Language English
French
German
Italian
Spanish

B. Elements of Nonviolent Resistance to Colonialism in Africa after 1945 **[1]**

Various struggles for self-determination are included elsewhere in the book. This chapter is primarily dedicated to the anti-colonial struggles which took place in Africa after India had become independent. Movements in British colonies were often influenced by the Indian example, and had contact with Indian leaders. The fact that Britain had in principle indicated willingness to dismantle its empire also created a context relatively favourable to nonviolent struggle (compared for example to Portugal, ruled internally by a dictatorship and committed – until the 1974 internal revolution – to keeping its colonies). However, until brought under pressure from popular movements Britain expected to grant independence in stages, gradually increasing African representation in government. Moreover, where there were large numbers of white settlers, there was counter-pressure to enshrine white dominance. The process of decolonization was, therefore, by no means always smooth. Britain responded to the (limited) anti-settler violence in the Mau Mau rebellion of the 1950s with ruthless military force and detained over 70,000 suspects in appalling conditions.

The nature of African resistance to colonial policies varied between countries, even within the British imperial sphere. In Uganda, for example, the traditional ruler of Baganda, Kabaka Mutsea II, was deported for leading opposition to British plans for an East African federation. In Tanganyika, however, a modernizing nationalist movement was created by TANU, supported by up to a million members and with an extensive network of local organizations and youth and women's groups. Because of British government responses to events in neighbouring countries, TANU, led by Julius Nyerere, did not need to launch a major independence struggle. It won all but one seat in the 1960 elections and Tanganyika became independent in 1961. There was however earlier peasant resistance in the 1940s-50s to attempts at agricultural reform, land seizures and local government reorganization. See:

- , Mountain Farmers: Moral Economics of Land and Agricultural Development in Arusha and Meru *[2]* Oxford, Nairobi and Berkeley, James Currey, Mkuku na Nyota and University of California Press, , 1997 , Chapter 11.

For useful brief surveys of decolonization see:

Birmingham, David, The Decolonisation of Africa *[3]*, London, UCL Press, 1995, pp. 109

Charts the processes of nationalism, liberation and independence in the various countries of Africa between 1922, when self-government was restored to Egypt, and 1994, when a non-racial democracy was established in South Africa.

Hargreaves, John, Decolonization in Africa *[4]*, [1988], London, Longman, 1996, pp. 298

There was a lively debate in Africa about the case for violence or nonviolence and some movements chose predominantly nonviolent tactics. There was also a close link between anti-colonialism and resistance to apartheid in South Africa, where Gandhi's influence was still significant (see section E.I.1).

Kaunda, KennethMorris, Colin, On Violence *[5]*, London, Collins, 1980, pp. 184

Kaunda, President of Zambia and an advocate of nonviolence, wrestles with problems of violence and nonviolence, giving his reasons for ultimately accepting the case for armed struggle in neighbouring Zimbabwe.

A survey of the debates and of some of the movements can be found in:

Sutherland, Bill ; Meyer, Matt, Guns and Gandhi in Africa: Pan African Insights on Nonviolence and Armed Struggle and Liberation in Africa *[6]*, Trenton NJ, Africa World Press, 2000, pp. 279

Reflects range of views of those actively involved in the anti-colonial struggle and resistance.

See also:

Maciej J. Bartkowski, Recovering Nonviolent History: Civil Resistance in Liberation Struggles *[7]*, (A. 1.b. Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements [8]), contains accounts of the role of nonviolent action in anti-colonial struggles in Africa – Algeria, Ghana, Mozambique, and Zambia – and also in Bangladesh.

B. 1. Central Africa to 1964 [9]

The Central African Federation, embracing Nyasaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, was created in 1953, and its chief architect, Roy Welensky, was Prime Minister until 1963. Africans feared that this move was intended to cement the permanent dominance of the 250,000 white settlers in Southern Rhodesia (Africans were to be allotted only one third of the seats in the new Federal Assembly) and bitterly opposed federation from the outset. Further concessions to the white settlers by the British, such as the promise in 1957 not to amend Federal Acts, and the 1958 Electoral Act ensuring white supremacy, together with rumours that the Federation would be granted Dominion status, prompted major unrest in Nyasaland. But British governments became increasingly uneasy after 1959 about imposing white rule in the face of African resistance and settler repression. Malawi and Zambia gained their right to secede and become independent African states in 1964.

In Southern Rhodesia there was also an upsurge of mass politics in the 1940s-50s, intensified in 1960-61, including strikes, marches and rural resistance to destocking policies. See:

- , African politics in twentieth-century Southern Rhodesia *[10]* In Ranger, Terence O., Aspects of Central African History *[11]* London, Heinemann, , 19681968, pp. 210-245 pp. 210-45.

However, Zimbabwean leaders looked to British government intervention and tried compromise policies until the banning of the African National Congress in 1959. Its successors, the National Democratic Party, and subsequently the Zimbabwe African People's Union, both led by Joshua Nkomo, were banned in 1961 and 1962 respectively. A more militant breakaway party, the Zimbabwe African National Union was formed in 1963 under Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe. After the intransigent white government of Ian Smith declared unilateral independence from Britain in November 1965, and the British Labour government failed to quell the rebellion, both ZAPU and ZANU resorted to bitter guerrilla warfare (ZAPU assisted by independent Zambia). The two parties came together as the Patriotic Front, under pressure from the Frontline states, to negotiate with Ian Smith's regime in 1979, but split up again before the national elections in 1980, when Robert Mugabe became the first President.

Alport, Baron Charles Ja, The Sudden Assignment *[12]*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1965, pp. 255

Alport was appointed High Commisioner to the Federation from 1961-63, and gives an official British perspective on these contentious years.

Rotberg, Robert I, The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia: 1873-1964 *[13]*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1967, pp. 360

Chapter 8 'Discovering their voice: the formation of national political movements' (pp. 179-213) goes up to 1948; chapter 10 'The Federal dream and African reality' (pp. 253-302) charts growing resistance from 1953; and chapter 11 traces 'The triumph of nationalism' (pp. 303-16). Gives some detail on protests and indexes 'non-violent resistance'. Includes detailed bibliography.

Wood, J.R.T., The Welensky Papers: A History of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland *[14]*, Durban, Graham Publishing, 1983, pp. 1329

Account based on Welensky's perspective, stressing top level negotiations and relations with successive British colonial secretaries.

B. 1.a. Malawi (Nyasaland) [15]

The Nyasaland African Congress, led by Dr. Hastings Banda, launched in 1958 a major campaign of nonviolent resistance, including tax refusal, against the Central African Federation, prompting fears among white settlers and repressive measures by the Federal government: 1300 Africans were detained and 51 killed. The British government appointed the Devlin Commission to look into the situation. Devlin (*Report of the Nyasaland Commission of Enquiry*, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 16 July 1959, pp. 147) criticised the police state measures and reported majority African opposition to Federation. His report led to the Monckton Commission, set up in July 1959, to review the Federation, signalling its likely demise.

Baker, Colin, State of Emergency: Crisis in Central Africa, Nyasaland, 1959-1960 *[16]*, London, Tauris Academic Studies, 1997, pp. 299

Brock, Guy Clutton, Dawn in Nyasaland: The Test Case in Africa *[17]*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1959, pp. 192

Clutton Brock, a member of the African National Congress, worked with a village cooperative in Southern Rhodesia. Puts the political and economic case against the Federation, justifying strikes and 'disorderly conduct' in Nyasaland, because 20 years of constitutional tactics had been unsuccessful. Chronology of political events in Nyasaland from 1859 (coming of Livingstone) to proposed conference on constitution of Federation in 1960.

Short, Philip, Banda *[18]*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, pp. 357

Biography of Hastings Banda, a central figure in Malawi's independence struggle who later became his country's increasingly autocratic president. Banda's role in the struggle against the Federation is covered pp. 55-172.

See also:

J.R.T. Wood, The Welensky Papers: A History of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland *[14]*, (B. 1. Central Africa to 1964 [19]), (esp. ch, 22 on the Nyasaland emergency, ch. 27 on the Monckton Report, and ch. 34 on 'The right to secede' and the 1962 decision on Nyasaland).

Robert I. Rotberg, The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia: 1873-1964 *[13]*, (B. 1. Central Africa to 1964 [19])

B. 1.b. Zambia (Northern Rhodesia) [20]

There had been signs of resistance to white rule from the 1930s, notably growing trade union activism in the copper belt. The campaign for an end to the Central African Federation (and later for independence) included strikes, boycotts of racist shops and of beer halls imposing a colour bar, sit-ins and political noncooperation, which took place periodically from 1953 until independence. Women were prominent in the boycott campaigns. The use of nonviolent methods was influenced by Kenneth Kaunda, who emerged as the main leader of the independence struggle. Kaunda admired Gandhi and developed his own version of 'positive action', although many of those taking part in the struggle did not accept nonviolence in principle and dealt harshly with those who did not join the resistance. There was also extensive sabotage of government property during the 1961 civil disobedience campaign.

Colson, Elizabeth, The Social Consequences of Resettlement: The Impact of the Kariba Resettlement Upon the Gwembo Tonga *[21]*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1971, pp. 288

The mass displacement caused by the Kariba Dam was a central issue for the pro-independence movement, despite the problems of organising resistance in the affected areas. Pioneer study of what is now called 'development-induced displacement'.

Hall, Richard, Zambia 1890-1964: The Colonial Period *[22]*, London, Longman, 1976, pp. 202

Chapter 3, 'Colonialism and the roots of African nationalism' covers early copperbelt strikes; chapter 4 'Federation – genesis and exodus', includes extensive information on developing resistance to the colour bar, to the building of the Kariba dam and eviction of local farmers, and to the Federation itself. Chapter 5 'The creation of Zambia' examines final stages of resistance and political developments. His earlier book, Zambia, Pall Mall Press, 1965, pp. 375, also covered the evolving struggle in chapters 5-7.

Kaunda, Kenneth, Zambia Shall Be Free *[23]*, London, Heinemann, 1962, pp. 202

Macpherson, Fergus, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia: The Times and the Man *[24]*, Lusaka, Oxford University Press, 1974, pp. 478

Makasa, Kapasa, Zambia's March to Political Freedom *[25]*, 2nd edition, Nairobi, Heinemann, 1985, pp. 199

(Originally published as March to Political Freedom, 1981).

Personal account by an activist prominent in the independence struggle of political events from the 1940s to 1963.

Momba, Jotham C. ; Gadsden, Fay, Zambia: Nonviolent Strategies Against Colonialism, 1900s–1960s *[26]*, In Bartkowski, Recovering Nonviolent History: Civil Resistance in Liberation Struggles *[7]* (A. 1.b. Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements [27]), Boulder CO, Lynne Rienner, pp. 71-88

Mwangilwa, Goodwin B., Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula: A Biography of the Old Lion of Zambia *[28]*, Lusaka, Multimedia Publications, 1982, pp. 157

Nkumbula was the first major exponent from the 1940s of African resistance to white dominance and federation, and led the Northern Rhodesian African National Congress. But in the late 1950s he moved towards gradual reform policies and stood for a seat in the 1959 elections, whilst Kapepwe and Kaunda opted for further resistance and founded their own separate party.

See also:

J.R.T. Wood, The Welensky Papers: A History of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland *[14]*, (B. 1. Central Africa to 1964 [19])
Robert I. Rotberg, The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia: 1873-1964 *[13]*, (B. 1. Central Africa to 1964 [19])
Baron Charles Ja Alport, The Sudden Assignment *[12]*, (B. 1. Central Africa to 1964 [19])
Theodore Olson, The World Peace Brigade: Vision and Failure *[29]*, (A. 5. Nonviolent Intervention and Accompaniment [30])

B. 2. Ghana (Gold Coast) to 1957 [31]

Ghana was the first African country south of the Sahara to gain its independence from colonialism. Small steps towards African representation had begun in the 1920s, and under the post-World War II constitution African parties were allowed to contest elections. The British generally favoured cooperation with traditional chiefs and a small intellectual elite until there arose a nationalist movement drawing support from the urban population, and led by Kwame Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party he founded in 1949. Nkrumah was imprisoned after protests in 1950, won the 1951 elections from jail, and was soon after released and became the country's prime minister in the transition period leading to independence in 1957. Nkrumah's concept of nonviolent 'positive action' was one element in the political processes which led to early independence, though its significance is disputed by some historians.

Agbodeka, Francis, African Politics and British Policy in the Gold Coast, 1868-1960: A Study in the Forms and Forces of Protest *[32]*, London, Longman, 1971, pp. 206

Austin, Dennis, Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960 *[33]*, [1964], London, Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 459

Regarded as classic account of this period.

Israel, Adrienne M., Ex-Servicemen at the Crossroads: Protest and Politics in Post-War Ghana *[34]*, Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 30, issue 2, 1992, pp. 359-368

A trigger incident in 1948 was when armed police opened fire on an ex-servicemen's march about unpaid benefits, killing three.

James, C.I.R., Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution *[35]*, London, Alison and Busby, 1977, pp. 227

Frequent references to strikes and nonviolent resistance. See especially ch. 7, 'Positive action'.

Nkrumah, Kwame, The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah *[36]*, Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson, 1957, pp. 310

Especially chapters 10 and 11.

Padmore, George, The Gold Coast Revolution: The Struggle of an African People from Slavery to Freedom *[37]*, London, Dobson, 1953, pp. 272

By leading Pan African activist and close associate of Nkrumah. Chapter 5 covers the 1950 Positive Action campaign.

Presbey, Gail, Ghana: Nonviolent Resistance in the Independence Movement, 1890s–1950s *[38]*, In Bartkowski, Recovering Nonviolent History: Civil Resistance in Liberation Struggles *[7]* (A. 1.b. Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements [27]) , Ch. 3, Boulder CO, Lynne Rienner, pp. 51-69

See also:

William Robert Miller, Nonviolence: A Christian Interpretation *[39]*, (A. 1.b. Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements [8]), chapter 19

B. 3. Kenya to 1963 [40]

A large white settler population occupying much of the best land made the transition to independence in Kenya more bitter than in other East African countries. African opposition to white rule began to emerge in Kikuyu political organizations in the 1920s. Jomo Kenyatta became leader in 1928 of the Kikuyu Central Association, which started in the 1930s to represent Africans more generally until banned in 1940. After the war the British began to allow very limited African representation on the legislative council and then the Governor's Executive Council, but settler resistance encouraged African support for the new Kenyan African National Union, which agitated on issues of representation, land and racial discrimination. The Mau Mau violent uprising began in 1952 and continued until 1956, and the British government imposed an emergency until 1959, during which Kenyatta and other Kikuyu leaders were detained (although they denied direct involvement with Mau Mau) along with 70,000 others. The shock of Mau Mau and revelations about deaths and ill treatment in the camps speeded up transfer of power to Africans, despite problems caused by the settlers and by divisions between African parties. Kenya achieved

independence in December 1963.

There were nonviolent protests before independence. A major nonviolent rural campaign involving a mass march on Nairobi was waged in 1938 by the Wakamba (supported by some other tribal groups) against colonial soil erosion policies, which meant economically disastrous enforced destocking. The leaders were arrested. See:

- Gadsden, Notes on the Kamba destocking controversy of 1938 *[41]* (B. 3. Kenya to 1963 [40]) .

There were also frequent strikes, including the 1947 Mombasa dock strike and general strikes in Mombasa and Nairobi, and there was a debate about 'positive action' versus violent resistance.

Arnold, Guy, Kenyatta and the Politics of Kenya *[42]*, London, Dent, 1974, pp. 226

Study of the political figure who was central to the struggle for independence from 1928 and became head of Kenya's first African government.

Bennett, George ; Smith, Alison, Kenya: from "White Man's Country" to Kenyatta's state 1945-1963 *[43]*, In , History of East Africa *[44]* Oxford, Clarendon Press, , 1976, London, Clarendon Press, pp. 109-156

Summary of developing African opposition, including early 'passive resistance' and land protests, attempts at unionization, and links with the East African Indian National Congress, as well as role of Mau Mau.

Clayton, Anthony ; Savage, Donald C., Government and Labour in Kenya, 1895-1963 *[45]*, London, Frank Cass, 1974, pp. 481

Gadsden, Fay, Notes on the Kamba destocking controversy of 1938 *[41]*, International Journal of African Historical Studies, Vol. 7, issue 4, 1974, pp. 681-687

Kenyatta, Jomo, Suffering Without Bitterness: The Founding of the Kenya Nation *[46]*, Nairobi, East Africa Publishing House, 1968, pp. 348

Mboya, Tom, Freedom and After *[47]*, London, Deutsch, 1963, pp. 288

Mboya was a union leader and prominent in Kenya's independence struggle. His book also covers negotiations with Britain.

Odinga, Oginga, Not Yet Uhuru *[48]*, [1967], London, Heinemann, 1984, pp. 323

Autobiography of a nationalist leader, a rival of Mboya, who in the mid-1960s left the ruling Kenyan African National Union because he disagreed with land resettlement and economic policies, and argued for greater socialism. Includes references to 1938 destocking campaign and to strikes.

B. 4. Nigeria to 1960 [49]

The British accepted the principle of African representation through direct election to the legislative council as early as 1922, though on a strictly limited franchise. Signs of African resistance also date back to the 1920s. Significant protests by women against colonial rule took place in 1929, when a local demonstration against a proposed tax sparked a mass movement of tax resistance and a longer term mobilization of women. The trade unions also engaged in politically directed strikes, notably in 1945, and continued to agitate until 1950. In the first years after the war Nigerian politics were more turbulent than in Ghana, but the Administration acted to pre-empt further trouble by proposing a review of the post-war constitution to grant Nigerians a much greater political role. The need for radical action faded as new political opportunities became available. Instead, negotiating an agreement between diverse regions of Nigeria became a central issue. Nigeria became independent in 1960.

Ananaba, Wogu, The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria *[50]*, London, C. Hurst, 1969, pp. 336

Chapter 7 covers the 1945 general strike.

Brown, Carolyn A., 'We Were All Slaves': African Miners, Culture and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery *[51]*, Portsmouth, Oxford and Cape Town, Heinemann, James Currey and David Philip, 2002, pp. 354

Part 2 is on major miners' strike organized by the militant Zikist movement. The movement became associated with riots and an assassination attempt and was banned in April 1950.

Isichei, Elizabeth, A History of Nigeria *[52]*, London, Longman, 1983, pp. 517

Ch. 17 'Colonialism rejected' (pp. 396-412) examines workers' and women's protests and growing nationalism from the 1920s to 1950.

Nba, Nina Emma, Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965 *[53]*, Berkeley CA, University of California Institute of International Studies, 1982, pp. 344

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