerere itself, and especially to the suggestion that Makerere was representative of colonial repression rather than a liberal oasis.

What was specific about the articles in the June 1953 issue was their hinting at the limitations of De Bunsen's 'tolerance' (he had issued several warnings in 1952) and at the power of student publications – entirely 'constitutional' – to challenge it. Wanyonyi stepped on dangerous ground precisely by implying that dangerous ground existed at all. This was elaborated in the *Current News* editorial, a condemnation of student 'individualism' and 'indifference'. 'If I do not write to the current News and

¹¹⁶ Margaret Macpherson, 'They Built for the Future', Makerere, AR/MAK/1/1.

¹¹⁷ Joseph Wanyonyi to Bernard De Bunsen 30 March 1953, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/7.

¹¹⁸ Joseph Wanyonyi, 'Coronation', *Current News*, 18 June 1953, Makerere, AR/MAK/2/2.

¹¹⁹ De Bunsen, 'Notice', 21 June 1953, Makerere, AR/MAK/2/2.

¹²⁰ Editorial, *Current News*, 18 June 1953, Makerere, AR/MAK/2/2.

¹²¹ Vice Principal to De Bunsen, 6 March 1954, Makerere, AR/MAK/2/3.

You do not write to the Current News and our neighbours follow our example ... isn't that as good as strangling the Current News?' the editors asked.¹²² While addressing Makerere news for a Makerere audience, the students, simultaneously, were writing about writing.

Conceptions of the region were often a motor for writing and publishing at Makerere. Just as the final issue of *Current News* was going to press, the Makerere College Political Society launched a monthly magazine, *Politica*. The Society, as Tanzanian student E. D. Sawe noted, would place 'special emphasis on East and Central Africa'. The prominent role that Central African students played in its activities was unique to this moment around the imposition of the Federation: the fate of the wider region appeared interdependent, with students debating whether the Central African Federation would be followed by an East African Federation, in which Kenyan settlers would play the role of Southern Rhodesian settlers.¹²³ Following in the vein of *Current News*, *Politica*'s first editorial encouraged bold contributions from across the university:

Don't curb your views on important topics, for who knows, you may be right, and through saying what you think, you may change the history of your country and the world. We would like our readers to remember that they have the freedom of speech, and the freedom of the press. By making use of these two freedoms you will share your views with the world.¹²⁴

The sense of responsibility implied in the *Current News* editorial reappeared here, the effects of failing to express one's views amplified from a college newsletter stage to a world-historical one. Addressing implausibly large audiences, like in other times and places, performed political work: *Politica* editors were not simply seeking out self-important writers but were constructing a collective role.¹²⁵ This was a role based on opportunities – cast almost as privileges – of freedom of speech and the press, pre-empting Stephen Mhando's guidance for the Makerere TANU Club discussed earlier. Makerere became a space between the restrictions of school and the duty of political life after graduation – a 'stage' as Sawe called it in his address to the Society. This conviction in the potency of student publications is inflated in personal memories: John Tembo told how he wrote an article around 1954 for a publication at Roma

¹²² Editorial, *Current News*, 18 June 53, Makerere, AR/MAK/2/2.

¹²³ Milford, 'Federation, Partnership, and the Chronologies of Space', 1333–1338.

¹²⁴ 'Editorial', *Politica*, 1:1 (May 1953), Makerere, AR/MAK/57/5.

¹²⁵ On addressing implausible audiences in early twentieth-century Nigeria, see Barber, *Print Culture and the First Yoruba Novel*, 46.

(Lesotho) criticising the racial politics of the liberal National Union of South African Students, which did not admit Black students at Fort Hare until 1945. Tembo recalled that his article was circulated around Cape Town and led to the union's dissolution – yet the organisation did not face a major crisis until the 1960s and was not dissolved until 1991.¹²⁶

Politica's allusion to a global readership began to assume concrete form when the Student Guild launched *The Undergraduate* in April 1954, with the explicit aim of functioning as a mouthpiece for the Guild, where students can 'express their opinions freely and enable the outside world to gain an insight'.¹²⁷ This was precisely at a moment when the Guild was being invited to send representatives – who could take publications with them – to international student conferences.¹²⁸ Already at the time of the strike, the Guild had noted its intention to 'establish good relations with organisations of a similar nature'.¹²⁹ *The Undergraduate's* content reflected this policy, inviting students to write about trips abroad and reporting on international student issues, for example that the Oxford University *Undergraduate* had been fined five pounds for publishing a critical article.¹³⁰

The Undergraduate worked to position the Makerere student body in relation to their worldly responsibilities and an international student community. From June 1955, a 'series of articles on Guild Relations with external students Organisations' was published, because students were 'vague' on the topic.¹³¹ James Rubadiri, a Malawian who had attended Budo with Mayanja and was the president of the Guild, wrote an article 'Impressions of European Universities'. He concluded that student freedoms were 'comparable' and that students were broadly 'the same everywhere', in that they could discuss any subject 'from Nylons to Marx, Louis Armstrong to Mozart, Olivier to Monroe'.¹³² Higher education

¹²⁶ Interview with John Tembo, Lilongwe, 18 July 2017.

¹²⁷ 'Editorial', *The Undergraduate*, 1:1 (April 1954), 2, Makerere, AR/MAK/159/7.

¹²⁸ On Arthur Wina's 1953 trip to Copenhagen, see R. E. Wraith to Arthur Wina (copy to De Bunsen), 13 January 1953, Makerere, AR/MAK/5/7. On Mark Bomani and James Nesbitt's 1955 trip, see De Bunsen to R. A. Frost 7 July 1955, Makerere, AR/MAK/54/4.

¹²⁹ Bgiriwenka, Student Guild Presidential Address, 23 June 1952, Makerere, AR/MAK/63/2.

¹³⁰ 'Oxford Undergraduate newspaper fined', *The Undergraduate*, 1:7 (May 1955), 1, Makerere, AR/MAK/159/7.

¹³¹ J. P. Mathenge, 'The first of a series of articles on Guild relations with external student organisations', *The Undergraduate*, 1:7 (May 1955), 2, Makerere, AR/MAK/159/7.

¹³² James Rubadiri, 'Impressions of European Universities', *The Undergraduate*, 1:1 (April 1954), 2, Makerere, AR/MAK/159/7.

appeared to grant entry into a global student community who shared historically specific cultural reference points across race and space – a generation defined by simultaneity and connectedness.¹³³

This generational role was flagrantly gendered. Rubadiri closed with the main difference that had struck him: at a dance at Freie Universität Berlin [the Free University in Berlin], female students ‘came in swimming costumes!’. It was not unusual for women’s clothing to feature in discourses constructing the global role of young educated East Africans in this period.¹³⁴ Patriarchal norms and the equation of masculinity with worldliness remained largely intact as this cohort began to construct a role for their own regionally defined generation. Yet, at the same time, a minority of women students were directly addressed, their very presence apparently affirming the claim of a world on the brink of change:

This world of ours is in a state of dynamic transition. There are big political and social waves sweeping through it and we seem to be spectators from another planet looking at the unfortunate victims of the ‘typhoon’. Ladies and gentlemen it is high time we came down to this planet¹³⁵

The early-1950s golden age for Makerere publishing was short-lived. In April 1955, De Bunsen announced a review of all student publications in light of unprecedented expansion. He pledged to ‘secure the maximum possible freedom of thought’ while maintaining a ‘level of discussion and expression which is consistent with [Makerere] standards’.¹³⁶ These fleeting publications were critical to the experience of the cohort of students involved: if we acknowledge that political discussion happened outside of print, over dinner and in dormitories, it remains the case that print signified for students the potential for an audience elsewhere, locating Makerere in a global space, specifically one not constructed solely along colonial lines. The frustrations of keeping a publication alive (in the face of student apathy as well as college rules) were central to the emergence, in these pages, of a sense of the unique responsibility of Makerere students at the intersection of colonial restrictions on freedoms and an international student community. Discussions about newsletters, their potency and the constraints imposed on them were already taking place beyond Makerere.

¹³³ On a shared language of dissent, see Suri, *Power and Protest*, 88–130.

¹³⁴ Ivaska, *Cultured States*, chap. 2.

¹³⁵ Sawe, ‘Presidential Address to the Makerere College Political Society’, 4–5, Makerere, AR/MAK/57/5.

¹³⁶ De Bunsen, Circular to all editors of student publications, April 1955, Makerere, AR/MAK/63/2.

ANTI-FEDERATION NEWSLETTERS AT
A GLOBAL CROSSROADS

African-managed nationalist newspapers, like Nnamdi Azikiwe's famous *West African Pilot* or Kwame Nkrumah's *Accra Evening News*, did not exist in early 1950s Malawi, Zambia, Uganda or mainland Tanzania.¹³⁷ The reading public instead found space for political engagement through missionary and government-funded newspapers, many circulating in particular towns or provinces in vernacular languages.¹³⁸ There were occasional, commercially successful and openly political press ventures – one of the best known, E. M. K. Mulira's Luganda-language *Uganda Empya*, was described as 'wild, irresponsible, [and] frequently near-seditious' after its 1953 founding.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, activists frequently identified the absence of an African-owned or -managed press as an obstacle in the campaign for self-government. Kenneth Kaunda stated that the lack of an African newspaper in Northern Rhodesia had been a 'serious blow' to the anti-Federation campaign, while colonial control of the press (alongside the education system – Kaunda grouped these together) gave Federal proponents an 'immeasurable advantage'.¹⁴⁰

The threat of Federation – like the Kabaka crisis in the case of Luganda newspapers – was galvanising in this respect, prompting attempts to circumvent the hurdles of permits and financial backing through non-commercial, informal publications. Two such publications were *Freedom Newsletter* in Northern Rhodesia and *Kwaca* in Nyasaland, both of which illustrate the overflow of ideas about a regionally defined generation from education institutions into the wider political sphere.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Sam O. Idemili, 'What the West African Pilot Did in the Movement for Nigerian Nationalism between 1937 and 1957', *Black American Literature Forum*, 12:3 (1978), 84–91; Jeffrey S. Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism: Nation, State, and Pan-Africanism in Ghana* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017), 9.

¹³⁸ Emma Hunter, 'Komkya and the Convening of a Chagga Public, 1953–1961', in Derek R. Peterson, Emma Hunter, and Stephanie Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures: Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 283–305; Englund, 'Anti Anti-Colonialism'. The situation was distinct in Kenya, see Phoebe Musandu, *Pressing Interests: The Agenda and Influence of a Colonial East African Newspaper Sector* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018), chap. 4.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Emma Hunter, 'Newspapers as Sources for African History', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (2018).

¹⁴⁰ Kenneth Kaunda to Mary Benson, 20 September 1953, Bodleian, MSS. Afr. s. 1681, 249/22.

¹⁴¹ I have not found scholarly histories of either publication. Copies of *Freedom Newsletter* in Lusaka, Zambia National Archives (hereafter ZNA), Personal Papers of Simon Zukas (hereafter HM 75/PP) File 6; copies of *Kwaca* are accessible at MNA periodicals collection.

In the process, their editors capitalised on a global debate that posited Federation as a crossroads in the trajectory of ‘multiracial’ empire in Africa.

The anti-Federation campaign was the direct impetus for *Freedom Newsletter*, which was launched in January 1952 largely at the initiative of Simon Zukas, a resident Jewish-Lithuanian supporter of African self-government.¹⁴² Following the publication of the White Paper on ‘Closer association of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland’ in June 1951, Zukas was involved in an Anti-Federation Action Committee made up of African civil servants and union leaders in the Copperbelt town of Ndola. *Freedom Newsletter* was the committee’s mouthpiece. When, in April 1952, Zukas was imprisoned and deported on the grounds that he was ‘a danger to peace and good order’, Nephas Tembo and Justin Chimba, two young NRANC members (who will appear later – in Cairo), took over its editorship.¹⁴³

In Nyasaland, NAC president James Sangala expressed the need for a nationalist organ as early as 1943, and briefly published *Kwaca* (‘dawn’ in several languages in the region, also spelled *kwacha*) in 1952, during the anti-Federation campaign.¹⁴⁴ *Kwaca* was relaunched in 1955, when the return of Makerereans to Nyasaland saw the newsletter assume a distinctly regional lens. Those involved included Kanyama Chiume (who had disputed Mayanja’s expulsion), Arthur Bwanausi (one-time treasurer of the Makerere Political Society) and Dunduzu Chisiza (who attended Aggrey Memorial College on Makerere’s doorstep).¹⁴⁵ They began to contribute to *Kwaca* at a moment of generational conflict in the NAC: Sangala’s presidency was under question due to his participation in the Federal legislature. He stepped down following the March 1956 general election (under a severely restricted franchise) – at the peak of *Kwaca*’s publication.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Interview with Simon Zukas, Lusaka, 14 September 2017; Simon Zukas, *Into Exile and Back* (Lusaka: Bookworld Publishers, 2002), 74. Central Africa was an important destination for persecuted Jews in the 1930s: around 1500 arrived in Zambia. See Hugh Macmillan and Frank Shapiro, *Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

¹⁴³ Zukas, *Into Exile and Back*, 59–92.

¹⁴⁴ Owen J. M. Kalinga, *Historical Dictionary of Malawi* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2012), 240; Robert I. Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873–1964* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 183–184.

¹⁴⁵ Henry Chipembere recalls that *Kwaca* was under the control of the older generation, but perhaps is referring to its 1952 rendition, see Henry B. M. Chipembere and Robert I. Rotberg, *Hero of the Nation: Chipembere of Malawi: An Autobiography* (Blantyre: Christian Literature Association of Malawi, 2001), 205.

¹⁴⁶ Joey Power, ‘Building Relevance: The Blantyre Congress, 1953 to 1956’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 28:1 (2002), 45–65; Owen J. M. Kalinga, ‘Independence Negotiations in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia’, *International Negotiation*, 10:2 (2005), 239.

Under the influence of the graduate generation, *Kwaca*, like the party clubs at Makerere, thought in regional terms. Chisiza wrote to NRANC in Northern Rhodesia asking if they would receive and publicise *Kwaca*, adding that statements of support from leaders in East, Central and South Africa were being requested to print in the newsletter. He contrasted *Kwaca* to ‘the “We know what is good for the African” type of policy pursued by European owned papers in East Africa’, casting *Kwaca* as a vanguard African newspaper, despite East Africa’s more prominent history of African journalism.¹⁴⁷ During 1955, this group of young activists frequently compared the Nyasaland situation to that in East Africa and especially Uganda, where the 1955 Constitution had made it possible for African members to participate in the Executive Council. In February 1954, Uganda’s governor described the future of the country as ‘a primarily African state’ in contrast to a ‘plural society’, with Central African leaders looking on from the ‘multi-racial’ Federation.¹⁴⁸ *Kwaca* pointed out that both Uganda and Nyasaland were Protectorates (not colonies like Kenya) and published a small article ‘Do You Know What a Protectorate Is?’.¹⁴⁹ Arguing for these protectorates to share a fate that excluded the colonies of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia cut across the imposed boundaries of the Central African Federation.¹⁵⁰

Narratives about interdependent regional fates formed in dialogue with allusions to a global anti-Federation community. *Freedom Newsletter*, at its 1952 launch, had less ambitious claims of intended readership than Makerere publications. It hoped ‘to reach all corners of the protectorate – and Nyasaland’, pledging to print Chibemba- and Chinyanja-language articles to make it accessible to readers across this space.¹⁵¹ The idea was instead that readers *within* the region would learn about support for their cause from outside of it: the editors sought to demonstrate that ‘we are not alone in this struggle’.¹⁵² The first issue included statements supporting the anti-Federation campaign from the British *New Statesman* and the New York-based American Committee on Africa. The young NRANC editors elaborated:

¹⁴⁷ Chisiza to NRANC ‘president’, 2 July 1956, BL, EAP121/1/5/8.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Reform in Buganda: Background of the Hancock Mission’, *The Round Table*, 45:177 (1954), 39. At its 1955 annual conference, the NAC ‘Call[ed] upon the british govt to make a categorical statement that Nysaland is an African state and occupies the same status as Uganda Protectorate’, reproduced in *Africa Digest*, 3:1 (1955), 13.

¹⁴⁹ *Kwaca*, 1:10 (March–April 1956); ‘Do you know what a Protectorate is?’, *Kwaca*, 1:6 (November 1955).

¹⁵⁰ Milford, ‘Federation, Partnership, and the Chronologies of Space’.

¹⁵¹ ‘Editorial’, *Freedom Newsletter*, 1:1 (January 1952).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

The fight against federation is a world wide [sic] subject. We African people are not by ourselves, but we have other people in full agreement to our opposition. The people of the world cannot fail to see the truth, our fears and rejections of the proposed federation are justifiable.¹⁵³

The article noted support in London from Michael Scott's newly formed Africa Bureau (which reappears in Chapter 2), detailing the Bureau's involvement in the campaign against South African pressure to dethrone Bechuanaland *kgosi* Seretse Khama following his marriage to white British woman Ruth Williams. Indeed, the Khama affair created an interested (if small) audience for debate about race and empire in Britain, who were then receptive to the debate around Federation.¹⁵⁴ Declaring their solidarity with 'our people of Bechuanaland', *Freedom News* editors used the affair to build a picture of a global anticolonial movement that stretched beyond national borders, and in which Northern Rhodesia had a place – the same sort of rooted worldliness identifiable in contributions to the contemporaneous government press in the region.¹⁵⁵

Activists quickly recognised that Federation was part of a larger debate across the colonial world about race and empire in Africa. There was, as *Freedom News* claimed 'agreement to [their] opposition': support (if not necessarily active or influential) existed from the Soviet Union to India.¹⁵⁶ Federation was indeed a worldwide subject: in this post-war 'federal moment', similar structures were being discussed across the colonial world, in Dutch and French colonies alike.¹⁵⁷ This particular Central African Federation was also understood to be decisive for the future of the African continent. As the English-language press in Hong Kong said of the Federation: 'the two great cross tides surging across modern Africa – white racism from the South and East and a Black awakening from the North and West – are bound by very geography to meet here

¹⁵³ 'Fight against Federation', *Freedom Newsletter*, 3:6 (June 1952). Note that *Freedom Newsletter* was misnumbered after 1:4, which was succeeded by 2:5, 3:6, etc.

¹⁵⁴ Howe, *Anticolonialism*, 196. See also Chapter 2.

¹⁵⁵ Englund, 'Anti Anti-Colonialism', 231–237.

¹⁵⁶ V. Korionov, 'Who Needs Federation in Central Africa?', *Pravda*, 11 May 1952, translated and reproduced in *Current Digest of the Russian Press*, 19:4 (1952), 18; Ivan Potekhin, 'Britain's Imperialist Plans in Central Africa', *Izvestia*, 15 January 1953, translated and reproduced in *Current Digest of the Russian Press*, 2:5 (1953), 32–33; 'An Unwanted Federation', *Times of India*, 27 March 1953, 6.

¹⁵⁷ Michael Collins, 'Decolonisation and the "Federal Moment"', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 24:1 (2013), 21–40.

in the centre'.¹⁵⁸ Emergency-era Kenya was thus increasingly understood in the same terms as South Africa, while democratic reforms in the Gold Coast, reported in the colonial press, appeared to offer an alternative path for those East and Central African countries with less powerful white settler populations.

The authors of these newsletters were not only aware of this interest but sought, through the circulation of their publications, to harness it against the Federation, even after the anti-Federation campaign had failed and the Federation was imposed in August 1953. The NAC's application for government permission to print a newsletter in December 1954 stated that expected circulation included the entire Federation, as well as South Africa, Tanganyika and Mozambique, based on the existence of NAC members in these countries.¹⁵⁹ Articles and letters in *Chinyanja* increasingly appeared towards the end of 1955, but the bulk of the newsletter continued to use English, with an international audience in mind. This audience existed: copies reached the London Africa Bureau, while the Anti-Colonial Bureau of the Asian Socialist Conference (ASC) in Rangoon (introduced in Chapter 2) listed *Kwaca* among the 'sympathetic' publications with which they exchanged their own.¹⁶⁰

Kwaca's international reach was mirrored in content: its January 1955 front-page story reported on the intensification of British counter-insurgency in Malaya, a topic, like Mau Mau, of international press coverage.¹⁶¹ The editorial of the same issue insisted on the need to 'prove to the world that [...] Nyasaland can stand on its own two feet and play a part in international affairs'.¹⁶² E. Alexander Muwamba

¹⁵⁸ James Cameron, 'A Shadow at the Crossroads: Grim Omens at the Birth of a Nation', *South China Sunday Post (Hong Kong)*, 29 November 1953, 4. Similar interpretations appeared in Jerusalem, Toronto and Bombay: Hugh Latimer, 'Key Territory in New State: Northern Rhodesia Federation Trouble Spot', *Jerusalem Post*, 22 July 1953, 4; Noel Buxton, 'Peril of Forced Federation in Africa', *Globe and Mail (Toronto)*, 9 January 1953, 6; Balkrishna Gokhale, 'Central Africa: Next Danger-Spot in the Dark Continent', *Times of India*, 5 April 1953, 8.

¹⁵⁹ NAC to Chief Secretary, 3 December 1954, MNA PA SMP NAT.34 Vol V 'Nyasaland African Congress 1953-1955' (Previously Box 111, 22.25.1R).

¹⁶⁰ 'Background to the Anti-Colonial Bureau', Nairobi, Kenya National Archives (hereafter KNA), Murumbi Africana Collection (hereafter MAC) MAC/CON/205/6.

¹⁶¹ On French coverage of Mau Mau, see Hugo Zetterberg, 'Representations of Algeria and Kenya in French and British Newspapers c. 1950-1962 (Provisional)' (University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, 2024). On US coverage, see Melissa Tully, 'All's Well in the Colony: Newspaper Coverage of the Mau Mau Movement, 1952-56', in Toyin Falola and Hetty Ter Haar (eds.), *Narrating War and Peace in Africa* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010), 56-75.

¹⁶² 'Editorial', *Kwaca*, 1:1 (January 1955).

insisted that from now onwards ‘Nyasaland will be on the map, for, as *Kwaca* will circulate the world over[,] the voice of Nyasalanders will be heard’.¹⁶³ Given that the NAC’s thirteen-point policy statement of the same year made no commitment to a wider anti-imperial front nor to external publicity, *Kwaca* was an early sign of the importance of publicity which would, as we shall see in Chapter 4, later become institutionalised.¹⁶⁴

Belief in the agency of these small newsletters followed from the conviction that press coverage more generally could shape the outcome of the anti-Federation campaign: *Freedom Newsletter* documented, for readers in Ndola, the British press coverage of (and hostility towards) Central African delegations in London during Federation talks.¹⁶⁵ Central to the editors’ justification of their newsletter was the fact that colonial newspapers were ‘using their monopoly of the written word to distort the truth’ about Federation.¹⁶⁶ Like at Makerere, writing a newsletter was itself an act of protest against this ‘monopoly’: Chiume wrote that *Kwaca* was a ‘thorn in the flesh of Malicious propaganda and falsehood’.¹⁶⁷ The circulation of these publications was part of the attempt to combat isolation: an article ‘Iron Curtain for Central Africa’ compared the command of Federal Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins for the world to keep their ‘hands off’ Central Africa, to Soviet attempts to stem external criticism.¹⁶⁸ Ultimately, *Kwaca* was victim to precisely this colonial attempt to isolate the Federation: in 1956, the printers in the Federal capital of Salisbury refused to continue production.¹⁶⁹

The question of ‘who knew what’ was attributed increasing weight in the context of the anti-Federation campaign, and the circulation of paper objects was one way to gain some control: in 1956, following the repression of trades unions on the Copperbelt, Zukas wrote to activists

¹⁶³ Quote from E. Alexander Muwamba, *Kwaca*, 1:5 (October 1955).

¹⁶⁴ ‘Thirteen-point Policy’, *Kwaca*, 1:1 (January 1955).

¹⁶⁵ *Freedom Newsletter*, 3:6 (June 1952). The assumed irrelevance of the British press to decolonisation has recently been challenged, see Rosalind Coffey, “Does the Daily Paper Rule Britannia”: British Press Coverage of a Malawi Youth League Demonstration in Blantyre, Nyasaland, in January 1960’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41:6 (2015), 1255–1277.

¹⁶⁶ *Freedom Newsletter*, 1:1 (January 1952).

¹⁶⁷ *Kwaca*, 1:6 (November 1955).

¹⁶⁸ ‘Iron curtain for Central Africa’, *Kwaca*, 1:8 (January 1956).

¹⁶⁹ ‘Emergency Circular No. 3’, enclosed in TDT Banda to Fenner Brockway 30 May 1956, KNA MAC/COPAI/160/3.

from exile urging them to consider the potency of news reaching London of large meetings with strong resolutions passed and appeals to the world labour movement.¹⁷⁰ Neither *Kwaca* nor *Freedom Newsletter* were simply vehicles for solidifying popular support within a nationalist framework. The necessarily transnational character of the anti-Federation campaign, coupled with regional networks through Makerere, Fort Hare and secondary schools, prompted an engagement with how to position a regional generation within an explicitly global struggle.¹⁷¹ Newsletters were both a way to work through what this position should be and, sometimes, a means to make it a reality.

CONCLUSION

Speaking at a celebration of Makerere's fiftieth anniversary in 1972, Abu Mayanja insisted that Makerere was no ivory tower: it had always been embedded in social change and was the 'very soul' of regional integration.¹⁷² He did not mention his expulsion some twenty years earlier. The student strike of 1952 certainly *was* about more than poor food, and the political moment in which it happened *was* about more than new nationalist parties. This chapter has brought into focus shared generational experiences that straddled the spheres of education and party politics – institutional rules, constitutional methods, attempts to launch publications and protests. That these experiences mattered to this cohort – that they were formative to the emergence of an anticolonial culture – is clearest when thinking through a regional lens, rather than in terms of party formation or colonial development policy. Among these activists, the global and the regional, as constructed scales of anticolonial work, developed in dialogue.

First, the events of the Mau Mau uprising and of the unsuccessful campaign against the Central African Federation constituted a turning point in identifying and articulating a region that encompassed Uganda, Tanganyika, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, and in activists' attempts

¹⁷⁰ Simon Zukas to 'Matthew', 29 January 1956, ZNA HM 75/PP/1. On the Zambian labour movement, see Henry S. Meebelo, *African Proletarians and Colonial Capitalism: The Origins, Growth, and Struggles of the Zambian Labour Movement to 1964* (Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation, 1986).

¹⁷¹ On the broader and longer social and cultural basis of links across Central Africa, see Zoë R. Groves, *Malawian Migration to Zimbabwe, 1900–1965: Tracing Machona* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020).

¹⁷² Speech by the Hon. A. K. Mayanja, President of the Makerere University Convocation, on the occasion of the golden jubilee celebrations, 3 October 1972, Makerere, AR/MAK/11/1/1.

to link this region to anticolonial activism beyond its borders. With the hardening of apartheid in South Africa looming in the background, the question of the role of European settlers in stalling democratic reform became central.¹⁷³ Both the brutal colonial response to Mau Mau and the imposition of the unpopular Federation confirmed the idea that settlers in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia were a problem that the countries between wanted to shield themselves from.¹⁷⁴ This cohort of young, educated people articulated the situation in regional, sometimes comparative, terms. This was made possible through the movements and meetings that often arose from the pursuit of education – most visibly at Makerere. At the same time, these events allowed for new and meaningful connections with external anticolonial sympathisers, from Mayanja's stay with Peter Wright in Nairobi to *Kwaca*'s circulation in London and Rangoon – connections that Chapter 2 will pursue. These activists began to call upon a global audience at the very moment when an interested audience emerged: the complex relationship between these two phenomena would become critical to the anticolonial culture that drove transnational work during the rest of the decade.

Second, these events served as the backdrop for specific modes of expression characteristic of this emerging anticolonial culture. Discussions of 'constitutional' protest and 'normal channels' during the strike were related to understandings of the potency of form which developed around publications both within and outside of education institutions. Assessing and pushing the limits of liberties of expression, in a particular institution or in colonial East and Central Africa more broadly, allowed for the articulation of the (often gendered) duty to use whatever political space existed.¹⁷⁵ This happened in a context of unprecedented cross-fertilisation between schools, party politics in the region and students.

All of these discussions emerged on the ground in East and Central Africa, in regional institutions and local secondary schools. That this opening chapter is the only one in this book to unfold almost entirely within this region is no coincidence. It deliberately offers a counterpoint to narratives of an education in the metropole as the trigger for thinking in global terms and building international contacts. Fundamentally,

¹⁷³ Babou, 'Decolonization or National Liberation', 49.

¹⁷⁴ See Ng'wanza Kamata, *Becoming Nationalist, Vol. 2 of Development as Rebellion* (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2020), 10.

¹⁷⁵ On the limits of educational protest in early twentieth-century Southern Rhodesia, see Summers, *Colonial Lessons*, 4.

what this chapter has described are the conditions for the emergence of a central tenet of this cohort's anticolonial culture: the conviction that pushing the limits of their freedoms to express and protest would mean not only finding space within the colonial state but moving, physically, outside of it. Mayanja's expulsion from Makerere was as much a beginning as an end.