Independent Africans: Migration from Colonial Malawi to the Union of South Africa, c.1935-1961

Figure 1: Migrants arriving at Francistown airport, July 1960, NA 10/55/15

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Abstract

This thesis addresses how Malawians engaged in the capitalist economy of Southern Africa on their own terms from 1935 to 1961. It firstly accounts for local motivations in emigration patterns by looking at the local economies of high-emigration areas, and demonstrating that migration complemented rather than underdeveloped independent agriculture, fishing and trade. It secondly highlights the importance of independent migration to South Africa, which accounted for the majority of Malawians heading to the Union until the mid-1950s. Finally, the history of urban 'Nyasas' in South Africa and the contracting urban spaces that they occupied are assessed. These three perspectives all contextualise the dominant narrative of recruited workers leaving economically backward areas to work on the mines, demonstrating both that Malawi itself was not a 'vista of inexpensive, docile tropical labour' and that Malawians integrated within South African society in numerous urban spaces.

Contents

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List of Maps, Graphs and Photographs

List of Abbreviations

AA	African Affairs
ANC	African National Congress
ICU	Industrial and Commercial workers' Union
JAH	Journal of African History
JSAS	Journal of Southern African Studies
NA	The National Archives (UK)
NAC	Nyasaland African Congress
NANC	Nyasaland African National Congress (South Africa)
NASA	National Archives of South Africa
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NRIC	Nyasaland and Rhodesia Industrial Co-operative
RNLSC	Rhodesia Native Labour Supply Commission
SOM	Society of Malawi Library
UJ	University of Johannesburg, Special Collections and Archives
UW	University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Archive
WNLA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two

In 1943, Samuel Phiri set off on foot from Zomba in central Malawi. For the next 10 years he would travel and work his way south through Zimbabwe, reaching Johannesburg in 1953. Establishing himself as a well-known tailor in Kempton Park, Phiri cycled around the town every morning, collecting orders and delivering suits made on his Singer sewing machine. A member of the Zambezi church in Tembisa and the President of the local Tumbuka Burial Society, he became both an independent and well-to-do African in South Africa. Though Phiri himself was a *machona*, a Malawian 'lost abroad', most migrants would return home hoping to achieve this economic independence and social status.[1]

Figure 2: Samuel Phiri in one of his tailored suits during the 1960s

Introduction

From 1935 to 1961, tens of thousands independently migrated from Colonial Malawi each year, travelling outside the legal framework of the state and capitalist recruiting networks. A high proportion of these migrants went on to become well-to-do rural producers back in Malawi, as migration abroad offered one of the few means of rural accumulation. Though many Malawians were successful fishermen, fish traders, independent tobacco or cotton growers and retailers, migration complemented all of these industries by offering a means of investing in and importing capital goods. The two interconnected categories of independent migrants and independent producers encompass Malawians who acted independently of settler economies, colonial states and tribal authorities, and at the same time were heavily engaged in the modern concepts of capitalism, Islam, Christianity, ethnicity, trade unionism

[1] Interview with Janet Phiri, Joseph Prolius and Fred Prolius, Tembisa, Johannesburg, 28/05/2014. See Appendix I.

and nationalism. As Shepperson and Price in their seminal piece *Independent African* reflected, "an independent outlook in one sphere is likely to be carried over to another"[2] and Malawians were often simultaneously independent producers, members of independent churches and African associations, and independent migrants.

Labour migration between Malawi and South Africa dates back to at least the 1890s and migrant networks had become well-established across the Southern continent by the 1920s. This piece however focuses on the 1930s, 40s and 50s when migration expanded from being focused in the north of Malawi to a Protectorate-wide phenomenon. The publication of the Nyasaland Government's Travers-Lacey Report in 1935 marked the point at which mass independent migration became a recognised concern of officials, missionaries and planters, and emigration increased markedly during the next three decades. Numbers abroad grew from 120,000 in 1935 to 230,000 in 1961.[3] This year however marks the point at which independent migration became secondary to the mass recruitment operations of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, the recruiting arm of the South African Chamber of Mines. The changing modes of migration, and demographic of migrants themselves, revolutionised the meaning of 'labour migrancy' over the period, and the means by which economic independence and social status were achieved.

Labour migration from Malawi has already attracted considerable academic attention, but little has been written specifically about those heading to South Africa.[4] This thesis addresses this shortfall, using evidence from the British National Archives, the National Archives of South Africa, the Historical Papers Collection at the University of Witwatersrand and the University of Johannesburg Archives and Special Collections. These sources cover

[2] Shepperson & Price, *Independent African*, (Edinburgh, 1958), p.422.
[3] Coleman, 'International Migration from Malawi', *Development Studies Occasional Paper*, No. 1, (1979).
[4] Important exceptions are the biographies of Clements Kadalie; Kadalie, *My Life and the ICU*, (New York, 1970) and Hastings Banda's early years; Short, *Banda*, (London, 1974).

correspondence between the South African Government, the South African Institute of Race Relations, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association and Malawians in South Africa, and offer perspectives that contrast with those of Colonial Malawi. Whilst Nyasaland missionaries were challenged by ex-migrants who questioned racial hierarchies and, alongside settlers, struggled to pay their workforces competitive wages,[5] South African capitalists benefitted from migrant labour and even went as far as to invoke the human rights of migrants to sell their labour in a market of their choosing.[6] All these groups tended to confine 'Nyasas' to stereotypes of obedient, vulnerable units of labour within colonial economies and clandestine, illegal aliens outside these systems, but South African sources offer an important, differing perspective.

This thesis moves beyond Eurocentric narratives however by incorporating both vernacular understandings of Southern and Central African history and the studies of Malawi's academic historians.[7] The studies of Chirwa, Nkhoma and Nkosi in particular point to the benefits of migration as a means of resolving "the crisis" of encroaching capitalism; rooting migration in the context of local economies.[8] The 16 oral histories collected for this study similarly point to the motivations and multi-generational benefits of migration. Despite its limitations, "the importance of oral testimony may lie not in its adherence to fact but rather its departure from it, as symbolism, imagination and desire emerge."[9] Taking into account personal motivations and experiences, accounts of individual migrants are integrated throughout this piece, to

[5]Groves, *Malawians in Colonial Salisbury: A Social History of Migration in Central Africa, c.1920s-1960s*, (Keele Univ. PhD. thesis, 2011), p.33.
[6] Crush, Jeeves & Yudelman (eds.), *South Africa's Labour Empire. A History of Black Migrancy to the Gold Mines*, (Oxford, 1991), p.51.
[7] Cheru, 'African scholars and western Africanists: A world apart', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (2012), p.194.
[8] Chirwa, '*Theba is Power': Rural labour, migrancy and fishing in Malawi, 1890s-1985*, PhD Thesis, (Kingston, 1992); Nkhoma, 'Competition for Malawian Labourers: 'Wenela' and 'Mthandizi' in Ntcheu District, 1935-1956', *Journal of Social Sciences*, No. 21, (2012); Nkosi, 'Labour Migration and its effects on Rural Life: a case study from Mzimba District, c.1930s-1950s', History Seminar Paper, No.12, Chancellor College, University of Malawi, (1982).
[9] Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different?', in Perks & Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader*, (London, 1998), p. 68.

provide historical examples, but also to move beyond the confines of a typical Malawian 'labour migrant'. This study instead highlights differentiation and employs an ethics of recognition by engaging with African academic and vernacular historical understandings, and undertaking cosmopolitan conversations.[10] Through the use of a variety of sources, hopefully, this history is ethically robust in its telling. As noted by Ranger, analysing archives and contemporary ethnographies against the grain needs to be supplemented with oral history if African history is to move beyond contemporary simplifications and Eurocentric historical paradigms.[11]

At the forefront of Malawi's current historiography, the works of McCracken and Chirwa are the most comprehensive existing studies on local migration patterns from Malawi, but "much research is still required on the migrant experience in all its complexity." Local variances in particular still need more attention.[12] The modes of transport used by migrants have also not been looked at enough (the history of flying in Africa in general has not been fully explored)[13] and the literature on Malawians 'clandestinely' entering South Africa stops at 1923.[14] The limits of Crush, Jeeves & Yudelman's South African 'labour empire' have been revealed by Nkoma's work on the recruiting operations of the Rhodesian Native Labour Supply Commission,[15] but not in the context of the greater number of Malawians who migrated independently to South Africa. Whilst Groves has written extensively on Malawian

[10] Appiah, *Ethics of Identity*, (Princeton, 2005); Honneth & Fraser, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, (New York, 2003); Full accounts of the migrants' lives included in this piece are available at independentafricans.wix.com - all maps are my own.
[11] Temu, 'Not telling: African History at the End of the Millennium', *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 1, (2000); Ranger, 'Growing from the roots: reflections on peasant research in Central and Southern Africa', *JSAS*, Vol. 5, No. 1, (1978).
[12] McCracken, *A History of Malawi, 1859-1966*, (London, 2012), p.232; Chirwa, '*Theba is Power'*.
[13] Nugent, 'Critical African Studies: A Voluntarist Manifesto', *CAS*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2009).
[14] Makambe, 'The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia and the Problem of the African 'Highwayman', 1903-1923: A Study in the Limitations of Early Independent Labour Migration', *AA*, (1980)
[15] Crush, Jeeves & Yudelman, *Labour Empire*; Nkhoma, 'Competition'.

networks in Zimbabwe,[16] similar networks in South Africa have only been hinted at; Shepperson picking out the formation of a Nyasaland African Congress in South Africa during 1920, 24 years before the Nyasaland African Congress was established in Blantyre.[17] Finally, notions of African honour and motivation in general need to be explored more and in local terms.[18]

This piece addresses all these elements and in doing so makes three main arguments. Chapter 1 argues that local variations in migration patterns during the period are explained by local dynamics. Migration existed as a choice alongside tenant farming, independent agricultural production, fishing, fish-trading and retailing. Over the course of the period migration complemented and increasingly overtook these industries as a means of maintaining economic independence and achieving social status due to local-level changes. Chapter 2 argues that local biases in emigration to South Africa in particular are explained by independent migrant networks and WNLA recruitment, and that independent migration formed the dominant means of reaching South Africa until 1960. Finally, Chapter 3 sets out that conditions in South Africa meant most Malawians had to return home to attain economic independence and social status. Malawian and South African associations, churches and mosques did create spaces which afforded a degree of independence within a stringent political environment, but during the 1950s these became limited to South Africa's mines and colleges where nationalist ideas catalysed. Migration both catalysed and opened differentiation up for renegotiation, and migration was consistently motivated by this possibility of differentiation within a local context.

[16] Groves, 'Urban Migrants and Religious Networks: Malawians in Colonial Salisbury, 1920 to1970', *JSAS*, Vol. 38, No. 3, (2012); Groves, 'Transnational Networks and Regional Solidarity: The Case of the Central African Federation, 1953-1963', *AS*, Vol. 72, No. 2, (2013).
[17] Shepperson, 'External Factors in the Development of African Nationalism, with Particular Reference to British Central Africa', *Phylon*, Vol. 22, No. 3, (1961).
[18] Iliffe, *Honour in African History*, (Cambridge, 2005).

Figure 3: Sam Chatola Banda in the 1950s

Though abroad for two decades, like many Sam Banda retained an attachment to the country of his birth and returned in 1971 to start a business trading fish. Educated at Bandawe Mission School, Banda worked in the local fishing industry for 12 years before leaving Malawi in 1950 - travelling on foot to Cape Town. Here he worked as a hotel waiter, picking up Zulu, Xhosa, Portuguese, Afrikaans, Tswana and Pedi, before leaving for Zimbabwe in 1957. After a short period as a clerk at the Wankie Coal Mine, Banda changed to a better paid job, gained due to his language skills, working as a steward for the Rhodesian Railways. On his return to Malawi, Banda invested the capital he earned abroad, including Rhodesian Railways shares, in a house in Blantyre and a Land Rover to trade fish. In 1973 he had to abandon this business and returned to find employment in the hotels of Johannesburg, where he worked until he returned to Malawi in 1982.[19]

Chapter One - Local motivations for migration from Colonial Malawi

Though all migrants such as Sam Banda left in search of green pastures, they often intended to find these in Malawi on their return. Migrations were invariably made in response to local conditions and often with a view to invest in local industries and attain local status. Numbers emigrating increased markedly throughout the 1930s, 40s and 50s. But this aggregate change was rooted in local dynamics, as the means of maintaining economic independence and social status changed in different areas. In the northern and lakeshore regions of Malawi, migration was an established means of attaining these goals from the 1900s, with emigration complementing the local fishing and cattle industries. Similarly migration from Central Province was a means of attaining capital for independent tobacco growers from the 1920s.

[19] Interview with Ronnie Banda, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 16/05/2014. See Appendix I.

In comparison, migration from Southern Province only took off during the 1950s due to the instability of independent cotton growing and local population growth. Malawians consistently pursued flexibility in their methods of production and attaining social status, but over time the means by which these could be achieved in each of these areas changed. This chapter firstly defines the motivations for emigration in terms of being economically independent and socially well-to-do. Secondly it sets out the local changes that explain the evolving pattern of migration over the period. Whilst recruiting depots existed across Malawi from the mid-1930s, agency on the behalf of migrants, and not recruiters, must be seen as at the heart of the explosion in emigration at the end of the 1950s.

Pursuit of economic independence has been a consistent motivation for Malawians.[20] Engaging in the capitalist system on their own terms, whilst retaining mobility and choice in their economic activity,[21] they found employment across the colonial economy as workers on plantations, cash-crop or food producers, retailers, traders, and as migrants. These industries all complemented each other as they simultaneously increased rural accumulation and, as a result, expanded local markets. Using pseudo-traditional means of mobilising family members and associational networks, most economically independent Malawians reacted to expanding markets, both local and global, by investing in independent production - demonstrating a high degree of autarky from the wage and tenant labour systems of Malawi's settler economy. Whilst Malawians could work on settler estates or within the wage economy, from the 1920s most retained and utilised the choice of independent production.

[20] Power, 'Individual enterprises and enterprising individuals: African entrepreneurship in Blantyre and Limbe, 1907-1953', (Dalhousie Univ. PhD. thesis, 1991).
[21] Chirwa, *Theba*, pp.55 & 157.

Migration was an important external sources of capital for these independent industries. Malawians were noted as good savers in South Africa,[22] and capital from abroad was essential for independent production. Newly acquired wealth allowed migrants to invest in farming, and establish their own stores; bicycles allowed traders to transport fish, farm produce and wares to the most competitive markets, and imported nets allowed for greater fishing yields. In 1952, 65.5% of household incomes in Lilongwe were spent on clothes,[23] and in this context the large-scale importation of sewing machines for tailoring becomes understandable. Petty trade and the informal sector expanded markedly during the 1950s,[24] and 90% of shop owners in northern Malawi were ex-migrants.[25] Money lending was also lucrative and simultaneously perpetuated migration. Money was often borrowed from ex-migrants by a younger generation and was usually repaid with interest of 100 to 150% over a two year period.[26]

Economic independence was complemented and integrated with the notion of being well-to-do. To "go to Joni (Johannesburg) or to Halale (suburbs of Salisbury) as they say gives experience and consequently makes them rise in the social scale."[27] People who did well, or more literally people who ate well, were known as *anthu wodya bwino* - indicated by a range of imported domestic items, a new house, a reliable non-agrarian source of income, payment of children's school fees, and a bank or postal account.[28] As noted by Nkosi "the yardstick used for measuring development in a particular society should be that of the society. For instance, the dressing and quality of house in which one lives among the people of Northern

[22] UJ WNLA 59L/8, 'Report of the leisure activities of Nyasas and Marobi employed in the Transvaal and Orange Free State mines', 24/10/1960.
[23] Wright, *African Consumers in Nyasaland and Tanganyika*, (London, 1955), p.12.
[24] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.427.
[25] McCracken, *History of Malawi*, p.259.
[26] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.405.
[27] UJ WNLA 59L/5 'A problem of many: Labour migration from Nyasaland', *Noticias*, 22/12/1954.
[28] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.434.

Mzimba indicates his advancement."[29] Fashionable suits in particular complemented economic independence - in the 1950s membership of African clubs in Chintechi was determined by the ownership of "an elaborate assortment clothes",[30] whilst Morton Madise complained bitterly in 1932 that his friend "was appointed special clerk for the Nkhosi's indaba because of his dressing. There were many of us who could have been taken as clerk."[31] All these consumer items were heavily associated with emigration. A "list of typical articles which natives purchase prior to repatriation" compiled in 1955 by WNLA included clothing, hats, bicycles, enamelware, sewing machines, gramophones, clocks and watches, boots and shoes, musical instruments and blankets.[32]

Figure 4: Newspaper adverts from the vernacular paper, Msimbi, from UJ WNLA 61/12

Advertising and WNLA's propaganda tapped into these heightening consumer needs and changing ideas of leisure. Cinema shows put on by WNLA reached tens of thousands of Malawians a year. Just within Dedza District in 1957 "altogether some 12,350 Africans saw the films...The cine unit was as usual greeted with great pleasure...it is only through this

[29]Nkosi, 'Mzimba', pp.6-7.
[30] Wright, *African Consumers*, p.69.
[31] Nkosi, 'Mzimba', p.7.
[32] UJ WNLA 7/4/1 'Nyasaland Customs Duty', 13/10/1955.

medium that they can get an idea of the recreational facilities provided..."[33] Recordings broadcast in vernacular across Malawi similarly played on notions of a good life; "On the mines there are many entertainments, after work and at the weekends they play skittles, fuwa some call it, nsolo, football and many other games. At the weekends they have competitions in tribal dancing; twice a week there is a free bioscope..." Exhibitions of a 'European' life-style were already notable in 1899,[34] and became increasingly marked after WWI,[35] but arguably these became only more important with the expansion of emigration and return of relatively affluent migrants during the 1940s and 50s. Whilst bureaucrats and intellectuals tried to analyse increasing urbanisation across Southern Africa, as noted by Read, Malawian villages were "the real laboratories where the new standards and ideas [were] being tested"[36]

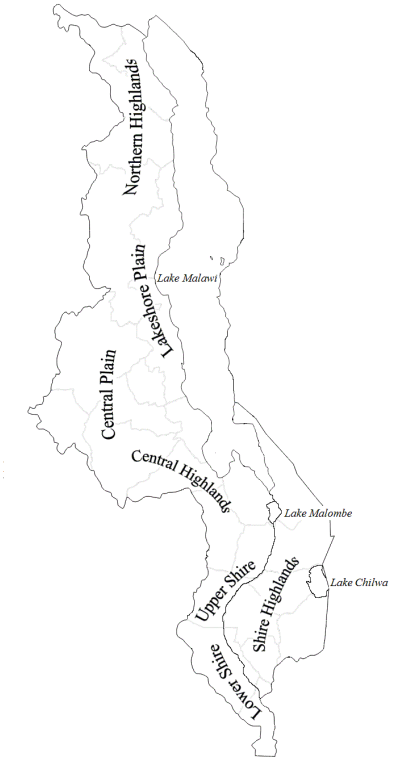

Figure 5: Geographical areas of Malawi, adapted from Chirwa, 'Theba is Power', p. 23.

[33] UJ WNLA 61/10 'Field Cine Unit', 27/08/1957.
[34] Boeder, *Malawians Abroad, The History of Emigration from Malawi to its Neighbours, 1890 to the Present,* (Michigan Univ. PhD. thesis, 1974), p.27.
[35] Chirwa, *Theba,* p.152.
[36] Read, 'Migrant Labour and its effect on Tribal Life', *International Labour Review*, Vol. 45, No. 6. (1942), p. 613.

The means of maintaining economic independence and becoming well-to-do were rooted in the dynamics of local economies. The northern highlands of Malawi offered practically no wage employment. Referred to as the 'Dead North' throughout the early 20th Century, most northern Malawians sought employment elsewhere, initially in the south of Malawi. Poor wages and working conditions however meant that they switched to labour markets further south from the 1910s and by the 1930s considerable numbers were emigrating. Tied to economic and social imperatives, possession of cattle was "an index of wealth and prestige. Consequently labour migrants went abroad with the intention of improving their social status through the acquisition of cattle."[37] Though agriculture was not as successful as in other areas it was not put under strain by migration. Migrants sent money home so families could hire labour for farming, and the system of *chovwano* meant that people also worked communally, rotating round each other's fields.[38]

This locally rooted motivation was aided by the prevalence of mission schools in the north. Based on the Protestant ethic of instilling practical skills as well as literacy, Ngoni, Tonga and Tumbuka were well-regarded across the sub-continent for their work ethic,[39] and were trained as "brick layers, carpenters, medical assistants, teachers or as pastors... after graduation, most of these found themselves unemployed because of the few job opportunities that existed for white collar job seekers."[40] With skills-sets which made them competitive across Southern Africa, throughout the 1930s, 40s and 50s, arguably "the only means of advancing in economic terms was labour migration."[41] Figure 6, complicated by the high degree of independent migration from northern Malawi, only captures some of the emigration from this area throughout this period.

[37] Nkosi, 'Mzimba', p.6.
[38] Nkosi, 'Mzimba', p.9.
[39] Boeder, *Malawians Abroad*, p.5.
[40] Nkosi, 'Mzimba', p.2.
[41] Nkosi, 'Mzimba', p.12.

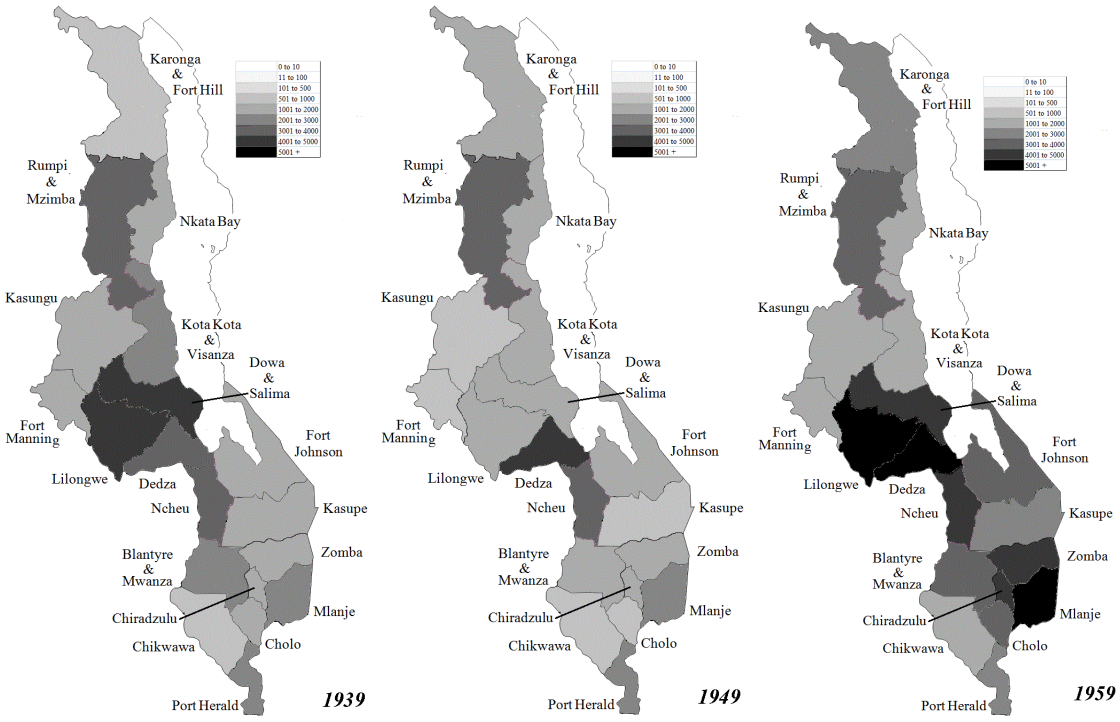

Figure 6: Official flows of male emigrants from each district in Malawi, 1939, 1949 and 1959. See Appendix II, Table 1.

In the lakeshore areas around Lake Malawi, Lake Malombe and Lake Chilwa, the dominant industries from the 1900s were fishing and fish trading. Complementing rather than undermining the local economy, high levels of migration were typically motivated by the desire to invest capital in these industries. As "far as the lakeshore districts were concerned, labour migration formed a highroad to rural accumulation."[42] As noted by Chirwa, for "the Mtonga man, owning a fishing unit was more than owning or controlling a means of subsistence. It was a status symbol that every man looked forward to. This social and political aspiration was among the major factors propelling young men into labour migration."[43] Fishing required a large capital outlay, and for the majority this was only possible through migration.[44] Investing capital in canoes and nets on their return, from at least the 1920s, the

[42] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.433.
[43] Chirwa, *Theba*, pp.40-41.
[44] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.184.

competitive advantages of chiefs and village headmen on the lakes were challenged by migrants.

Commercial fishing grew throughout the 1930s, 40s and 50s due to expanding markets in the centre and south of Malawi. The structure of the industry however changed from the late 1930s as returning migrants in the central and northern sections of the lake, who often had the same missionary education as those in the north, came to dominate. By the 1950s migrants, who were importing new fishing technology (mosquito mesh nets, nylon gill-nets, trawling nets, and narrow-meshed beach seine nets) represented an "emerging class of entrepreneurs in the fishing industry."[45] At Nkhota-kota, fishermen with big nets made £20 to £30 a year-though the average did not exceed £10.[46] These technologies were complemented with less conventional approaches. In 1942, two Malawians were arrested in Limbe for importing gelignite, fuses and gunpowder from the Rand.[47] Explosives were "found frequently in luggage of Natives returning to their homes after service in the mines"[48] usually for "the of making medicine or the dynamiting of fish..."[49] In the south, African fishermen faced competition from well-capitalised European fishermen who entered industry from 1920s, but fishermen here still enjoyed good access to southern markets, in particular after the opening of the Shire Highlands railway in the 1930s.[50] By the mid-1950s the fishing industry's centre, and numerous fishermen and traders, had gravitated south towards the rich fishing grounds of Salima and Fort Johnston. Enjoying considerable success, fishing was the main means of generating tax revenue for the Nyasaland Government in the lakeshore area, and though Europeans presented strong competition for African fishermen during the 1940s and 50s, Nyasaland officials rejected the applications of most Europeans applying for fishing permits -

[45] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.264.
[46] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.180.
[47] UJ WNLA 7/4/1 'Conveyance of explosive substances by Nyasaland repatriates', 01/09/1942.
[48] UJ WNLA 7/4/1 'Stolen explosives found in possession of natives ex-mines', 05/07/1954.
[49] UJ WNLA 7/4/1 'Natives in possession of explosives', 30/09/1942.
[50] McCracken, *History of Malawi*, p.175.

"like in cash-cropping, the colonial administration adopted a policy of balancing African interests with a small European sector."[51]

The increasing output from commercial fishing and the increased demands for fish were mediated by legions of fish traders, often ex-migrants who had invested their earnings in bicycles. Due to the prevalence to the south of Lake Malawi of well-capitalised European fishermen, returning migrants here tended to occupy the middleman or bicycle boy position.[52] Mitigating the risk of handling a highly perishable commodity, fisherman typically sold their catch at the lakeshore to fish traders who acted as 'middlemen' between lake and the market. Thousands of fish traders came from Dowa, and in 1937 would buy two fish at the lake for 1d, and sell each in Dowa or Lilongwe for 3d.[53] Hawkers typically made £1.10.0 to £2 a year.[54] Fish trading expanded alongside fishing as demand from independent cash cropping and the Shire Highlands tea plantations grew, and competition between and within African and European fishermen and traders increased. During the wet season inaccessible roads became the domain of the cyclist,[55] but even during the dry season when European lorries dominated the transportation of fish, African traders bought wholesale from these lorries in urban areas and took fish to be sold in rural villages, plantations or peri-urban markets.[56] By the late 1950s even jeeps, lorries and dhows (formerly symbols of chiefs) were used by African fish traders to bring catch to markets.[57]

In Central Malawi, migration similarly complemented the dominant industry, independent tobacco production. Of 6,110 tobacco growers in Dowa 1928, 4,185 were ex-migrants.[58]

[51] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.254.
[52] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.185.
[53] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.238.
[54] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.180.
[55] McCracken, *History of Malawi*, p.259.
[56] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.183.
[57] McCracken, *History of Malawi*, p.259; Interview with Ronnie Banda.
[58] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.175.

Even whilst away migrants "remitted money to relatives to hire labourers or tenants to grow tobacco on their behalf...[showing not only] the vitality and resilience of the local economy in the face of increased labour migration, but also the enterprising spirit of the labour migrants themselves."[59] As settler growers of tobacco struggled, increasing numbers of Africans grew tobacco on Crown Lands, and by 1927 accounted for 43% of Malawi's output; succeeding due to low production costs, no transportation costs and intense competition among buyers.[60]

Independent tobacco production was faced with a crisis in the period from the Great Depression to WWII, but showed considerable resilience and did not collapse at the same time as European plantations came to a standstill. European planters often survived during this period by buying and selling African produced crops. 61.3% of independent producers abandoned production between 1932 and 1933, but smaller producers and women increased output, despite the fall in prices, as they needed cash. Improving cotton prices from 1934 meant cultivation expanded and,[61] rising demand for tobacco during and after WWII, and the removal of restrictions by the Native Tobacco Board,[62] saw large production increases occur.[63] Success in independent production, in turn meant that few came forward for labour recruitment.[64]

In contrast, the 1950s "were a decade of rural crisis and contradictions"[65] with a marked increase in emigration from tobacco producing areas. Commodity prices fluctuated wildly throughout the decade, and independent African tobacco growers were hit the hardest. Famine in 1949 meant that growers increased their production, but early harvesting of the

[59] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.175.
[60] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.170.
[61] Chirwa, *Theba*, pp.216 & 230.
[62] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.241.
[63] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.227.
[64] NLS 6.1311 Annual Report of the Labour Department, for the Year ending 31st December 1946, (Zomba: Government Printer, 1947).
[65] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.408.

crop and poor handling, resulted in low quality and low prices in 1950. Erratic water conditions hampered tobacco throughout 1950s and registered growers dropped from 92,000 in 1951 to 63,719 in 1954 and 23,603 in 1957.[66] In contrast to the mid-1940s, WNLA officials in 1951 noted, "one factor in Nyasaland favourable to recruiting, namely the fall in the price of native grown tobacco".[67] Though migration had always complemented tobacco production, low prices of tobacco and low returns to labour meant emigration became an increasingly important means of rural accumulation in the centre of Malawi, as shown by figure 6.

The Shire Highlands and Upper Shire of southern Malawi were the heart of the settler economy. During the early colonial period especially, the administration of taxes, policing, and the coercion of labour were focused in the Shire Highlands, with considerable numbers employed on settler plantations. However from the end of WWI to the Great Depression independent cash-cropping, and fishing around Lake Chilwa, rapidly expanded as they offered rural producers more choice and greater economic independence than working for local employers. From 1903 the Shire Valley, the Shire Highlands, Fort Johnston and Karonga emerged as areas of independent cotton production, after the distribution of cotton seed to independent producers by the British Cotton Growers Association,[68] but the industry only took off in 1923 after the British Cotton Growers Association was granted a monopsony and offered prices more than twice those of private buyers.[69] In 1925, 63% of Malawi's cotton came from African producers, growing to 83% in 1927.[70] In the Shire Highlands cash-cropping on Crown Land was balanced with sharecropping on private estates. Following a

[66] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.417.
[67] UJ WNLA 30K/6/1 'WNLA Tropical Areas Administration', 10/10/1951.
[68] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.110.
[69] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.199.
[70] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.169.

similar pattern to tobacco in the centre of Malawi, cotton became an African industry as European production declined.

Price fluctuations, the 1949 famine and climatic factors however limited the expansion of cotton throughout the 1950s, increasing the incidence of migration. Though cotton enjoyed some success in early 1950s, 1956 was a disastrous year as planting rains were extremely unfavourable and prolonged wet weather favoured a build up of pests and disease. Total acreage of cotton fell from 39,124 in 1955 to 26,422 in 1956 and registered growers fluctuated from 33,000 in 1951, to 43,853 in 1954 and 13,089 in 1957.[71] Cotton production - unlike tobacco - did recover for late 1950s thanks to intensified production and between 1955 and 1964 Malawi produced more cotton than during any other years before.[72] The instability of cotton however combined with severe land shortages and a population boom in the south, meant that during the 1950s emigration exploded from Southern Province, as captured in figure 6. Though the majority of migrants, unlike earlier emigrants from the north, were relatively uneducated, the expansion of migration followed a global trend of unskilled labour moving out of agriculture and into industry. Crucially this unskilled labour had a high degree of congruence with the skills set required for the expanding mineral and secondary industries in South Africa.

[71] Chirwa, *Theba*, pp.419-420.
[72] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.12.

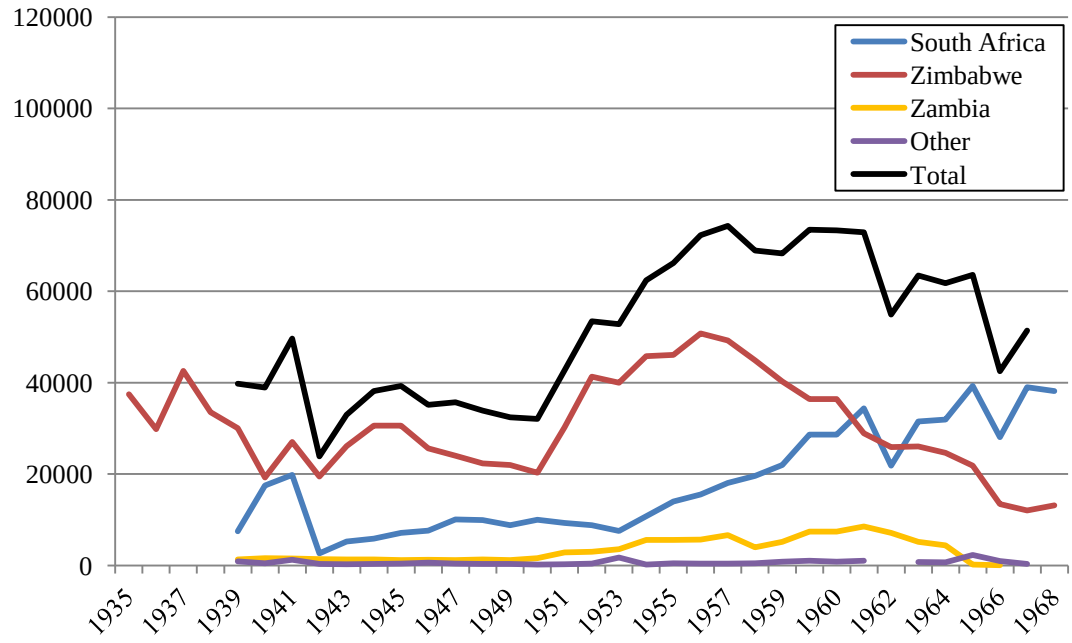

Figure 7: Official flow of male Malawians abroad, 1935-1967. See Appendix II, Table 2.

Though this thesis focuses on migration to South Africa, the Zimbabwean economy was also an important local consideration, particularly in Southern Malawi, which had a precedent of sending labour there. Due to its proximity, and the safety afforded by Rhodesian transport and police patrols, as shown by figure 7, the majority of Malawians emigrated there until 1960 and in the early 1950s the Rhodesian Native Labour Supply Commission out-competed WNLA in terms of recruitment.[73] WNLA officials reflected that RNLSC recruitment gained from "free forward and return transport; free clothing issue and, under the Federation, absence of Customs duty on goods taken home by repatriates."[74] The downturn in the Zimbabwean economy in the second half of the 1950s,[75] goes a long way to explain why official numbers going to South Africa started to rise in the late-1950s.[76] At the end of the decade local and regional conditions meant that tens of thousands from the centre and south

[73] Nkhoma, 'Competition for Malawian Labourers: 'Wenela' and 'Mthandizi' in Ntcheu District, 1935-1956', *Journal of Social Sciences*, No. 21, (2012).
[74] UJ WNLA 59L/5 'Memorandum to Gold Producers' Committee', 13/04/1954.
[75] Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1948*, (London, 1988).
[76] UJ WNLA 59L/7 'Memorandum to the Board of Directors', 21/05/1959.

of Malawi were looking to emigrate, without having the same the well-established access to migrant networks as the north. WNLA recruitment networks tapped into this demand, but must be considered in the context of local economies.

Figure 8: Signal Phiri in the 1950s

Signal Phiri migrated to South Africa in 1952, representative of a new wave of independent migrant. Transported through Zimbabwe in a bakkie owned by a fellow Malawian, Phiri along with a number of other migrants from Mangochi District were dropped off near the border and walked into South Africa. After travelling a week and a half on foot, Phiri initially found work as a farm labourer in Tzaneen. Taken into the farm household, Phiri picked up culinary skills which he would use for the rest of his life; eventually becoming a chef at the Malawian Embassy in 1973. He lives in Pretoria to this day, integrated in South African life, working as a caretaker at the Pretoria Trust Sunni School in Laudium.[77]

Chapter 2 - International Networks across Southern Africa

Migration from Malawi was locally motivated, but transnational networks were important determinants in the final destinations of migrants. Whilst emigration was determined by the success of local production in cotton, tobacco and fish, local biases in the destinations of migrants suggest that networks were crucial to where Malawians emigrated to. From the south of Malawi emigration was directed mostly to Zimbabwe, whilst a disproportionate number from the north emigrated to Zambia, as shown in figures 9 & 10. Those officially heading to South Africa predominantly emigrated from a few districts in Central Province, but this was complemented by a strong tradition of independent migration from the north. Independent migration was the only means of reaching South Africa until 1935, when the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) was permitted to open up recruitment on a limited scale, and remained the dominant mode of emigration until the mid-1950s. Existing in the north of Malawi from the 1890s, independent migrant networks remained important in

[77] Interview with Signal Phiri, Mulina Phiri and Hajira Phiri, Laudium, Pretoria, 30/05/2014. See Appendix I.

this area into the 1960s.[78] In comparison, the well-capitalised operations of the WNLA were central to the mass emigration from the centre and south of Malawi from the late-1950s. Created by the collapse of independent agricultural production, and the downturn in the Zimbabwean economy which up to this point had been the most popular destination for migrants particularly from Southern Province, considerable labour flows were channelled towards the mines of the Rand from 1956.

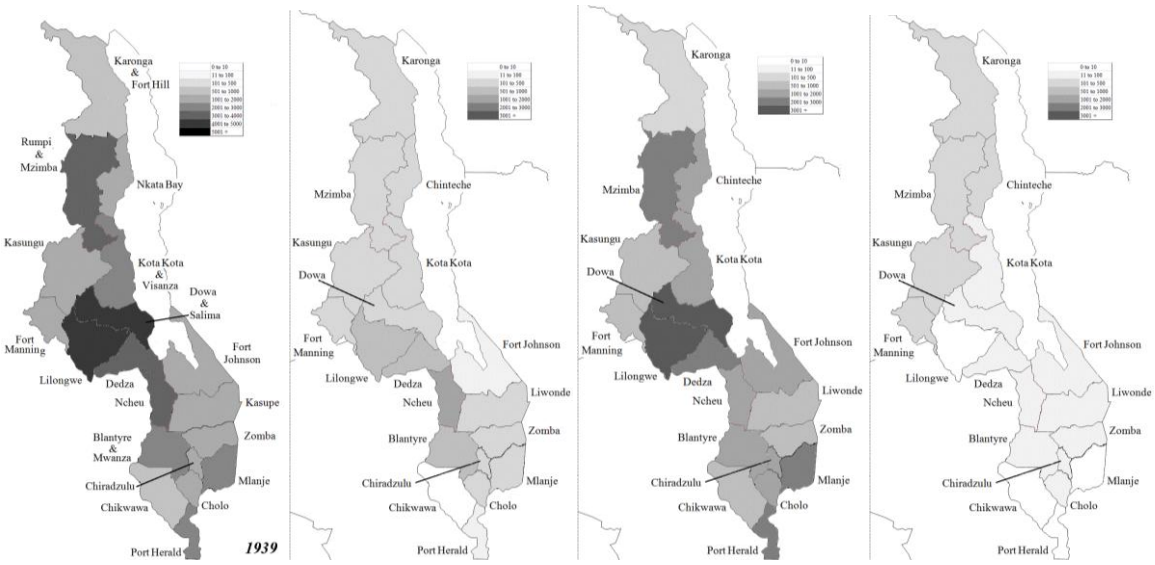

Figure 9: Official migrations flows from Malawi, in total, to South Africa, to Zimbabwe, and to Zambia respectively in 1939. See Appendix II, Table 3.

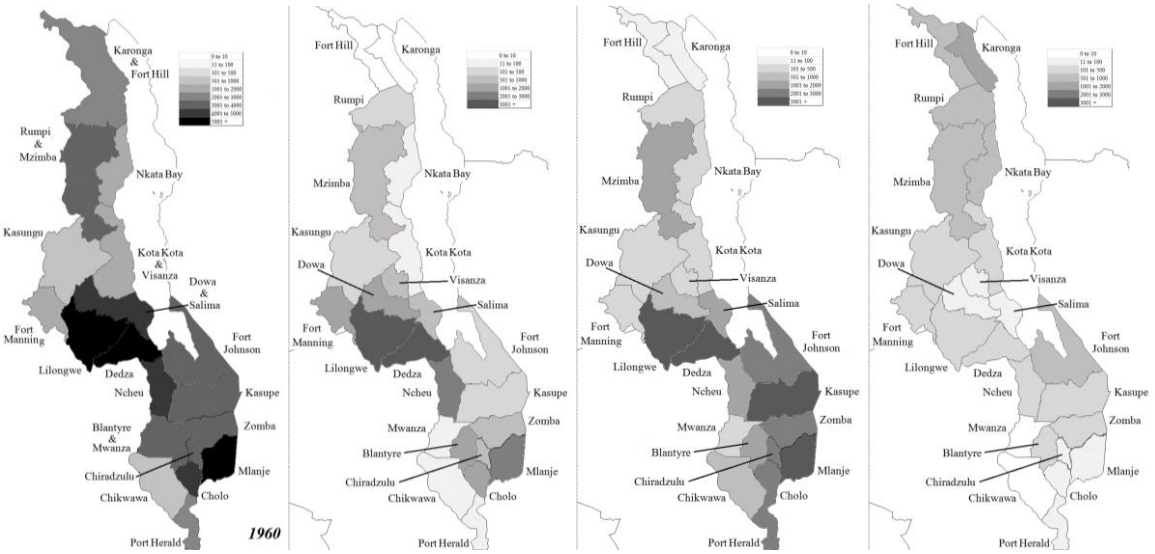

Figure 10: Official migrations flows from Malawi, in total, to South Africa, to Zimbabwe, and to Zambia respectively in 1960. See Appendix II, Table 4.

[78] McCracken, *History of Malawi*, p. 258.

This chapter looks to explain how these networks operated and how they channelled an increasing number of Malawians towards the sub-continental nexus, South Africa. It argues firstly that independent migration was the dominant means of reaching South Africa until the mid-1950s, when economic independence became most easily maintained through recruitment by WNLA. It secondly addresses WNLA's infrastructural network, but argues that this only diverted Malawians on mass to South Africa when the local and regional economy created the demands for employment on the mines. Put in perspective against independent migration, it was only from the 1960s that it is plausible to talk about a South African labour empire in Malawi, and even then the option of independent migration remained viable. Notably, both these networks underwent fundamental changes over the course of the period as they adapted to new technology and infrastructure. The final part of this chapter addresses how women took advantage of these changes and increasingly emigrated via train or bus by the 1950s, putting into context earlier male domination.

Independent migration, termed 'selefu' by Malawians themselves,[79] 'uncovenanted' or 'clandestine' by colonial officials, occupied an ambiguous and contradictory position in the minds of colonial governments. Though framed as subversive by colonial officials, independent migration simply encompassed those emigrants who travelled outside the framework of colonial recruitment. Hard to monitor, let alone control, independent migration to the Union had a dubious legal status in Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa. In Malawi, legal migration from 1937 required an identification certificate which necessitated migrants demonstrating that they already had a job in South Africa before they left; either through recruitment to the Rand mines or established connections with employees in South Africa.[80] Most independent migrants left Malawi without one. The colonial government of Southern

[79] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.134.
[80] NLS 6.1311 Annual Report of the Labour Department, 1938.

Rhodesia complained bitterly about South Africa's apathy towards the identification certificate system,[81] but in Zimbabwe "few if any employers [worried] about such a mere formality."[82] Independent migrants in South Africa were termed 'prohibited immigrants'. After the passing of the 1938 Natives (Urban Areas) Act, Malawians were banned from urban areas if not in possession of written permission, and thus occupied a vulnerable position within urban South Africa. Temporary permits could be readily purchased by migrants every 6 months for 5 shillings but only as long as migrants conformed to South Africa's legal system and area restrictions.[83] Many simply stated that they were Union tax payers. This vulnerable, ambiguous, but legal, presence in the Union of South Africa continued into the 1960s, but became increasingly burdensome for Malawians, as the 1955 amendment to the Natives (Urban Areas) Act heightened urban restrictions.

Independent migration involved considerable hardship and depended on networks of experienced migrants and fellow travellers. After the banning of WNLA recruitment in 1913, the only means by which most Malawians could reach South Africa, up to the 1940s, was on foot. In 1935 90% of Malawians walked to the Rand.[84] Due to local factors addressed in chapter 1, this practice was best established in the north of Malawi, particularly among the Tonga who, "nearly always proceeded to the Union by themselves".[85] When Nyasaland official Eric Smith tried to convince the Tonga to use identification certificates in 1937 they retorted, "there is a catch in it...we don't want government assurances."[86] Indeed the full reality of emigration is not captured by figures 9 & 10, as considerably more northern men

[81] Yudelman & Jeeves, 'New labour frontiers for old: black migrants to the South African gold mines, 1920-85', *JSAS*, Vol. 13, No. 1, (1986).
[82] UJ WNLA 59L/1 'The Labourer is Worthy...', *Nyasaland Times*, 10/09/1945.
[83] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.159.
[84] Pirie, 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance', *JSAS*, (1993), p.726.
[85] UJ WNLA 59L/5 'BNP Recruiting: Atongas', 23/04/1954.
[86] Chirwa, *Theba*, p.400.

migrated unofficially. In Mzimba in 1934, an estimated 60 to 70% of men, approximately 22,5000, were abroad whilst the number of passes applied for numbered just 427.[87]

Networks of independent migrants in the 1930s were based on migrant brotherhoods which typically consisted of between 10-30 fit young men. These were often locally organised - for the Tonga, migrant groups were typically arranged at the level of hamlets, and migrants still saw themselves potential cultivators of the land even when they were abroad.[88] As noted by Chirwa due to the nature of fishing, only a few Tonga men could provide the entire hamlet's needs, allowing the remaining men to emigrate. Typically leaving at the end of the planting season, they would travel without identification certificates - indeed often with little more than the clothes on their backs and a few essential supplies.

Migrant brotherhoods would often be led by experienced migrants, who could be hired in Malawi or Mozambique.[89] Aided with notices and letters left on trees,[90] these older migrants had a considerable knowledge of the best routes across Southern Africa. Some groups travelled through "wild untracked wilderness along Mozambique's western border"[91] before crossing into South Africa through Kruger National Park, but most literally worked their way through Zimbabwe. Travelling by this mode could take months as groups stopped, split up and found employment on various farms. Of a party of 39 Ngoni that the Nyasaland Government Labour Representative met in 1940 at Potgietersrus, only three had not worked in Mashonaland farms for 2 to 6 months.[92] Mashonaland farmers in particular were dependent upon this flow of migrants, and armed with letters black-listing certain farmers and industrialists, migrant groups knew where they wanted to go and what they wanted to do.

[87] SOM Report of the Committee appointed by His Excellency the Governor to Enquire into Emigrant Labour, (Zomba: Government Printer, 1935).
[88] Van Velsen, *The Politics of Kinship*, (Manchester, 1964), pp. 66 & 71.
[89] Interview with Ronnie Banda.
[90] Groves, *Malawians in Colonial Salisbury*, p.46.
[91] Crush, Jeeves & Yudelman, *Labour Empire*, p.46.
[92] Burden, *Nyasaland Natives in the Union of South Africa*, (Zomba: Government Printer, 1940).

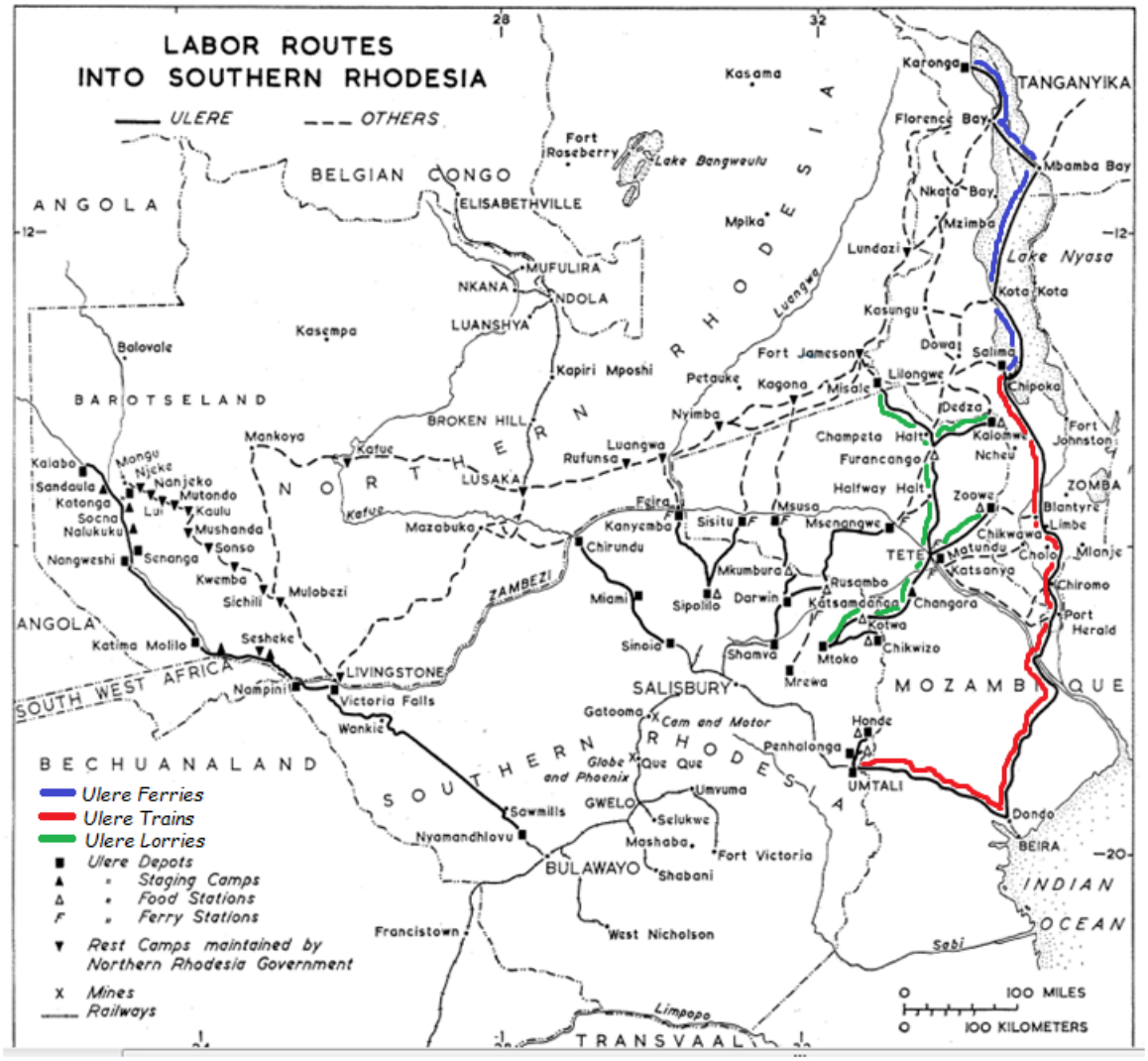

Figure 11: Ulere routes into Zimbabwe in 1952, adapted from Scott, 'Migrant Labour in Southern Rhodesia', Geographical Review, Vol. 44, No. 1, (January 1954).

Independent migration remained relevant into the 1940s and 50s by diversifying beyond travelling on foot. This most notably involved exploiting the free *Ulere* transport service put on by the Southern Rhodesian government from 1937 to 1961 to encourage labourers to work in Zimbabwe. In 1952, 7,634 migrants travelled via the train route from Salima, and a further 13,651 migrated via lorry.[93] At its peak year in 1955 *Ulere* transported 39, 299 Malawians - 73% of all those going to Zimbabwe - mostly by lorry, but ferry services along Lake Malawi and train fares from Salima and Blantyre were also paid for.[94] Tens of thousands exploited

[93] NLS 6.1311 Annual Report of the Labour Department, 1952.
[94] NLS 6.1311 Annual Report of the Labour Department, 1955.

this scheme "to assist them to pass through Southern Rhodesia [and then] seem to have little difficulty in entering the Union where there is a ready market for their labour."[95]

Rural accumulation by numerous generations of migrants also meant that independent migrants travelled by train, bus or bakkie. Able to borrow money from ex-migrants, train fares became affordable, and this in turn allowed increasing numbers of women to migrate south - something which the physicality of walking and the mine recruitment system restricted. Additionally, some Malawians used their accumulated wealth to work as independent drivers - transporting migrants down to the South African border during the 1950s in bakkies or buses they had purchased. Often ex-migrants themselves, these men ran fortnightly trips to and from the border.[96] Similar to the *Ulere* service however this service only took migrants to the borderlands of South Africa. The majority still had to walk into the Union, typically at night.

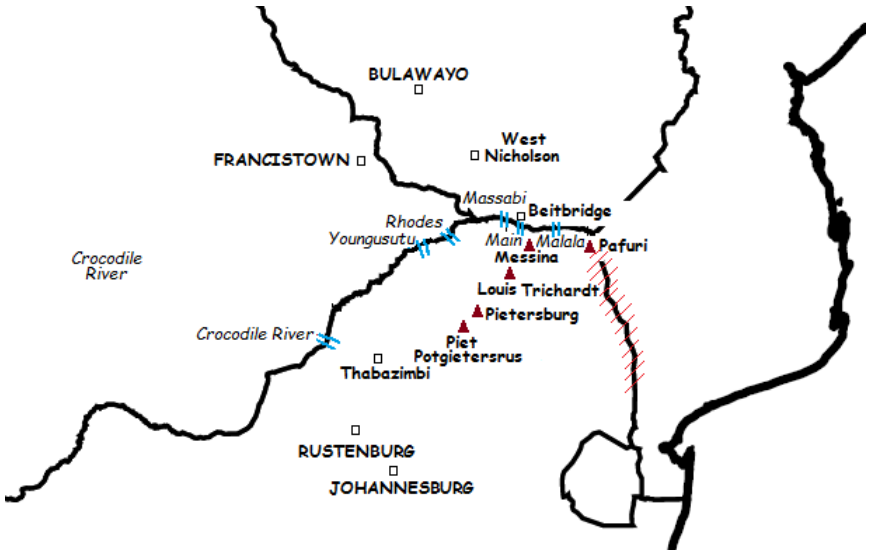

Figure 12: Clandestine migration routes into South Africa in 1940

The Limpopo River, demarcating South Africa's northern border, was crossed by tens of thousands of Malawians each year at numerous points in a 300 mile arc from the Matlabas

[95] NLS 6.1311 Annual Report of the Labour Department, 1944.
[96] Interview with Signal Phiri.

River to the frontier point of Pafuri. The main fordable points were at the Malala, Main, Massabie and Rhodes Drifts marked in figure 12. Those coming from Mozambique crossed at Malala or Main, circumventing the WNLA's depot at Pafuri, whilst most from Zimbabwe crossed at Beitbridge at night and headed to the Eastern Transvaal. The party the Nyasaland official met in 1940 had crossed at Youngusutu having travelled through Botswana and Zimbabwe. Alternatively, those heading to Rustenburg, where there was a large Malawian community, would track the Limpopo in Botswana until they reached the Crocodile River, which they then followed to Thabazimbi. Kruger National Park was also a major avenue for labour entering South Africa. Though game keepers were "eagle-eyed",[97] they were focused above all on cost margins and would employ trespassers, referred to as 'mafourteens' on manual labour for two weeks before giving them temporary passes for South Africa.[98]

As migrants entered South Africa's borderlands they were vulnerable to numerous black-birders who operated along and beyond the border. Makambe has written of prolific levels of black-birding in the Transvaal during the 1920s,[99] but these practices continued well into the 1940s. In 1939 several recruiters had "regular runners working in Komatipoort and I suspect that two Europeans are connected with the business..."[100] and in 1947 there were still numerous "recruiters operating along the Limpopo River"[101] who supplied the citrus estates of Northern Transvaal, Bethal district and the Eastern Transvaal low veldt.[102] One African constable based in Kruger Park noted in 1948, "there are very many private recruiters going about here with lorries, especially at night time. They are looking for Natives once they get

[97] Burden, 'Nyasaland Natives in South Africa'.
[98] NASA SAP 18/18/35 'Illegal Immigrants Kruger National Park', 13/10/1959; UJ WNLA 46 B/1 'Clandestine Immigration via Kruger', 05/04/1939.
[99] Makambe, 'Ulendos'.
[100] UJ WNLA 46 B/1 'Clandestine Immigration via Kruger', 05/04/1939.
[101] NASA NTS 2246/564/280 'Farm Labour Scheme', 22/07/1947.
[102] Burden, 'Nyasaland Natives in South Africa'.

hold of them they frighten them, with revolvers and guns, and take the Natives and put them in the lorries and take them away."[103] Recruiters also employed the tactic of

> impersonating the police in a series of hideouts on the Crocodile River, they pounce on unsuspecting and gullible tropical natives as soon as they cross the river and enter the Union from the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Not being in possession of passes and with the knowledge that they are entering the Union as prohibited immigrants, the natives readily submit to arrest by the bogus policemen.[104]

From 1947, illegal recruiting was complemented by institutionalised recruiting by the police under the Farm Labour Scheme. Intended to intercept 'prohibited immigrants' and offer them the option of employment on farms or deportation, the scheme reflected the well-established interests of South African farmers. Whilst the capitation fee per migrant was £2, the per capita cost of the scheme was £13.[105] The scheme in the late 1940s proved a "costly failure...in 1948, 3,474 men were detained...and only 95 (three in every 100 arrested) accepted work on farms...natives knew farm conditions too well to fall in with this scheme."[106]

Even if caught, independent migrants exploited the limits of the various overlapping bureaucracies in numerous ways. Identification certificates were often forged; "the common practice being the substitution of the words 'South Africa' for 'Southern Rhodesia'" or to state that migrants were returning to employment after a period abroad.[107] Malawians, on reaching the border could also pose as Mozambicans, who did not fall under the restrictions of the identification system. Experienced Mozambican guides would "produce a Portuguese tax pass and all the others say they are Portuguese Natives. We can see that they are not

[103] NASA HKN 1/1/52 17N3/20/2 'Howard Tagwuireyi', 3/08/1948.
[104] NASA NTS 2246/564/280 '"Press Gangs" Pose as Police to Get Native Workers', *Sunday Times*, 4/5/1947.
[105] NLS 6.1311 Annual Report of the Labour Department, 1951.
[106] First, *The Farm Labour Scandal*, p.14.
[107] NLS 6.1311 Annual Report of the Labour Department, 1944.

Portuguese people. We have to let them go..."[108] Direct resistance was another option. In August 1948 a constable in Kruger National Park recollected,

> The Matahawa's from Nyasaland are the dangerous ones. They tell the runners that if they force them or take their passes they will kill the runners...I had this experience myself. At the depot two of them pulled out knives and said if you mean to take me for this work you will lose your life. I spoke to them in their own language and they would not listen, I had to let them go...[109]

Once beyond South Africa's borders, independent migrants utilised existing community networks to find employment, exploiting the fact that Malawians were employed in numerous sectors across the South African economy. In the same way that independent migration to South Africa was often multi-staged, life histories of migrants such as Signal Phiri, point to considerable flexibility and breadth of employment in South Africa. On arrival in the Union, migrants typically travelled south via the tobacco farms around Rustenburg and Potgietersrus, the citrus farms of Tzaneen (where Signal Phiri worked), or the cement works at Piernaars River.[110] Most often Malawians worked briefly on farms as 'cash paid resident labourers',

> with quarters and food or rations, no family privileges and no privileges of land or cattle...[Malawians transferred from] seasonal work on the vegetable and fruit irrigated areas of the north, gradually through farms or small mines further south or east, possible a 'marriage' with a local girl (in general Nyasaland Natives are popular with Transvaal girls…), all this leading to sophistication in Union ways and the acquisition of a Union 'pass' - then Johannesburg.[111]

'Joni' because of its higher standard of living was "Mecca of every work-seeker in the country, and this is doubtless, too, the reason why these men will resort to literally any means of gaining entry into the town..."[112] Malawian networks on arrival to urban areas are addressed in Chapter 3.

The continued viability of independent migration meant the WNLA was not the dominant network by which Malawians reached South Africa in the 1940s and early 1950s. By the late

[108] NASA HKN 1/1/52 17N3/20/2 'Howard Tagwuireyi', 3/08/1948.
[109] NASA HKN 1/1/52 17N3/20/2 'Howard Tagwuireyi', 3/08/1948.
[110] Burden, 'Nyasaland Natives in South Africa'.
[111] UW AD843 Aa12.11.3 'Farm Labour in the Transvaal', 11/01/1941.
[112] UW AD1947 7.1 'Migrant Labour', 19/01/1961.

1950s however the marginalisation of independent migration, and the increase in emigration from the Southern Province of Malawi where independent migration networks were not as well established, meant that WNLA became increasingly important in directing Malawians towards South Africa. Whilst in 1941 approximately 28,000 travelled independently to South Africa, compared to 3,621 who were recruited for the mines, this gap had closed by 1952 when approximately 12,000 travelled independently compared to 6,958 who were recruited.[113] Over the course of the 1950s, Malawians abroad increasingly fell under the category of 'labour migrant'. Just as numbers officially migrating via WNLA to South Africa increased (figure 13), those in employment outside of the mining sector actually markedly decreased.[114] By 1961, most Malawians were in South Africa as recruited migrant miners, with the view of maintaining economic independence on their return to Malawi.

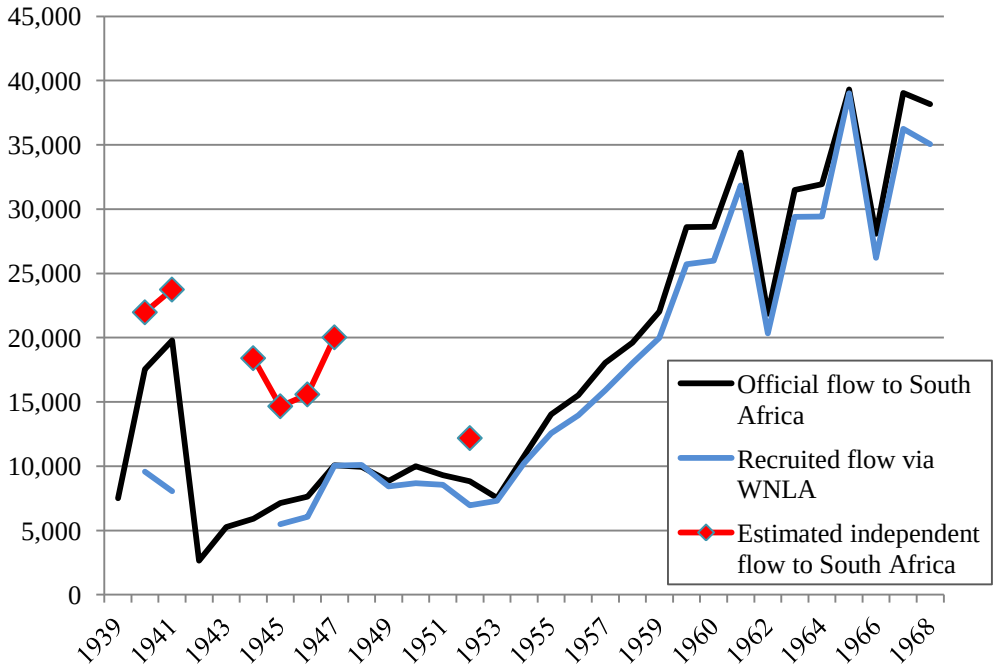

Figure 13: Estimated flows to South Africa. See Appendix II, Table 5.

[113] See Appendix II, Table 5.
[114] SOM Annual Report of the Labour Department, 1960.

Changing local conditions meant the WNLA became increasingly effective in recruiting Malawians for the mines of South Africa during the 1950s. After the banning of tropical recruiting in 1913, experimental WNLA recruiting started in 1935 following the development of modern anti-pneumonia drugs and, perhaps not coincidentally, the marked increase in the dollar-value of gold after American devaluation.[115] WNLA recruitment was finalised in the 1938 Salisbury Agreement and became a permanent arrangement in December 1938. Central African labour became highly attractive to the Federated mines following the 1946 strikes across the Rand. WWII may explain low recruitment figures for the mid-1940s, with 22,000 enlisted in 1945,[116] but does not cover the gap between WNLA's expected and actual recruitment in the late 40s and early 50s. Crush and Jeeves recognise the demand for Central African labour from 1946, but explain away the 10 year delay in mass recruiting by stating that WNLA needed time to establish itself.[117] This is true to a degree, but in no way accounts for local economic conditions that were the key motivating factor for emigration. Between 1946 and 1956, WNLA officials consistently complained about the constraints imposed by existing quotas (pointing to more expansionary objectives) whilst at the same time often not filling the quotas that they had.

As laid out in Chapter 1 the instability of local independent production across Malawi during the 1950s, and the economic downturn in Zimbabwe, meant that emigration increased markedly. WNLA recruitment networks however were crucial in directing most of this upsurge in emigration towards South Africa - but only when local and regional economic conditions aligned did WNLA recruitment take off. These networks involved considerable capital investment in roads and runways, depots and district representatives, but also propaganda, which enjoyed notable success. Malawians after listening to WNLA radio

[115] Feinstein, *An Economic History of South Africa*, (Cambridge, 2005), p.94.
[116] McCracken, *History of Malawi*, p.257.
[117] Crush, Jeeves & Yudelman, *Labour Empire*, pp.45-46.

broadcasts in 1953 reflected that the "wireless with its news was so entertaining to the audience that even when the time for eating sounded everyone refused to leave the place of entertainment...[the broadcast] inspires everyone with the desire for a journey to come and work on the mines of Johannesburg..."[118] Radio broadcasts, film showings and Wenela merchandise complemented a growing consumer culture in Malawi, and meant mine recruitment was closely aligned with the notions of economic independence and being well-to-do.

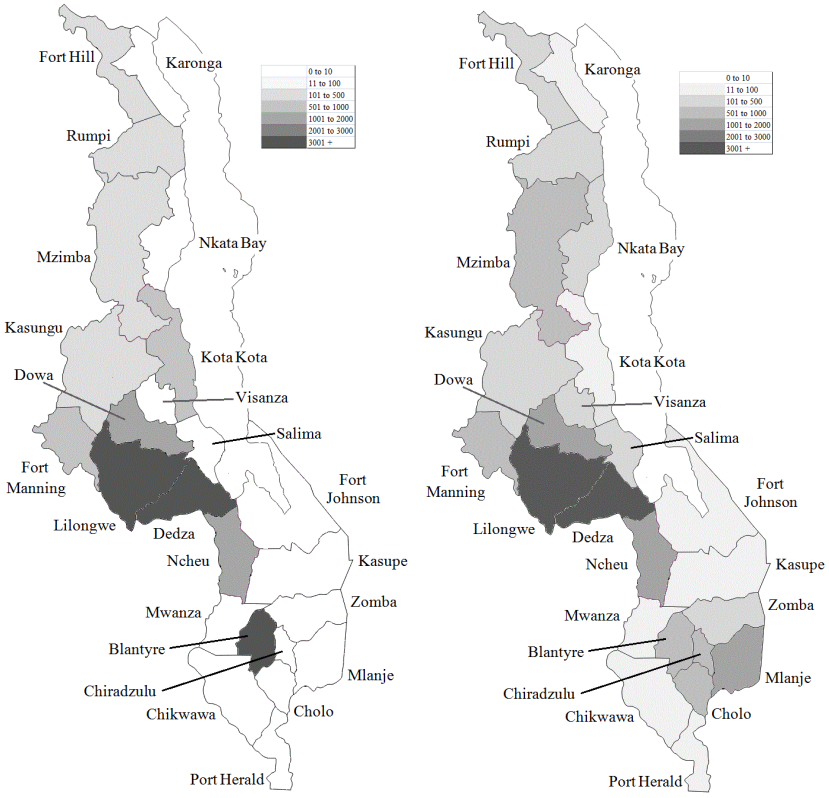

Figure 14: Numbers of Malawians recruited at WNLA depots and total number who officially migrated to South Africa in 1957. See Appendix II, Table 6.

As shown by figure 14, when there was local demand for recruitment, WNLA was effective at channelling labour towards the Rand mines, with patterns of those officially leaving for South Africa closely aligning with the numbers recruited at individual depots across Malawi.

[118] UJ WNLA 61/4 'Silvester Paliani Report', 31/03/1953.

WNLA appears to have been particularly effective at channelling emigration in the case of Dedza district, where recruiting operations were run by Major Ted Rickett. Rickett was first engaged as an Assistant Representative in November 1953,[119] and appears to have had an instant impact on recruitment once appointed to Dedza district. Between 1954 and 1957 Dedza increased its "intake of recruits from 2,768 to 4,205 - an increase of 51.8% over the 1954 figure...The population statistics for the district are 39,200 adult taxpayers of whom over 10,000 left the Dedza district last year for employment abroad. In 1956 it is estimated over 8,500 Africans left the District, of whom many left for two years or more. These figures speak for themselves..."[120] This may have been down Rickett's encouragement for a high number of repeat contracts,[121] but also reflects his popularity with recruits. On a tour to Johannesburg on behalf of WNLA in January and February 1957, "Mr Rickett's reception by the Nyasaland Natives was extremely good and became an ovation wherever Natives from the Dedza area predominated."[122] Dependent on propaganda, local conditions and a charismatic recruiter, emigration from Dedza to South Africa demonstrates that migration remained rooted in local conceptions of success, the local economy and local networks. As recognised by officials, the "increased popularity of WENELA [was] brought about by various factors, including the airlift, and by the closer touch with the native in his village by our representatives - a process which has been gradually built up since we commenced actively to recruit in 1951..."[123] In comparison for the Tumbuka and Tonga of northern

[119] UJ WNLA 30K/6 2 'Mr E.W. Rickett - Pension Fund', 02/04/1953. Thanks to D. Stuart-Mogg and G. Shepperson for their helpful suggestions.
[120] UJ WNLA 59L 7 'Nyasa Output', 17/06/1958.
[121] UJ WNLA 59L 6 'Extract from Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors', 05/06/1957.
[122] UJ WNLA 59L 6 'Mr E.W. Rickett: Visit to Witwatersrand and Orange Free State', 09/02/1957.
[123] UJ WNLA 59L 6 'Memorandum from the General Manager Tropical Areas Administration', 26/10/1956.

Malawi, local success remained rooted in independent migration and, as noted by Rickett in 1956, "Very few of these two tribes offer themselves for employment on the Gold Mines."[124]

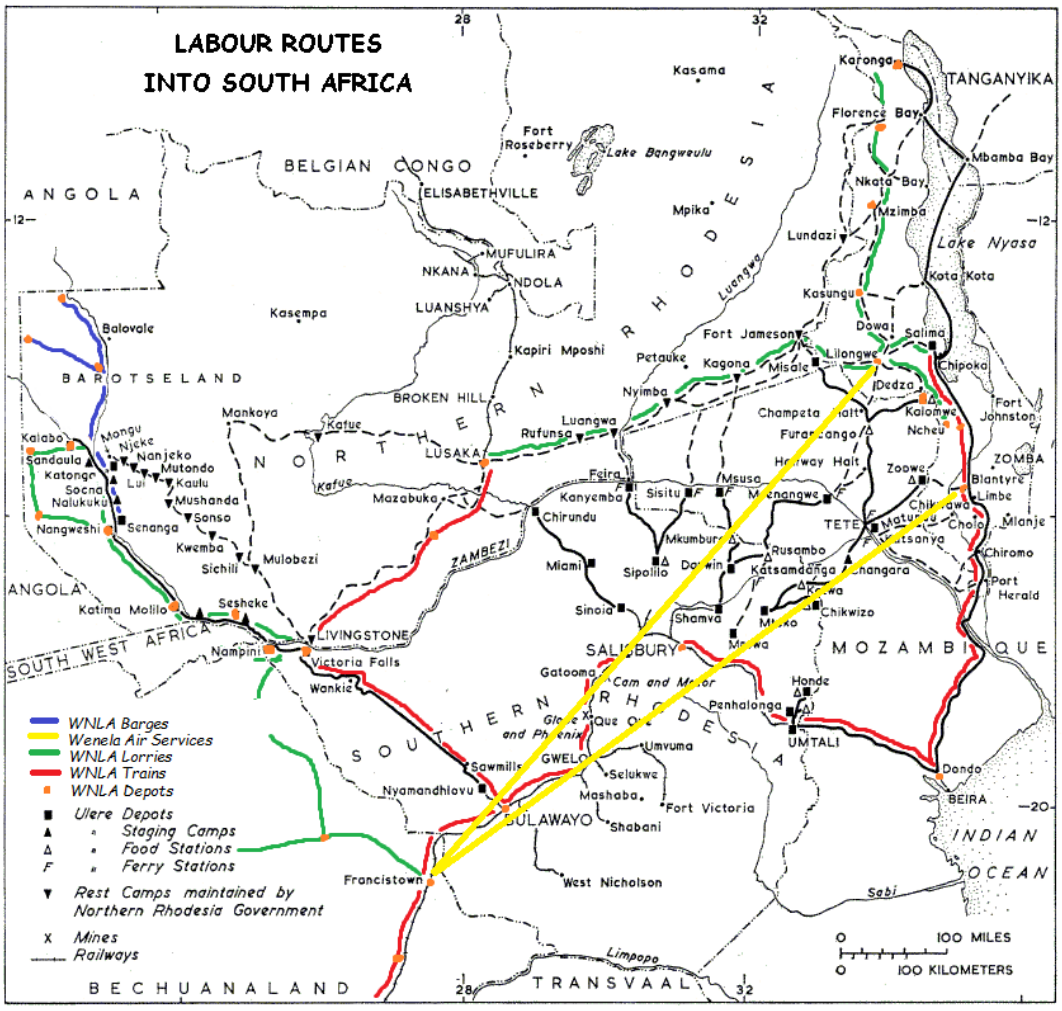

Figure 15: WNLA routes into South Africa in 1952, Mansell Prothero, 'Foreign Migrant Labour for South Africa', International Migration Review, Vol. 8, No. 3, (1974).

Nevertheless migration through WNLA involved considerably less hardship than independent migration, and from 1955 a degree of luxury - flying. In the years 1938 to 1955, WNLA recruits travelled by train from Blantyre to Francistown, the regional hub of WNLA's operations. Compared to the months involved in walking to South Africa the journey to South Africa took 8 days, with rests at Dondo, Umtali and Francistown. From Francistown migrants were distributed either to Mafeking or Johannesburg. WNLA Manager JA Gemill however

[124] UJ WNLA 59L/6 'Some notes on the customs and habits of Nyasaland natives employed on the gold mines of the Witwatersrand', 13/12/1956.

was keen to move towards the airlifting of recruits and in April 1951 WNLA made an experimental flight from Blantyre. Wenela Air Services began flying recruits en mass in three 28-seater Dakota DC-3s in July 1952,[125] but apart from the numerous recruits posing as Mozambicans or Tanzanians,[126] these were not Malawians. The Nyasaland Government's ties to guaranteeing the return on Nyasaland Railway shares[127] meant Malawian recruits had to be transported by railway until May 1955, when the Nyasaland Governor's permit finally allowed Malawian recruits the luxury of flying south to Francistown, on Africa's busiest air route.[128]

Female migrants similarly took advantage of Southern Africa's developing infrastructure. In comparison to even Zambia, the numbers of women officially heading to South Africa were negligible, as shown by figure 16. But if anything this meant that women were more likely to migrate independently. As noted by one constable on the South African border, "There are very many woman and children also coming into this country from Nyasaland, these left Nyasaland months ago, they say they are on their way to Johannesburg. I cannot do anything with these people. They say I cannot stop them from going..."[129] By the 1950s rural accumulation and improved transport networks allowed increasing numbers of women, such as Melrin Mtegha to travel by train to Johannesburg, even if on balance migration to South Africa remained a male-dominated phenomenon.

[125] UJ WNLA Unsorted, 'History of Wenela Air Services', *Teba Times*, No. 2, (1977).
[126] UJ WNLA 59L 5 'Tropical Areas Administration', 30/09/1954.
[127] Vail, 'The Making of an Imperial Slum: Nyasaland and her railways, 1895-1935, *JAH*, (1975).
[128] UJ WNLA 59L/5 'WNLA Tropical Areas Administration: Report on Results for 1954', 03/05/1955.
[129] NASA HKN 1/1/52 17N3/20/2 'Howard Tagwuireyi', 3/08/1948.

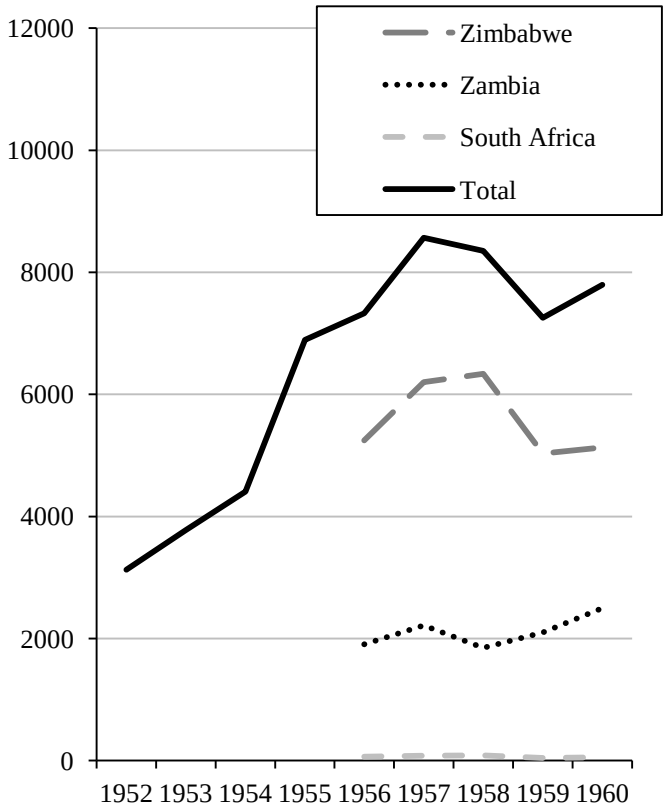

Figure 16: Women officially migrating from Malawi, 1952-1960. See Appendix II, Table 7.

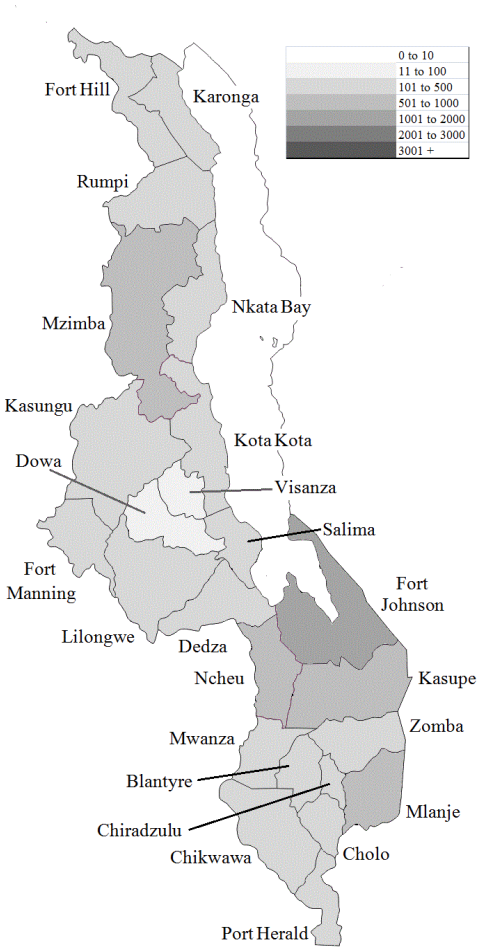

Figure 17: Women officially migrating from Malawi in 1958. See Appendix II, Table 8.

International migration from Malawi during the 1930s, 40s and 50s was not just about mine recruitment - indeed Malawians mostly found employment in areas other than the Federated mines of the Rand until the 1960s. By the late 1950s, due to local factors, emigration had become a Protector-wide phenomenon and biases in official flows towards South Africa are explained by WNLA networks. At the same time, independent migration was still prolific from north in particular, and accounts for a broader range of perspectives and employment opportunities. Numerous Malawians were employed in urban areas as clerks, domestic servants, chefs, policemen, gardeners, traders and religious leaders - or were not employed at

all and simply lived as housewives, as was the case for Melrin Mtegha. These Malawians were almost all independent migrants. Their lives in South Africa are addressed in Chapter 3.

Figure 18: Melrin Mtegha with her husband Daih in the 1990s

Melrin Mtegha was a housewife throughout her life, both in Usisya, Malawi and Johannesburg, South Africa. Travelling by train to the Union in 1952 with her two children, she brought up her young family in Daveyton, Johannesburg. Here she was supported by friends and family from Usisya, whilst her husband Daih worked as a hospital assistant in Cape Town. She returned to Malawi in 1959, so her children could attain a good education and to this day has considerable influence within local politics and the Jehovah's Witness community. Converted by her husband in 1958, she is now 86 and still involved with the Jehovah's Witness Women's Guild - "if you go and speak to her now she will preach, she will try and convert you."[130]

Chapter 3 - Nyasa Networks in Urban South Africa

Capital earned in South Africa was crucial to many Malawians maintaining economic independence and attaining social status. For most however these goals were not attainable in the Union itself, as the Apartheid state looked to confine foreign Africans to being workers on its mines and farms and define them in this employment as labour migrants. Though the Nyasaland Government complained of the number of *machona*, Malawians 'lost' to South Africa, most migrants returned to Malawi to invest their accumulated capital. Nyasa associations however did afford Malawians a degree of autonomy within urban South Africa - if only in a local and insular sense. Across Southern Africa during the colonial period, Malawians were known as Nyasalanders or Nyasas. Nyasa associations were in existence on the Rand from the 1920s, but these were not nationalist vanguards per se and, more often than not, appealed to Central Africa for a unifying identity. Instead it was only in South Africa's

[130] Interviews with Gilead Mtegha, Pretoria, 09/05/2014 & 10/06/2014. See Appendix I.

mines and colleges that Malawian nationalism had the space to flourish. Just as tribal affiliations among South African miners were emphasized through practices such as tribal dancing to ensure they retained an attachment to 'home',[131] so too were Malawians categorized as Nyasas, attributed with various characteristics and given weekly Nyasaland newspapers to read. Throughout the 1930s, 40s and 50s, the South African state looked to define Malawians in the Union as labour migrants who belonged on its mines and farms, not urban areas, but migrants through Nyasa and South African associations operated beyond such categorisation, attained independence of sorts, and reworked the idea of being a Nyasa in urban South Africa.

This chapter firstly argues that economic independence and social status from capital earned in the Union were most commonly attained in Malawi, not South Africa, especially from the mid-1950s. It secondly demonstrates that established urban communities and associations - Malawian, Central African and South African – did allow some Malawians to maintain a degree of economic independence and social status. The chapter closes by arguing that whilst the transnational links of Nyasa urban associations were limited, the mines provided an important space for the development and negotiation of a specifically Nyasa nationalist identity.

From the 1900s, Malawians were engaged throughout South Africa's labour market, and were disproportionately represented in well-paid occupations. As noted by one official in 1960, "the Nyasas work themselves into all the best jobs. I have heard this in the mines and outside of them too."[132] Prevalent on South Africa's mines and farms, Malawians were also disproportionately represented as clerks, domestic servants and hospital assistants in urban

[131] Malunga, 'Sports and ethnicism: Instruments of labour control at the Messina Copper Mines, 1920-1960', *Historia*, Vol. 45, No. 2, (2000).

[132] UJ WNLA 59L/8, 'Leisure activities of Nyasas'.

areas - indeed there was even a cohort who worked as clerks on South Africa's stock exchange during the 1960s.[133] These occupations were some of the best paid on the continent, and even farm labourers earned considerably more than they could in Malawi. As noted in 1945 whilst in "the Protectorate itself the average wage for unskilled labour is 8/- per ticket for 30 days. These rates are 'plus food and quarters in all cases'...The minimum wage on the Witwatersrand Gold Mines is...equal to 63/- per calendar month."[134] A number of Malawians had considerable assets in South Africa - Golden Nkandipa passed away in 1945 leaving £317.13.11[135] - and a lot of this capital was exported back to Malawi. Though far fewer Malawians were in South Africa, remittances from the Union far outstripped those from Zimbabwe - in 1952 Malawians in the Union remitted £300,504 in postal and money orders, compared to £165,111 from the Colony.[136] More money was brought in by migrants themselves and, as noted in Chapter 1, considerable volumes of capital goods were also imported.

This is not to say, however, that all Malawians attained economic independence or social status by working in South Africa. Many did not find green pastures, and this appears increasingly to have been the case in urban areas by the end of the 1950s. Further restrictive amendments to the Natives (Urban Areas) Act in 1955 meant that Malawians, in addition to needing written permission from the Secretary of Native Affairs to enter urban areas, could not renew existing permits for urban employment if they changed employers. Any employment south of the Orange River also became off-limits and these measures impacted Malawians across the social spectrum.[137] The relatively well-to-do A Banda, President of the Central Africa Native Improvement Association, was deported from Zululand Sugar Estates

[133] Interview with Walter Longwe, Johannesburg, 08/06/2014.
[134] UJ WNLA 59L/1 'Nyasaland Native Labour', 30/11/1945.
[135] NASA NTS 2538/299 'Estate late Foreign Native Golden Nkandipa', 17/02/1947.
[136] NLS 6.1311 Annual Report of the Labour Department, 1952.
[137] NASA SAP 18/18/35 'General Circular from the Department of External Affairs', 08/07/1955.

in 1953,[138] and his experience was replicated by thousands of Malawians who were squeezed out of Natal Sugar Estates. [139]

In conjunction with area restrictions, the Farm Labour Scheme was resurrected over the course of the 1950s. Though banned in 1949, it was partly re-introduced during 1952 and fully functioning from June 1954,[140] affecting urban Malawians in particular. James Musa Sadika, a Malawian herbalist in Johannesburg during the 1950s, was picked up by one of the South African Police 'ghost squads' in October 1958 and worked under appalling conditions in Heidelburg. When he was discovered in 1959 his conditions of work caused international outrage.[141] Whilst some such as Gerhardt Nyirenda, who was a boss boy on a Potgeitersrust farm from 1941 to 2005, thrived in such conditions, most did not.[142] "During 1957-58 199,312 African men were sent from jails to work on farms. All 165 jails in the Union are operating this scheme"[143] and as shown by figure 19, the 1955 Urban Areas amendment meant that thousands of Malawian urban workers by the end of the decade returned to Malawi in order to attain greater degree of economic independence, or fell off the records and became trapped in their places of work.[144] Whilst in 1951 there were 55,938 employed outside the federated mines, number had dropped to 23,608 by 1960.[145] Even if actual numbers did not fall by as much, these statistics capture the increasingly repressive conditions in South Africa.

[138] NASA NTS 525/326 'Central African Association: A Banda', 05/10/1953.
[139] NASA SAP 18/18/35 "Pass-Laws Crisis in Natal's Sugar Industry', *Cape Times*, 02/07/1953; NASA BTS 14/7/3/1 'Nyasaland Government Representation', 18/03/1957.
[140] First, *The Farm Labour Scandal*, (New Age Pamphlet, 1959), p.10.
[141] NA CO 1015/2049 Parliamentary Questions, 25/06/1959
[142] Interview with Gerhardt Nyirenda, Diepsloot West, 18/05/2014.
[143] First, *The Farm Labour Scandal*, p.16.
[144] UW AD1947 7.1 'No Holidays for Nyasas', *Star*, 08/10/1962.
[145] Crush, Williams & Perberdy, 'Migration in Southern Africa', *Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration*, (September 2005), p.3

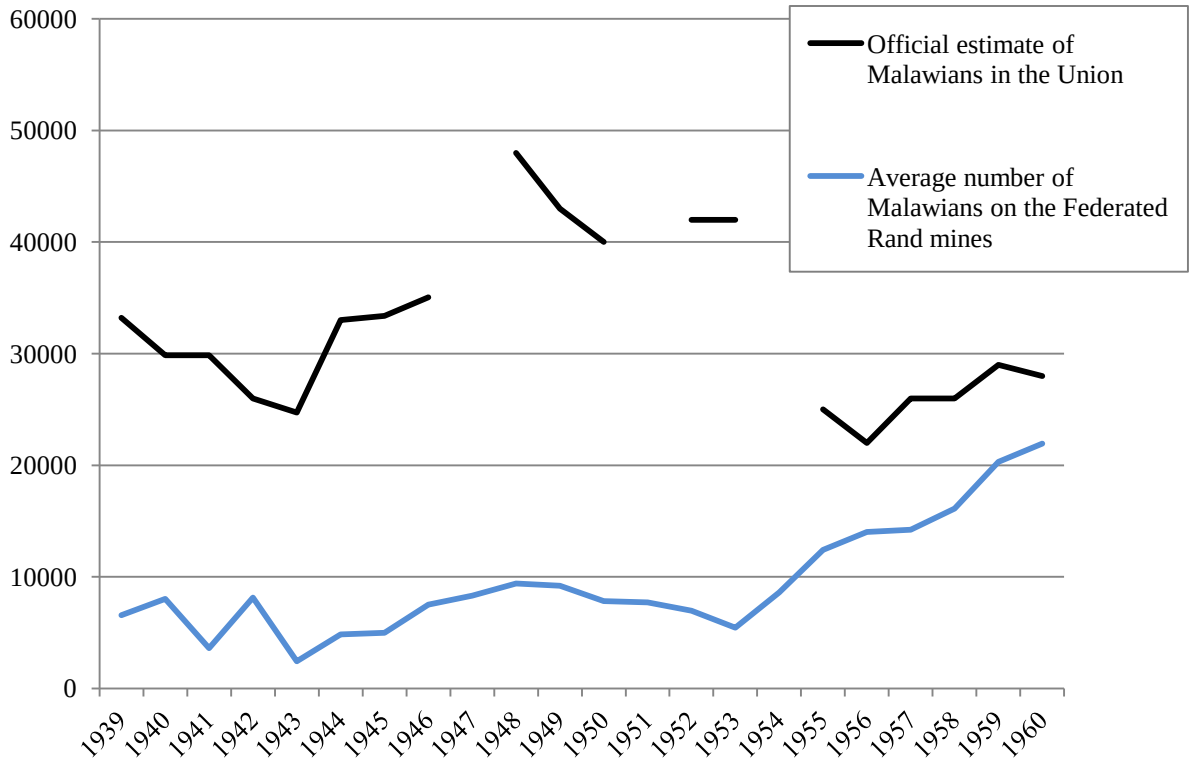

Figure 19: Estimated numbers of Malawians in South Africa. See Appendix II, Table 9.

With capitalist interests pushing immigrants towards South Africa's farming and mining sectors, numerous Malawian networks and associations provided essential support for migrants living and working in urban South Africa. Evidence of these associations comes from correspondence with the Native Affairs Department, and mostly concerns little more than official recognition. This recognition was never granted to any association, but this does indicate that associations had a high degree of independence from state frameworks. Importantly these associations represented a space in which Malawians organised themselves outside the South African state's categorisation of them as labour migrants who had no fixed place in urban South Africa.

The first Nyasa association established in South Africa was the Nyasaland African National Congress (NANC), founded in Johannesburg in 1920 by two Tonga, Anderson Chimbaza and

John Longwe. Officials at the Native Affairs Department hardly held the NANC in high regard, noting that though the

> Congress originally aspired to represent some 500 natives from British Nyasaland...I understand that the number who have actually joined and paid their subscriptions is probably less than one fifth of this number. I have met the Executive Committee of the Congress on several occasions. It is composed of men of poor education, indifferent attainments, and no forcefulness of character. The creation of the Congress is I think due to a spirit of emulation and a desire on the part of the organisers to earn their living by politics rather than manual labour...The organisation will probably dwindle and finally disappear.[146]

In contrast to this disparaging view, the executive was comprised of some very well respected Africans. Chimbaza was the son of a chief, and the original chairman Albert Ankhoma, a minister Apostolic Faith Church educated at Bandawe Training Institute (and a Tonga), had a reference in the prestigious *African Yearly Register* and a policy taken out with African Life Assurance Society Ltd.[147] Despite official expectations, the congress itself remained active, admittedly intermittently, until at least 1951, and offered support to Malawians who lived on the Reef. [148]

Though difficult to fully ascertain, the NANC does appear to have been a representative body for Malawians across urban South Africa. The NANC's correspondence with the Native Affairs Department was erratic; with no information on the Congress in the 1930s other than when Chimbaza applied for recognition in 1931 and 1936.[149] It is impossible to tell whether this represented the inactivity of the congress, or a high degree of independence from the South African state. Colonial officials took the former view, noting in 1947 that the congress had

> been semi-moribund for a number of years, and I do not think can be said to have any great support from the people it purports to represent...support wanes when subscriptions are asked

[146] NASA GG 28/416 'Objects and Activities of Nyasaland Native Congress', 10/01/1921.
[147] Skota, *African Yearly Register*,(Johannesburg, 1932); NASA KJB N1/3665/56 'Estate of Late Albert Ankhoma', 23/11/1956.
[148] NASA GG 50/1557 Untitled letter from Chimbaza requesting employment for Jameson, 27/01/1928.
[149]NASA NTS 7215 75/326 'Nyasaland Native National Congress', 31/03/1936; 'Nyasaland Native Congress', 12/01/1931.

> for, and though I think the leaders are, in many cases, sincere in trying to better the conditions of their less educated countrymen outside Nyasaland, little is achieved in this respect...[150]

Within African circles by the mid-1940s however, the congress was seen as representative of the Malawian community - in part to the detriment of its leaders, and it was during such moments that they looked to the South African state for assistance. In 1945 the congress was charged by the South African National Congress' 'Vigilance Committee' with dealing with a Northern Rhodesian called Thomas Kazembe who had run off with the wife of a Zulu, Joseph Kumalo.[151] Threatened with the repeat of a 'war' which in 1927 had seen a number of Nyasas hospitalised with stab wounds, the executive of the NANC were keen to see that Kazembe was properly punished, and in October 1945 a deputation of the NANC asked for his deportation. The congress certainly appears to have had links across South Africa, with the executive committee gaining permission in November 1948 to visit Malawians across the Union, including Clements and Robert Kadalie in Cape Town.[152] This may have been a regular practice before 1948 when General Smuts temporarily eased pass laws.[153]

Engaged with Malawians across South Africa, the congress was focused on providing support domestically and did not look beyond the borders of the Union for transnational linkages. When the NANC again applied for recognition in August 1947, President JR Gray Banda described the congress as "a political body looking after the interests of the Nyasaland Natives....to direct their social, intellectual and moral activities according to the laws of the Union Government....the Officials of the Congress are all subjects, or what we call detribalised Natives, who can understand well the Laws of the Land as they themselves are a part of it."[154] Throughout its existence in the 1920s, 30s and 40s, the executive consistently emphasized that they were South African as well as Nyasa, and orientated its activities

[150] NASA NTS 7263 375/326 'Nyasaland Native National Congress', 06/11/1947.
[151] NASA KJB 408 N1/14/3 'Re Joseph Kumalo & Thomas Kazembe', c. mid-1945.
[152] NASA KJB 408 N1/14/3 'Names and Districts of visits', 08/08/1948.
[153] Crush, Jeeves & Yudelman, *Labour Empire*, p.13.
[154] NASA NTS 7263 375/326 'Nyasaland Native National Congress', 30/08/1947.

towards issues affecting Nyasas specifically in the Union, not Southern and Central Africa.

Correspondence between the NANC and the Native Affairs Department terminated after Davidson Moyo, the Chairman and Secretary of the NANC, alleged in April 1951 that James G Mandah (possibly the same individual as JR Gray Banda), the President, was an "ardent communist" who put Malawians in danger with his political teachings.[155] Utilising the contemporary fears of white South Africans, Moyo may have been looking to oust Mandah as head of the congress. There is no evidence that James G Mandah was arrested for these allegations, but lack of correspondence after this date indicates either the collapse of an organisation whose existence relied on the agency of a limited number of individuals, or that the congress went underground. Either way these events point to the stringency of state restrictions on politically active Malawians, who were increasingly vulnerable to any political allegations.

Numerous other less well-documented Nyasa associations existed in South Africa,[156] but the one other Nyasa association with considerable coverage in the South African National Archives is the Nyasaland and Rhodesian Industrial Co-Operative (NRIC), founded in 1946. Davidson Moyo, the same man who must be seen as responsible for terminating the NANC's correspondence, proclaimed in its constitution, "As a founder I will see that my people get something to eat, from today I will be called Leader of Nations. I will lead the Nation in a proper way."[157] A member of the South African Native Military Corps from January 1941 to September 1943, Moyo was a hospital assistant on Village Reef mine in October 1945 and involved in the NANC from at least September 1945. Colonial officials took the view that "Mr Moyo is considered something of a fanatic and is labouring under the mistaken

[155] KJB 408 N1/14/3 'Transvaal Nyasaland African National Congress', 05/04/1951.
[156] See Appendix 3.
[157] NASA NTS 7263 377/326 *NRIC Constitution*, 27/09/1947.

conviction that he is the chosen leader of the Northern Territory Natives in the Union."[158] In 1947 he put himself forward as a judicial officer overseeing Malawians stating, "I know how to deal with Nyasaland people...this is the only thing how we can stop the trouble in Johannesburg of the whole Union of South Africa. I will deal with them according to my Native Custom and my National Secretary [James Kamanga] is also very clever."[159] Officials feared this was simply "a cloak to 'skin' his fellow countrymen."[160] With the apparent failure of the NRIC to garner any popular support, in his hunt for influence Davidson Moyo went on to become Chairman and Secretary of the NANC, and by June 1950 seems to have won the trust of officials who took the view "that he is quite harmless and not likely to become involved in any political agitation."[161] If anything however the relatively large amount of NRIC correspondence indicates Moyo's attempts to use the state as a means of gaining influence and legitimising his co-operative. As noted by a colonial official, the NRIC "was invented by himself and has not I think a very large membership..."[162] In comparison to the NRIC, the lack of correspondence from other associations may indicate relative strength in numbers and success.

In contrast to South African-based Nyasa associations, which appear to have collapsed by the 1950s under increasingly repressive urban conditions, Malawian church groups continued to grow in strength and would last into the 1980s and beyond. The Nyasaland Church of South Africa founded by Stephen Sanguwe had its first branch founded in 1924 in Krugersdorp, followed by branches in Reetfontein in 1929, Herringklop in 1938, Noseitgedogth in 1952 and Heckfort in 1960. Whilst in 1930 the church only had 30 members, by February 1947

[158] NASA KJB 410 N1/14/3 'Nyasaland ad Rhodesian Industrial Cooperative', 10/11/1947.
[159] NASA KJB 410 N1/14/3 'General Hertzog Promised', 27/09/1947. This presumably is the same James Kamanga who was in contact with NAC treasurer IM Lawrence in 1944. Lawrence was also in contact with Kadalie in the 1920s. Power, *Political Culture and Nationalism in Malawi: Building Kwacha*, (Rochester, 2010), pp.47 & 228.
[160] NASA NTS 7263 377/326 Untitled, 09/12/1947.
[161] KJB 408 N1/14/3 'The Transvaal Nyasaland African National Congress', 22/06/1950.
[162] KJB 408 N1/14/3 'Nyasaland & Rhodesian Industrial Co-operative', 06/11/1947.

membership totalled 335. In March 1952 the church's headquarters moved from Mata Street, Western Native Township to White City, Jabavu, perhaps a reflection of a growing congregation, which by 1980 had reached at least 3,071 adult members, and a further 6,374 below the age of 15.[163] Other, less formalised churches were certainly functioning on the Rand by the 1950s,[164] and just as in Malawi,[165] independent church groups provided an important space where migrants associated as Nyasas.

Despite George Shepperson's hopes that the NANC represented a form of "Irish nationalism" in South Africa,[166] this congress was Nyasa in form but not in substance. It was not nationalist, proved insular and never gained popular support. At the end of the 1940s both the NANC and the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) in Malawi were in remarkably similar positions as relatively elite organisations with limited support bases.[167] Yet whereas the NAC from 1950 went on to become a mass political party, the NANC faded into obscurity. This is perhaps telling of the colonial states that they existed in - whilst the Nyasaland state came under pressure from economic instability, growing civil unrest and Pan-African nationalist discourses, the South African state strengthened under Apartheid and windfall Golden Age economic growth.[168] Malawians were arguably most successful when they integrated within South African associations as South Africans. PT Nyambo, chairman of the Cape Town branch of the ANC, and Clements Kadalie, leader of South Africa's first trade union, the ICU in the 1920s, are early examples of this.[169] James G Mandah was also the secretary of the African Liquor, Catering, Domestic Servants, Hotel and Meat Worker's Union, which

[163] NASA DGO 196 P120/4/179.
[164] Interview with Boy Moyo, Sandton, 11/05/2014.
[165] Shepperson & Price, *Independent African.*
[166] Shepperson, 'External Factors'.
[167] Power, J., 'Building Relevance: The Blantyre Congress, 1953 to 1956', *JSAS*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (2002).
[168] Feinstein, *Economic History of South Africa*.
[169] Skota, *African Yearly Register.*

boasted 1000 members, a number far in excess of the NANC membership.[170] Similarly Malawian imams, Ysusuf Saidi and Abu Inad, were well known and respected within the Transvaal Muslim community,[171] and the oral histories of migrants point to association with a South African identity as much as a Malawian one.

After the Nyasaland African Congress was founded in Blantyre in 1944, President C Matinga travelled to Johannesburg to establish a branch in February 1945.[172] This branch had no correspondence with the South African state after this date and no apparent contact with NANC, but it is known that Matinga was refused a meeting with Dr Xuma, President of the ANC. Albert Mwezi Mhango and John Kamanga, the Johannesburg NAC delegation to the 1956 NAC Annual General Meeting in Blantyre were noted for their radical stance against the Federation, and Nyasaland officials listed the Johannesburg branch as a "stronghold" of the NAC in 1958.[173] Though it out-lasted the NANC and during the early 1950s provided key financial support for the NAC in Malawi, by 1961, the sums contributed to the NAC were little more than an average branch such as Dowa.[174] In contrast to its counterpart in Zimbabwe, the Johannesburg branch does not appear to have had transnational links with the ANC or been active enough to warrant its members being described as "militant African nationalist[s]" by the police.[175] The last two pieces of recorded evidence of Malawian political activity in this period come from 1959 and 1961, when the branch was accused of spreading the pamphlet *Freedom Dawn,* written by one Kenneth Kaunda, on the Rand mines,[176] and a document was "found in the compound of the Rustenburg Platinum Mine,

[170] NASA KJB 408 N1/14/3 'Proper recognition of the Congress by the Union government', 27/03/1950.
[171] Interview with Sakina Mohamed, Central Pretoria, 26/05/14; Interview with Rahima Makuyi, Durban, 07/06/2014. See Appendix 1.
[172] NASA KJB 408 N1/14/3 'Nyasaland African Congress', 22/02/1945.
[173] Power, *Political Culture*, p.79.
[174] McCracken, *History of Malawi*, p.369.
[175] Groves, 'Transnational Networks', p.164 & p.172.
[176] UJ WNLA 59L 7 'Freedom Dawn', 17/10/1959.

Ltd, showing the organisation in the Transvaal of the Malawi Congress Party."[177] Districts in Malawi with a "strong migrant tradition, constituted some of the most influential and popular branches of the NAC",[178] but arguably popular nationalist sentiments were developed in the space of the Rand mine compounds, rather than the restricted urban spaces of South Africa.

The experiences of intellectuals and elites abroad were crucial to the Nyasaland African Congress' success in the 1950s, and Fort Hare College in South Africa certainly provided an important space for Orton Chirwa, Harry Bwanausi and Manoah Chirwa who started the student paper, *The Nyasa* as a mouthpiece of the Nyasaland Students Association. They were joined at Fort Hare by leading future NAC members, Henry Chiperembe, Herbert Chitepo and Mangosuthu Buthelezi.[179] Flax Musopole, involved in the South African ANC, Communist Party and the 1952 Defiance Campaign, was similarly politicised by his time in South Africa,[180] and Hartwell Solomon returned from the Rand mines with "a fine line in Communist-sounding bombast."[181] But for the many tens of thousands of migrants who worked on the South African mines, and provided an important support base for the NAC in Malawi, nationalist sentiments are likely to have been fostered by mine propaganda, newspaper reading and travel across Southern Africa. Throughout the 1940s and 50s, the mines actively looked to create the identity of a Nyasa labour migrant, which was profiled in the pamphlet *Life on a Mine Compound,* and appears to have gained considerable traction with workers.

[177] UJ WNLA 59L 8 'Malawi Congress Party', 08/02/1961.
[178] Groves, 'Transnational Networks', p.160.
[179] Power, *Political Culture*, pp.110 & 232.
[180] Groves, 'Transnational Networks', p.162; McCracken, 'The Ambiguities of Nationalism: Flax Musopole and the Northern Factor in Malawian Politics, c. 1956-1966', *JSAS*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (2002).
[181] Power, 'Building Relevance: The Blantyre Congress, 1953 to 1956', *JSAS*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (2002).

Print capitalism, key to the spread of European nationalism during the 19th Century,[182] appeared in an ulterior form on the Rand. One official visiting the Rand in 1960 noted that "Nyasas are more interested in politics than any other tribe in South Africa...They are said to discuss eagerly every political move that takes place in the continent and to know the names of all the prominent leaders both white and black..."[183] These discussions were fostered by the ready availability of Bwalo la Nyasaland, Msimbi, The Bantu Mirro and the Information Department Bulletin - all supplied on a weekly or monthly basis to the mines, and Malawians were "the mine's keenest newspaper readers".[184] Officials put Malawians literacy in English at around 12% and in vernacular around 35%,[185] but "in any one room there is sure to be at least one man who can read and he reads aloud so that the rest can hear the news."[186] Travelling by train and plane would have also allowed Malawians to see and interact with the land of Nyasaland, and Southern Africa. Malawians were noted as "great visitors, often travelling long distances at weekends to see their friends on other mines,"[187] but the airlifting of tens of thousands on Africa's busiest air route, must have been the defining moment for Malawians allowing them to "see for themselves the forests, mountains and rivers of their Fatherland"[188] replicating models of German nationalism.

Categorised as Nyasas by WNLA, mining recruits appear to have affiliated with this identity whilst on the mines. Though they typically did not take part in martial displays of tribal dancing, archival evidence indicates Malawians did identify amongst themselves and demark themselves from other workers on the mines. The same official noted in 1960 Malawians "are strangers in a strange land and they feel strange...in everything they do they cling together

[182] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London, 1983), pp.44-45.
[183] UJ WNLA 59L/8, 'Leisure activities'.
[184] UJ WNLA 61/9 'Summary of replies from mines in regard to the continuance of the issue of native newspapers 'Bwalo lo Nyasaland', 'Msimbi', 'Baraza' and 'Lembuka" 05/02/1957.
[185] UJ WNLA 59L/8, 'Leisure activities'.
[186] UJ WNLA 59L/8, 'Leisure activities'.
[187] UJ WNLA 59L/8, 'Leisure activities'.
[188] Green, *Fatherlands*, (Cambridge, 2001), pp.295-296.

and keep themselves separate."[189] Malawians also displayed apparent solidarity when the almost inevitable brawls did break out. In one incident "...as a result of an assault upon a Nyasa by a Mosotho there had been demonstrations by all the Nyasaland Natives working on the Western Reefs Exploration and Development Company Limited."[190]

This sense of Nyasa nationalism was not shared by all, and Tonga in particular disassociated themselves from other Malawians. Recruits from Mlangeni complained that "on arrival in the Compound the Atonga clerks who receive them insult them and handle them very roughly... these people seem to discourage Nyasaland recruits by saying 'our home people do not come to the Union by Wenela and people coming under contract are fools, we Atonga work in Offices and get £9 per month, you Gomani people work underground for £3 and lose your limbs and eyes."[191] Considering "themselves superior to any other tribe of the British Nyasaland Protectorate",[192] the Tonga in particular appear to have retained a resilient independence even in the 1950s, adapting their long tradition of independent migration to new forms of transportation and retaining well-paid jobs within urban South Africa at the same time as most other Malawians were increasingly marginalised towards employment on the Rand mines or Transvaal farms.

Whilst urban associations in Zimbabwe provided an important space for the development of Nyasa nationalist movements, this does not appear to have been the case in South Africa, where associations were concerned with domestic issues and keeping in line with South African authorities. Urban conditions by the 1950s made this increasingly difficult and over the course of the decade numbers of Malawians in South Africa outside the mines dramatically curtailed. Urban spaces where migrants could politically engage with each other

[189] UJ WNLA 59L/8, 'Leisure activities'.
[190] UJ WNLA 59L/7 'Native Labour Position', 07/10/1959.
[191] UJ WNLA 59L/2 'Mlangeni District', 28/07/1947.
[192] UJ WNLA 59L/5 'BNP Recruiting: Atongas', 19/05/1954.

as Nyasas appear to have all but closed down by the late-1950s, and with them alternative views of how Malawians could live their lives in South Africa. In contrast, on the mines of the Rand ideas of Nyasa nationalism thrived, but this was integrated with the idea that Malawians could only be in South Africa as temporary labour migrants, not as economically independent and well-to-do individuals in their own right.

Figure 20: Yusuf Saidi in the 1960s

Islamically educated in Zanzibar during the 1940s, Yusuf Saidi left Mangochi District in the mid-1950s to bring his brother Ahmed back to Malawi. Yusuf did not visit Malawi again until 1987. Throughout his life "before anything he was a Muslim" and he was heavily involved with the Muslim community, as well as local Malawian networks, throughout his time in South Africa. Initially set up with a job at the Avalon Bioscope in Johannesburg, run by Muslim Indians who Ahmed knew, after a year Yusuf started a career as a muezzin at the Kerk Street Mosque. In the early 1960s he started work at the Marabastad Mosque, and would be based here for the rest of his life, becoming well known and loved as an imam and spiritual healer. Happily married and with 6 children, South Africa "was home for him and he was not going to go away."[193]

Conclusion

Over the course of the 1940s and 50s the space afforded to migrants in South Africa was dramatically closed down by the Apartheid state. Malawians played important roles in a number of South Africas' trade unions (such as the African Liquor, Catering, Domestic Servants, Hotel and Meat Worker's Union), the ANC, South Africa's Muslim community and within Christian circles - and oral histories afford a place for Malawians in the history of South Africa, both in the mines and off them; as Malawians and South Africans. But during this period notions of 'foreign migrants' and 'prohibited migrants' gained traction in important

[193] Interview with Sakina Mohamed, Central Pretoria, 26-05-14; Interview with Ismail Kalla, Laudium, Pretoria, 29-05-14; Interview with Rabia Kamdar, Central Johannesburg, 10-06-14. See Appendix 1.

ways. The political marginalisation of Kadalie for being a Nyasa,[194] and ANC's lack of transnational engagement point to an established precedent across South African urban society, but restrictions on Malawians appear to have become particularly stringent by the late-1950s. As the numbers of Malawians on the mines took off, so the numbers of Malawians in other urban areas contracted. In this sense the experiences of Malawians came to conform more closely to Apartheid models.

McCracken has made three points with regards to the experiences of Malawians abroad; that the experience "stimulated a sense of national consciousness",[195] that urban residence heightened "awareness of cultural diversity" with Chewa migrants carrying *Nyau* to Zimbabwe and Chewa intellectuals establishing an Achewa Improvement Society in Johannesburg in 1946,[196] and that "most migrants were acutely concerned with preserving their interests at home."[197] These cannot be refuted. But firstly, in addition to top down classification and common antipathy to pass laws, Nyasa nationalism was given substance by Nyasa newspapers, labelled wristbands and tribal dancing - migrants on the mines could not escape the fact that they were Nyasas, and largely seem to have identified with this. Secondly, cultural diversity if anything took on a form larger than the nation. Most 'Nyasa' associations identified with a larger Central Africa, and even the specifically Nyasaland African National Congress were lumped with addressing the misdeeds of Northern Rhodesians. This is an area for possible future research.[198]

Thirdly, the importance of local ties needs to be incorporated within the historiography of South Africa's mine recruitment. Malawians were motivated by the possibility of maintaining economic independence and differentiating themselves within local contexts. Narratives of

[194] Kadalie, *My Life*.
[195] McCracken, *History of Malawi*, p.232.
[196] McCracken, *History of Malawi*, p.233.
[197] McCracken, *History of Malawi*, p.234.
[198] See Appendix 3.

underdevelopment in Malawi have in turn led to Crush et al's view that the mines took "full advantage of sub-continental poverty and unemployment".[199] Unemployment was prevalent in Malawi in the late 1950s, but this was circumstantial and not a historic precedent. Up to this point most Malawians were engaged either in independent production or as tenant farmers, and when they did leave for South Africa, migrated independently of recruitment networks. Beyond colonial economies and governance, Malawians enjoyed independence in multiple overlapping forms in Colonial Malawi and the Union of South Africa. Samuel Phiri attended the independent Zambezi church in Tembisa; Sam Banda set up as a fish trader in Blantyre; Signal Phiri was a member of the Kerk Street Mosque; Melrin Mtegha was an influential proponent of the Watch Tower movement in Usisya; and imam Yusuf Saidi led a Malawian association in Marabastad. All were independent migrants in South Africa and - by engaging with the concepts of capitalism, Christianity, Islam, ethnicity and Malawian and South African nationalism - maintained their economic independence and became well-to-do.

[199] Crush, Jeeves & Yudelman, *Labour Empire*, p.xiii.

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(B)

Oral Evidence

Interview with Ronnie Banda, Yeoville, Johannesburg, 16/05/2014.

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Interview with Ismail Kalla, Laudium, Pretoria, 29/05/14.

Interview with Rabia Kamdar, Central Johannesburg, 10/06/14.

Interview with Walter Longwe & Weston Chirwa, Johannesburg, 08/06/2014.

Interview with Rahima Makuyi, Durban, 07/06/2014.

Interview with Mica Mbwe, Diepsloot West, 18/05/2014.

Interview with Sakina Mohamed, Central Pretoria, 26/05/14.

Interview with Boy Moyo, Sandton, Johannesburg, 11/05/2014.

Interviews with Gilead Mtegha, Pretoria, 09/05/2014 & 10/06/2014.

Interview with Soloman Mwale, Nathan Mwale & Kabawo Mwale, Tembisa, Johannesburg, 01/06/2014.

Interview with Gerhardt Nyirenda, Diepsloot West, 18/05/2014.

Interview with Janet Phiri, Joseph Prolius & Fred Prolius, Tembisa, Johannesburg, 28/05/2014.

Interview with Signal Phiri, Mulina Phiri & Hajira Phiri, Laudium, Pretoria, 30/05/2014.

Appendix I

Life Histories of Malawian Migrants

The following accounts lay out in more detail the life histories of two Malawians who emigrated to South Africa during the 1940s and 1950s. They have been selected as they offer a range of perspectives on the experience of migration. Further life histories can be found at independentafricans.wix.com

Sam Chatola Banda

Sam Banda, was a cosmopolitan hotelier and businessman. Travelling across Southern Africa he spoke numerous languages – Zulu, Xhosa, Portuguese, Afrikaans, Tswana, Pedi, along with English and Chitonga - which he picked up whilst working in the South African hotel industry - friends and family would always joke that his Chichewa, the national language of Malawi was relatively poor. Sam first arrived in South Africa in 1950, but left to Zimbabwe, in 1957, before returning to the Republic of South Africa in 1973. In 1982 Sam returned to Malawi to recover from illness, but passed away within a few months. His son Ronnie Banda, who was himself a miner in South Africa during the 1980s retold his father's life in May 2014.

Sam Banda was born in 1918, a Tonga from Chiperembe, Nkhata Bay. He did not tell Ronnie much about his parents but his father was probably a farmer. Sam was schooled at Bandawe Mission School and for that time "he was regarded as someone who had achieved everything as far as education is concerned." He finished school around 1938, and for the following 12 years took part in the local fishing industry on Lake Nyasa which provided "the livelihood of the people along the lakeshore"

He left for South Africa in 1950, "for greener pastures. Because by then there was very little that people could do in Malawi and with his education he was tempted to find greener pastures." Liasing with other ambitious young men, Sam walked as part of a large group from Nkhata Bay. "They would travel in a group of not less than 20 because you know the dangers along their route. Countries did not look [after animals] very well in terms of their game reserves - it was not as organised as it is today. They could travel in groups of not less than 20..." This group was led by experienced migrants – "within the group there were people who could direct them, who knew where they were going. And these could be hired, they could be paid." These "navigators, people who could direct them this is the way how to get to South Africa, the route...on their arrival they would pay them whatever, you know was agreed upon – they would travel for 3 months."

Each day “they would travel as far as they could, but when they were tired, when it was at night they could gather some firewood, burn up the firewood to scare off the wild animals and sit like a roundtable warming themselves up.” To ensure their safety they “used to have their kinds of rituals...the grouping which could come from Nkhata Bay, they were not only Tongas, you could have other people coming from other areas. You could have people coming from Mzimba, Tumbukas...you would pick up other tribes along the way...some could maybe slaughter goats; because this was their ration along the way some could go with live animals along the way...bearing in mind that this was a journey of three months, if they were tired they could slaughter live goats, sheep...”

After several months on the road, Sam Banda arrived in Cape Town, finding work as a waiter in a hotel. During this time he picked up a vast array of languages. “He enjoyed being a waiter by then you know given the country’s political situation by then...I think he enjoyed what he was doing.”

Sam Chatola Banda in the 1950s

Sam remained in Cape Town for 6 or 7 years. During this time he drew on the fashions of the “Scottish Empire” and purchased numerous suits. “He was very into suits...he liked his corporate attire...he liked also bow ties, and Wilson hats, with a feather on the side.” The ‘turn-up suit’ was his mainstay dress-code.

In 1957 Sam left South Africa to work in Zimbabwe. “He left Cape Town because he had information about Zimbabwe, when he compared the labour laws...even though they are under colonialism, people in Zimbabwe are far better than the local South Africans.” Travelling by train to Zimbabwe in 1957, Sam was initially employed as a clerk on the Wankie mines. After only a short stint as a clerk, Sam however got a new job in Bulawayo, working as a steward on the Rhodesian Rail network - his language skills a crucial qualification for this highly regarded job, and one that must have been relatively well paid as Sam went on to buy shares in Rhodesian Railways – “for me that indicates someone who understood, you know, the economy of Zimbabwe, and who understood economics at large.”

It was during this period of time that Sam met Ronnie’s mother, Fanny, 18 years his junior. Fanny’s parents were also Malawian. Fanny's father, Joseph Chiumya, from Usisya, Nkhata Bay, had worked as a coal miner at Wankie from the 1930s. The couple married in 1959, with Fanny remaining a housewife throughout her married life. Whilst Sam worked as a steward, the young Banda family lived in Shabalala, Bulawayo until 1968. Jane was born in 1962, followed by Ronnie, Alice in 1965, Sam in 1967 and Lameck in 1969.

At the age of 53, in 1971 Sam returned to Malawi to start “a new life” - drawing on his earnings and pension from the Rhodesian Railways. Though he was happy to retire, a further motivation was the threat that his adopted son, Moses, who could have been drafted into the Zimbabwe Bush War. On their return however the family fell foul of numerous unfortunate events. Whilst in South Africa and Zimbabwe, Sam had arranged for his cousin to build him a house in Blantyre. When he arrived in the city however this proved to be a shoddily

built, mud-brick dwelling in Zingwangwa – a place "which my father never liked". The Banda family soon relocated to a nice house elsewhere in Blantyre, but they were evicted after only a few weeks, as it transpired that the house actually belonged to a corrupt politician. Housing woes were coupled with an unsuccessful business. Returning to his old trade, Sam bought fish in Mangochi and transported it in his Land Rover to sell wholesale in Limbe. "This did not prove at all lucrative, and within a couple of months the business folded. He was not involved in politics, but fell foul of unfortunate circumstances... it was very difficult for him to prosper in that kind of business."

With the failure of his business and all his savings wiped, Sam returned to the South African hotel industry in 1973, travelling alone by bus via Zambia, Botswana, due to the conflict in Mozambique. He got a job in Berea, Pretoria at the Casa Mia Hotel, as a head waiter – due to his experience and communication skills. By the end of 1973 he had switched jobs to work at Germiston Lake. In 1982, Banda became very sick. Suffering from hyper-tension and a stroke, he decided to leave South Africa in 1982, to live with Fanny in Blantyre. He died the same year. Fanny lives in Blantyre to this day.

Despite his successful careers when abroad, his children lived relatively poorly and did not receive a good education. Ronnie however still sees his father's emigration as a good thing. "Sitting back and looking back at my father's adventures in life, I realise that the economy of Malawi is very small...there isn't much to do. And I realise that it was very difficult for a man to achieve his goals. When a man comes to South Africa a man can feed his family irrespective of the job that he is doing he can put food on the table...Unlike in Malawi, I don't even know if there is a middle class in Malawi, it is someone who is into politics....just being an average, having an average education it is very hard. My father's coming down to South Africa, it shaped who I am today and I thank him for that."

Interview with Ronnie Banda, at Khoisan Bar, Yeoville, Johannesburg. 16/05/2014

Yusuf Saidi

Yusuf Saidi was a "deeply religious" man. In May 2014 his daughter Sakina Mohamed recounted, "before anything he was a Muslim". Travelling to South Africa in the mid-1950s, Yusuf worked in numerous mosques across the Transvaal, starting as a muezzin in Kerk Street, Johannesburg before establishing himself a well-respected and well-loved muazin and imam in Marabastad from the 1960s. Also a spiritual healer and loving father, Yusuf spent his adult life in South Africa, only retuning once to Malawi in 1987. His life history was retold by his daughter Sakina Mohamed, grand-daughter Rabia Kamdar, fellow Marabastad Muslim Ismail Kallah and fellow Malawian Signal Phiri in May and June 2014.

Yusuf Saidi's travels through Southern Africa

Yusuf Said grew up in Salafi, Mangochi District, where his father was both a local chief and imam with three wives. Born in 1928, the youngest of his mother's six children "he was extremely spoilt." Though he was the first son of his mother, Sakina, his father already had another son, Ahmed, through his first wife. As Sakina was descended from royalty, and did not think it was her job to raise children "the third wife actually raised my father, and his siblings".

Yusuf's family was relatively well-to-do with numerous cows, chickens and goats. Yusuf "was educated islamically, because his father was a sheik, a mawlānā. Because he was the only son, he was then educated. My aunts were not educated, but my aunts married well - one was married to a doctor, another to a farmer, the other three were married to mawlānās, and they all had lots of children." After being educated at the local madrassa, Yusuf left to be schooled in Zanzibar. Though he didn't elaborate much about this period, he spoke Swahili fluently, and read Arabic very well. His daughter Sakina, though aware that Yusuf's father was descended from a Swahili mother and Arab-Swahili father, but could not elaborate any more on his childhood.

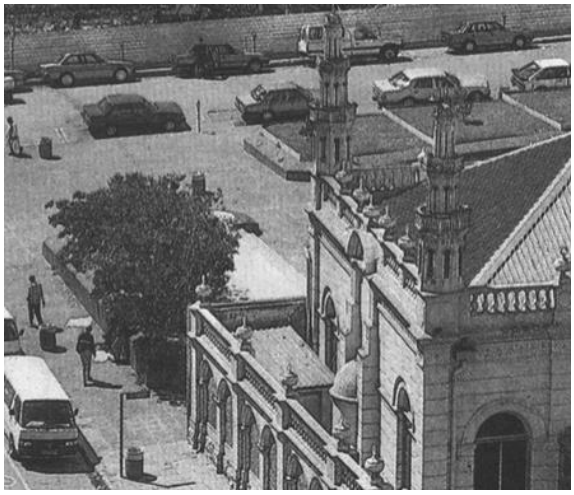
In the mid-1950s when Yusuf was 25, he was sent by his father to retrieve his brother Ahmed from South Africa. Not much is known about how Yusuf travelled south, but he certainly didn't walk. Travelling either by bus or truck through Blantyre and then on through Zimbabwe he passed relatives of his mother living in Messina, and then probably hitch-hiked from the north of South Africa south to Johannesburg.

Ahmed had been working in a mosque in Germiston for a number of years, and persuaded Yusuf to stay instead of returning to Malawi. Initially, he arranged a job for Yusuf at the Avalon Bioscope - a cinema in Fordsburg, Johannesburg run by Indian Muslims who Ahmed knew. With a number of relatives already there, South Africa was a more attractive place to live - "it was a better life, there were more opportunities..." From the 1940 through to the 1970, "Fordsburg was at the cutting edge of black urban culture. It was defined amongst much else by its anti-apartheid protest rallies at Red Square; its fish and chips and toasted steaks; its gangsters and romantic liaisons; its music, clubs and street fashions; and most prominently by its four bioscopes, off the street and within just a few blocks of one another."

The Avalon Bioscope, Fordsburg, Johannesburg

Yusuf spent a year working at the cinema, and it was during this time that he met Hawa, his future wife. Hawa was 15 at the time, a Ndebele and a Presbyterian. Hawa converted to Islam and the couple married in early 1956, the same year that Sakina was born. Yusuf did not insist that she converted to Islam, Hawa "became Muslim because she wanted to. My dad gave her the opportunity to opt out if she didn't want to be Muslim, but he would not have stayed with her if she was not Muslim because it was important for him.". Sakina recalled Hawa's "family had disowned her because she had married my dad."

After a year working at the cinema, Yusuf became a muezzin at the Kerk Street mosque in Johannesburg, taking the call to prayer and leading prayers. Within the Muslim community, Yusuf was known as Ismail Mohamed. In 1961 Yusuf working at the Queen's Street Mosque, and the family relocated to Pretoria. A number of years later, it was here that Yusuf met Signal Phiri, who remembered him as "a nice man".



The Kerk Street Mosque, Johannesburg

Most of his time in South Africa however was spent in Marabastad - for Sakina, "that's where we grew up." Yusuf's family lived within the precincts of the Marabastad mosque, which at the time was located in a coloured district alongside two other families. Ismail A Kalla who knew Yusuf during his time in Marabastad recalled he recited the call to prayer and led prayers five times a day. "He had a very good voice, he was very articulate in his Arabic prayers...He was a very well-rounded gentleman and he had a very pleasant personality...He was one of the leaders in the mosque, a leading personality." Very well read in the Quran and the Prophets "his Arabic pronunciations were very powerful...Everybody loved him." Other Malawians attended the Marabastad mosque "coming to prayer there were many who were working somewhere else. Within the mosque there one or two others, but he was a man of stature...leading personalities like him, they were few and far between, he was one of the outstanding personalities." Though working within a predominantly Indian mosque, there was "no problem among Muslims whether he is Black or White or Indian, there is no problem, there is no racialism. Many mosques you'll see many leading personalities are black and not Indian, and the Indians are in their hundreds - in one of the mosques near us we are the same."

As well as teaching at Marabastad, Yusuf taught in Eastrus, a coloured community in the 1970s and 1980s. This "was the first Islamic Schoool my father got the congregation to build. They built the mosque and then he said you need to build an Islamic school." Numerous people remembered Yusuf when Rabia went to pray there in 2014, "he taught at Earstrus for a long period of time - he left a legacy there."

Yusuf was also a spiritual healer. Rabia recalled, "he had a spiritual connection to another realm - people came from all different walks of life; Indian, Afrikaans who would come to him for healing." Sakina remembered "there was this one time there was this child who was having a seizure and his parents brought him. I was totally scared of him, and I saw my dad and this boy was fitting, there was foam coming out of his mouth, and my dad prayed and gave him a drink. I was thinking is it the water that calmed him down, or is it my dad? What is my dad?"

Yusuf Saidi in the 1980s

Attachment to his family meant that though a humaniatrian and a human rights activist, Yusuf did not get involved in politics - due to the risk of deportation and the fact that this would break his young family apart. Nevertheless Rabia remembered "he told me stories of how he burned his pass book." Living a successful life in South Africa, Yusuf did not return to Malawi until 1987. He did retain links with Malawi though. Yusuf was proud of his heritage - "there was no kind of hidden story about it - we knew our dad was Malawian and we were Malawians." "That gave us a sense of who we are - you are Africans, you have your roots in Africa, and that's who you are...He was an Africanist - in terms of helping Africans"

Throughout the year there would be numerous Malawian gatherings - "at different points people would have a fatija, or a just a gathering for prayer or zika, and people would come... When you came here it was like having a network that would help you set up, whether it's finding a job or having a place to stay for a couple of days, or if you were just passing through." Yusuf himself was a central figure in the local network supporting Malawians. "He would help people - their home it was a space where visitors were always welcome, and people would come and stay there." "On Sunday he would go to Mapobane, where there were a lot more Malawians there and they would sit and they would do all of the administrative stuff that they needed to do, or alternatively they would come to our house...because everyone congregated at our house, my dad dealt with a lot of things." Those staying at their home included "people from Mangochi, or even from other places like Dedza." To support this community Yusuf at the end of the 1960s "put together a structure and it was called the Malawian Association."

"The whole thing started because when someone died they would have to go to the Indian people and ask them to assist, and this was not right - because we all worked and we all could contribute." "They had to contribute every week, so if anything happened to anybody they would take money from there, and then they would assist. If there was a death, they would assist out of that money, if someone was sick and needed to go back to Malawi, that money would come from there. So there was a pool of money and if anyone was not in a job, or something like that they would then use money from there."

As a result of both Yusuf and Hawa's jobs "we were OK, and so my father had a lot of cars - my father liked cars - so I think that the people thought he was buying cars with that money." In 1980 "there was a fall out - and he said take your money, take your things, I don't have to do this, I really am not doing this for me, I'm doing this for us...When my dad stopped doing it the whole thing disintegrated"

Yusuf also kept in touch with his five sisters back in Malawi -"he maintained links because there were letters that were passed through." Yusuf would often send money back to Mangochi and his children "had to send all our clothes to Malawi...a whole lot of people would come from time to time and they would take stuff." In the 1980s, Yusuf also sent his daughters Sakina and Hatija to Malawi for a year so they could learn about their heritage and how to keep a home.

Yusuf lived a very successful life, going for Haj in the late 1980s and continuing to work at the Marabastad mosque until his retirement in 2000. He gave an excellent foundation for his family in South Africa - "position and status are tied to your parents, not so much in terms of wealth, but morality...Moral beliefs play a big role."Sakina nevertheless reflected that, "I don't think it was easy...I think my father held his own because he was very eloquent and read very well, and because he understood human nature he was able to have a good standing within the Indian community but also within any community... a lot of the people in my generation were taught by him." After Yusuf retired in 2000, he lived in the mosque precinct until 2004, when he relocated across the road when the mosque was rebuilt in 2004. Yusuf passed away in 2005.

Interviews with Sakina Mohamed, 26-05-14, Ismail Kalla, 29-05-14 and Rabia Kamdar, 10-06-14

Appendix II

Statistical Tables

Table 1: Official flows of male emigrants from each district in Malawi, 1939, 1949 and 1959, Annual Reports of the Labour Department, for the Years ending 31st December 1939 to 31st December 1959, (Zomba: Government Printer)

	1939	**1949**	**1959**
Southern Province			
Zomba (& Domasi)	1068	1203	4055
Kasupe (Liwonde)	1149	649	2418
Fort Johnson	1217	1574	3129
Blantyre (& Mwanza)	2006	1614	3589
Chiradzulu	1531	1616	4274
Cholo	1396	704	3998
Mlanje	2532	2431	6471
Chikwawa	585		1550
Port Herald	2732	2255	2731
Total	14216	12046	32215
Central Province			
Kusungu	1314	858	1060
Kota Kota	2297	1589	1602
Dowa	4300	1669	4519
Lilongwe	4154	1835	9818
Fort Manning	1323	534	1820
Dedza	3058	4347	7066
Ncheu	3081	3051	4197
Total	19527	13883	30082
Northern Province			
Karonga	665	1140	1417
Nkata Bay (Chinteche)	1694	1382	1313
Mzimba	3685	3951	3267
Total	6044	6473	5997
Protectorate Total	39787	32402	68294

Table 2: Official flow of male Malawians abroad, 1935-1967, from the Annual Reports of the Labour Department, for the Years ending 31st December 1939 to 31st December 1960, (Zomba: Government Printer).

	1928*	**1929***	**1930***	**1931***	**1932***	**1933***	**1934***	**1935***	**1936**	**1937❖**	**1938❖**	**1939**	**1940❖**	**1941❖**	**1942***	**1943***	**1944***	**1945**	**1946**	**1947**
South Africa												7517	17533	19792	2642	5264	5901	7144	7637	10066
Zimbabwe	22030	23503	25223	16868	11426	26061	43967	37502	29868	42598	33577	30061	19291	27046	19443	26119	30620	30586	25650	23991
Zambia												1295	1600	1561	1402	1354	1309	1167	1263	1204
Others												911	500	1288	373	258	369	387	602	443
Total												39787	38924	49687	23860	32995	38199	39284	35152	35704

Table 2 (continued)

	1948	**1949**	**1950**	**1951**	**1952**	**1953**	**1954**	**1955**	**1956**	**1957**	**1958**	**1959**	**1960**	**1961†**	**1962†**	**1963†**	**1964†**	**1965†**	**1966†**
South Africa	9936	8848	9988	9307	8819	7526	10772	14023	15516	18045	19615	22022	28611	34405	21865	31488	31935	39314	28087
Zimbabwe	22362	21984	20279	30235	41289	39975	45797	46072	50760	49248	44863	40252	36424	28947	25929	26019	24654	21838	13426
Zambia	1294	1198	1584	2882	2971	3555	5595	5624	5638	6671	3961	5155	7448	8537	7126	5151	4440	171	63
Others	328	372	230	277	392	1742	217	467	390	382	506	865	1022	1022		769	715	2287	970
Total	33920	32402	32081	42701	53471	52798	62381	66186	72304	74346	68945	68294	73505	72911	54920	63427	61744	63610	42546

*Figures from R.R. Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire, Volume II*, Oxford University Press, (1949).
❖Figures from Southern Rhodesia estimates, quoted in Labour Department Reports
†Figures from J. Gregory & E. Mandala, 'Discussions of Conflict, Emigrant Labour from Colonial Malawi and Zambia, 1900-1945', in D. Cordell & J. Gregory, *African Population and Capitalism*, Westview Press, (1987).

Table 3: Official migrations flows from Malawi, to South Africa, to Zimbabwe, and to Zambia respectively in 1939, from the Annual Report of the Labour Department, for the Year ending 31st December 1939, (Zomba: Government Printer).

	South Africa	Zimbabwe	Zambia
North Province			
Karonga	251	200	196
Mzimba	494	2845	327
Chinteche	233	1183	209
Kota Kota	430	1771	57
Kasungu	356	853	104
Dowa	210	4067	16
Lilongwe	908	3237	5
Dedza	939	2082	33
Ncheu	1503	1502	55
Fort Manning	314	871	138
	1140	18611	5638
Southern Province			
Fort Johnson	37	1017	39
Liwonde	327	768	20
Zomba	140	880	29
Chiradzulu	132	1348	10
Blantyre	741	1171	21
Cholo	281	1050	24
Chikwawa	4	574	2
Mlanje	178	2291	6
Port Herald	39	2351	4
	1879	11450	155

Table 4: Official migrations flows from Malawi, in total, to South Africa, to Zimbabwe, and to Zambia respectively in 1960, from the Annual Report of the Labour Department, for the Year ending 31st December 1960, (Zomba: Government Printer).

	South Africa	Zimbabwe	Zambia
North Province			
Karonga	2	60	1470
Fort Hill		22	739
Nkata Bay	43	424	832
Mzimba	631	1109	970
Rumpi	233	123	540
	909	1738	4551
Central Province			
Kasungu	372	178	325
Kota Kota	90	240	168
Visanza	935	363	49

Dowa	1935	945	47
Salima	673	1276	41
Lilongwe	7087	3113	137
Fort Manning	1007	388	386
Dedza	6047	3415	140
Ncheu	2659	1874	280
	20805	11792	1573
Southern Province			
Zomba	599	2459	122
Kasupe (& Balaka)	341	3500	152
Fort Johnson	125	2589	653
Blantyre	1123	1843	134
Mwanza	27	422	9
Chiradzulu	685	2780	67
Cholo	1598	2262	84
Mlanje	2353	3973	64
Chikwawa	34	881	6
Port Herald	12	2185	33
	6897	22894	1324

Table 5: Estimated flows to South Africa, from the Annual Reports of the Labour Department, for the Years ending 31st December 1939 to 31st December 1960, (Zomba: Government Printer) and WNLA records, UJ.

	1939	**1940**	**1941**	**1942**	**1943**	**1944**	**1945**	**1946**	**1947**	**1948**	**1949**
(1) Official flow to South Africa	7,517	17,533	19,792	2,642	5,264	5,901	7,144	7,637	10,066	9,936	8,848
(2) Malawians engaged by WNLA in Johannesburg		9563	8,053				5485	6056	10043	10093	8422
(3)Official flow minus WNLA (=1-2)		7,970	11,739			5,901	1,659	1,581	23		426
(4)Estimations of clandestine entry from Labour Department	14,000	14,000	12,000			12,500	13,000	14,000	20,000*		
(5) Estimated independent flow to South Africa (=3+4)		21,970	23,739			18,401	14,659	15,581	20,023		

	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
(1) Official flow to South Africa	9,988	9,307	8,819	7,526	10,772	14,023	15,516	18,045	19,615	22,022	28,611
(2) Malawians engaged by WNLA in Johannesburg		8549	6958	7303	10211	12555	13948	15889	18008	19986	25715
(3)Official flow minus WNLA (=1-2)		758	1,861	223	561	1,468	1,568	2,156	1,607	2,036	2,896
(4)Estimations of clandestine entry from Labour Department			12,183[†]								
(5) Estimated independent flow to South Africa (=3+4)			10322								

*Ruth First put numbers at 20,000 in 1947; Pinnock, *Writing Left: Ruth First and radical South African journalism in the 1950s*, (Rhodes Univ. PhD. thesis, 1992), p.101

[†]An estimated 25% of those officially travelling to Zimbabwe clandestinely entered South Africa in 1952.

Table 6: Numbers of Malawians recruited at WNLA depots and total number who officially migrated to South Africa in 1957, from the Annual Report of the Labour Department, for the Year ending 31st December 1960, (Zomba: Government Printer) and WNLA records, UJ

	Official Flow to South Africa	Number recruited by WNLA
North Province		
Karonga	62	
Fort Hill	149	204
Nkata Bay	129	
Mzimba	613	319
Rumpi	243	214
	1196	
Central Province		
Kasungu	363	340
Kota Kota	93	535
Visanza	449	
Dowa	1009	1273
Salima	362	
Lilongwe	3711	3387
Fort Manning	699	623
Dedza	4476	4181
Ncheu	1556	1317
	12718	
Southern Province		
Zomba	228	
Kasupe	92	
Fort Johnson	65	
Blantyre	564	3601
Mwanza	22	
Chiradzulu	595	
Cholo	906	
Mlanje	1606	
Chikwawa	35	
Port Herald	18	
	4131	
Total	18045	3601

Table 7: Women officially migrating from Malawi, 1952-1960, from the Annual Reports of the Labour Department, for the Years ending 31st December 1952 to 31st December 1960, (Zomba: Government Printer)

	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
Zimbabwe					5245	6201	6338	5029	5129
Zambia					1903	2214	1850	2099	2496
South Africa					66	78	87	43	52
Other					114	74	77	82	117
Total	3128	3779	4405	6891	7328	8567	8352	7253	7794

Table 8: Women officially migrating from Malawi in 1958, the Annual Report of the Labour Department, for the Year ending 31st December 1958, (Zomba: Government Printer)

1958	Zimbabwe	Zambia	South Africa	Other	Total
North Province					
Karonga	28	238	1	2	269
Fort Hill	6	154		1	161
Nkata Bay	145	298	42	8	493
Mzimba	191	302	8	3	504
Rumpi	34	161		3	198
Central Province					
Kasungu	122	67		2	191
Kota Kota	98	46	4	1	149
Visanza	31	4	1	1	37
Dowa	69	13	2	1	85
Salima	140	28	1		169
Lilongwe	160	25			185
Fort Manning	164	108		1	273
Dedza	370	23	1		394
Ncheu	437	60	2	8	507
Southern Province					
Zomba	370	66	4		440
Kasupe	561	34	3	4	602
Fort Johnson	1336	146	6	6	1494
Blantyre	421	26	1	15	463
Mwanza	102	2	2		106
Chiradzulu	280	11	2	1	294
Cholo	257	10	2	4	273
Mlanje	546	15	3	11	575
Chikwawa	133	5		4	142
Port Herald	337	8	2	1	348
					8352

Table 9: Estimated numbers of Malawians in South Africa, from J. Crush, A. Jeeves & D. Yudelman (eds.), South Africa's Labour Empire. A History of Black Migrancy to the Gold Mines, (Oxford, 1991), and WNLA Records, UJ.

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
Official estimate	33214	29855	29855	26000	24733	33028	33400	35060		48000	43000
Average number on the Federated mines	6563	8037	3621	8145	2438	4829	4973	7521	8304	9403	9196

	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
Official estimate	40000		42000	42000		25000	22000	26000	26000	29000	28000
Average number on the Federated mines	7831	7717	6971	5456	8595	12407	14035	14227	16129	20314	21934

Appendix III

Central African Associations in South Africa

Political vulnerability in the context of the South African state manifested itself in a plethora of Central African associations in the 1930s and 1940s. As officials reflected in November 1947, the Nyasaland African National Congress was just "one of several, which have sprung up amongst Northern Territory natives in the Transvaal."[200] The fact that numerous Nyasaland and Rhodesian associations were in operation probably reflects the difficulty in communicating beyond a limited local sphere and the need to appeal to a broader demographic. The Nyasaland, East Africa and Rhodesian Helping Hand Society, active during the early 1930s, was led by three Malawians; President Saulos Roseberg a Native Detective in the Criminal Investigation Department, Secretary Shadrack Chitembe who was employed in Boksburg by the Central News Agency and Treasurer James Phiri, a domestic servant in Germiston.[201] During the late 1930s, the Nyasaland and Rhodesian National Congress was led by JK Mahemane - a Tonga minister of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa - and held intermitant meetings to "talk of our living...[as most] of our people are only wasting their time and money...[and to put] my country men in better life or thought."[202] In January 1946 the Nyasaland and Central African Association was founded by Face Nyirenda,[203] followed by the formation of the Nyasaland and Rhodesia United Association in January 1949 by McDonald Manda.[204] Obviously functioning with elected committees, the lack of documentary evidence on these organisations points pessimistically to their relative obscurity, or more positively to their high degree of independence.

Where Malawian associations enjoyed documented popularity, they were organised locally in South Africa or had common local roots in Malawi. The Central African Native Improvement Association, founded in June 1952, with the object of promoting "the general welfare of natives from Nyasaland and Northern and Southern Rhodesia, who might be employed in the Cape Province in particular...[had a membership] in the neighbourhood 500 natives mostly from Nyasaland who are employed with Messrs Crammix (Pty) Ltd, Brick Fields at Brackenfel."[205] The Nyasaland Dowa Benefit Society founded in October 1940 by Johannes Maeko boasted 389 members in October 1945. Though one of the few associations with membership numbering in the hundreds, the society also demonstrated the vulnerability of such associations to individuals, with the President Ephraim Banda coming under accusations of maladministration in 1945.[206] Oral evidence also points to numerous Malawians burial societies, which provided a space for migrants to support each other, that were popular and locally organised.

[200] NASA NTS 7263 375/326 'Nyasaland Native National Congress', 06/11/1947.
[201] NASA NTS 7219 95/326
[202] UW AD 843 Pb7.5
[203] NASA NTS 2757 313/326
[204] NASA NTS 7265 405/326
[205] NASA NTS 7275 525/326.
[206] NASA KJB 440 2/10/7/73.

Malawians arguably achieved greater success politically by integrating across territorial lines. Apart from the NANC and the Nyasaland Dowa Benefit Society, all appealed to a Central African, rather than specifically Nyasa identity, replicating solidarity between congress movements in Central Africa.[207] Indeed within the demands of a different context they went further, for though Central African congresses were much talked about in Central Africa, they did not materialise. In comparison they were founded in numerous guises in South Africa. These point to alternative affiliations, perhaps only made obsolete in Malawi itself by the strength of Rhodesian settler nationalism.

[207] Groves, 'Transnational Networks'.