

CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION

By " BWANAUSI. "

Historical.

About 1922, there was a suggestion to link up Northern and Southern Rhodesia, but the settlers in Southern Rhodesia turned it down because the union was to be at the expense of Southern Rhodesia.

In 1938, the question of amalgamating the three territories, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland came up again, and a Royal Commission under Lord Bledisloe was sent to "consult" the people of Central Africa.

In Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, where the Commission spent most of the time, the Africans objected to the idea of linking up with Southern Rhodesia, in view of the fact that the interests of the Africans in the Northern Territories were paramount, and Southern Rhodesia was a so-called white man's land.

The Commission found that amalgamation was not practicable in view of the disparity in the policies of the three territories towards the African, and also due to the disparity in the constitutional development of the three territories. The Commission found that some sort of closer association was desirable, and so recommended the formation of the Central African Council, which Southern Rhodesia did all she could to make unworkable.

Birth of Congress.

In 1944 the Nyasaland African Congress was formed and was registered as a political party. The Northern Rhodesia African Congress was born more or less at the same time.

The Governments of the two countries instituted District, Provincial and Protectorate (in Nyasaland) and African Representative Councils (in Northern Rhodesia) as counters to these two Congresses.

Constitutional Development

During the same year, history was made in Northern Rhodesia in that two Africans sat in the Legislature for the first time and in the following year two Africans sat in the Nyasaland Legislature.

These developments disturbed the white minority of Southern Rhodesia. They felt that this step would make the Africans of Southern Rhodesia clamour for more rights than they had hitherto enjoyed.

In 1948, Sir Godfrey Huggins and Mr. Roy Welensky decided to call a meeting at the Victoria Falls to discuss Federation. At that time the Labour Government in Britain was doing more for the political set up of the Northern Territories, and the delegates to the Falls Conference, at which Conference Africa was conspicuous by his

absence, it was decided that to put an end to the advance of the African in the North, Federation was the only tool. They called upon Britain to call a conference to discuss the matter in full.

Then came the second Falls Conference at which Britain insisted that Africa be represented. At this Conference the four African representatives voiced their objections to the scheme, and their objections were so good that Huggins asked the conference to exclude these Africans who knew only one word—No. Mr. James Griffiths said he would walk out if the Africans walked out. In the minutes of the proceedings, in spite of the fact that the Africans voted against the plan for federation, it was recorded that voting was unanimous.

Then the Africans of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia decided that it was absolutely useless to attend these conferences if their objections were not going to be recorded. (This answers Mr. Selope Thema's question in the Bantu World why the Africans refused to attend these conferences.)

The authorities decided that the next conference in London, had to be attended by Africans. To divide the people the Nyasaland Government chose some men from the Protectorate Council and sent them to London. These did not want to go for reasons stated above, but they were assured that they were going there as "observers."

When in London the Colonial Secretary told them that they were not "observers" but delegates, they chose to defy his ruling that they attend the conference. At the same time, a delegation of the Congresses of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland was conducting a violent campaign against the Central African Federation. The Nyasaland delegation was led by O. T. Chirwa, B.A.

Features of the Federal Constitution.

1. The draft constitution of the Federation provides for 35 members of the house of assembly, allocated thus:—

Southern Rhodesia	...	17
Northern Rhodesia	...	11
Nyasaland	7

(of which 6 were to be Africans, two nominated by the Governor of each country).

From the outset you see that Nyasaland, which has the largest population, gets the least number of seats.

2. The Federal Government will have control, among other things, of Telecommunication, Transport and Immigration.

3. Federal legislation will override all territorial legislation.

4. The original draft proposed an African Affairs Board to look after African interests. This has now in the later draft been abolished. Instead there is to be a select committee of Parliament to look after African interests.

At present the African in Nyasaland enjoys the privilege of being in control of radio-telephone and telegraph services both in the operational and servicing aspects. He is the postal clerk, post master etc.

In Transport he enjoys the monopoly of driving railway engines, of examining the tickets and of being a guard.

These have to go when Federation comes.

Immigration is of vital importance. The Federation will swamp these countries with many whites and so drive the African to the tsetse-fly belts of these parts of Africa. His land will have to go. The Chief will no longer control the land, in favour of his people.

Above all, the African's aspiration to determine his own affairs in a self-governing country will be vitally threatened by Federation. This is the crux of the problem.

The African in Southern Rhodesia used to have a paper protection from legislative that would adversely affect him. Now under the Federation, even this protection, which has never been exercised, has been done away with.

The visit of the Colonial Minister, Mr. Hopkinson, did a lot to unite Africans of Central Africa. He was very arrogant, and further he said that there were many Africans who favoured Federation. This angered every African. A significant consequence of the visit was that the Governor of Nyasaland cabled to London saying that there was intimidation, or else the people would gladly accept the federal idea. The first reaction came from the Chiefs, who decided to have their own meeting, not a government sponsored one, at Lilongwe, where they passed eleven resolutions condemning the Minister of State and the Nyasaland Government. The conference of chiefs decided to send a deputation to the Queen to protest against this obnoxious idea. In London the delegates of this mission were snubbed and this made them see a new light in that it was the Congress that was fighting for their rights and they decided to join hands, and thus the Supreme Council of Nyasaland Chiefs and the people was formed to co-ordinate and direct the action of the people.

Chiefs in Northern Rhodesia have also been very active, and have not let their people down. And so begins an era of struggle in Central Africa.

Book Review:

MUSIC AND IDEAS

A New Approach

By W. B. NGAKANE.

Rarely are books on music written for the ordinary reader and with some other object than the exposition of its technique and structural forms. Here, however, within this compact little volume and within the limit of little more than a hundred pages, Mr. Finkelstein departs from the old beaten paths and views it from an entirely different perspective. The orthodox writer of music deals with its historical development, its technique and its structural forms. On the other hand, Mr. Finkelstein writes about music as a vehicle for expressing ideas, an explosive force which, while growing out of and with the people, giving pleasurable satisfaction to their aesthetic sense, nevertheless interprets their ideas of the status quo and their dissatisfaction with it.

Tracing the development of music from that of primitive man, the author of this book goes to great pains to demonstrate that at every stage, its forms were adequate to the needs of the people. Among primitive people a single melodic phrase repeated endlessly, sufficed as a song, for its purpose, apart from the satisfaction of the aesthetic sense, was to control the forces of nature with which they contended all their life. "It was a means for organising the tribe's collective labour in real activities such as hunting, sowing, and the beginning of an attempt to understand nature. There were rituals for hunting, war, sowing, harvest, festive initiation of the young into adulthood, and ceremonies over the burial of the dead. Each had its own dance and song." Two types of music are characteristic: ritual music at this stage, distinct but tending to combine, one based on pitch