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PROFILE
of
COLIN CAMERON BL, NP
Retired Hon. Consul to the Republic of Malawi in Scotland
and
Former Cabinet Minister in the Malawi Government
re
His connections and experiences in and with Malawi
6th July, 1957 - 6th July, 2017

Colin Cameron, born Lanark, Scotland, on 24th August, 1933, educated at Uddingston Grammar School, Dux and Head Boy, 1950; graduated Solicitor at University of Glasgow, in May, 1957. Called up for National Service 1951 to 1953. Commissioned Lieutenant in Royal Army Service Corps. After National Service completed three years Territorial Service in Territorial Army Service as was required by law then, and served as a Platoon Commander in the Beach Brigade in Glasgow.

18.06.57

Married Alison Spittal - Registered General Nurse, Glasgow Royal Infirmary and State Registered Midwife, Eastern District Hospital, Glasgow.

06.07.57

Left Scotland for Malawi (then Nyasaland), and spent honeymoon on SS Braemar Castle to Beira in Mozambique.

Both thoroughly disillusioned by apartheid regime as experienced by them in Cape Town, East London and Durban.

08.08.57

Arrived by train at Limbe, Malawi, from Beira.

Settled into a four year contract as a Solicitor and Legal Practitioner with a private legal firm, Messrs. Wilson & Morgan in Blantyre.

Alison commenced work, on a voluntary basis as a Midwife with the then Church of Scotland Mission Hospital at Blantyre. On the opening of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and closure of the Mission Hospital Alison went with the Malawi women to the new hospital to give them support and reassurance as it was a federal service. She continued to serve as a voluntary nurse there during her stay in Blantyre.

Colin began voluntary teaching English at the local African Night School on the Mission under the Headmastership of Edwin Chibambo (husband of Rose). He also shared in the setting up of the Nyasaland Youth Hostel Organisation along with Willie Chokani and the Rev. Tom Colvin. He also became Scout Master at the Chichiri Coloured School at Blantyre.

Both became unhappy with (a) the apartheid practices in all walks of life in the then British Protectorate and (b) the effects of the imposition of the Federation with the then Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia by Britain on Nyasaland against the wishes of the local people.

Colin began taking an active interest in and support of the Nyasaland African Congress then led by TDT Banda, and this was prior to the return of Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda.

06.07.58

Took part, along with David Rubadiri, in the welcome for Dr. Banda on his return to his native land at Chileka Airport, Blantyre. Thereafter on Dr. Banda's assumption as President of the African National Congress attending many of his mass rallies, and became actively involved in the movement for Secession from the Federation, and the achievement of independence.

He also became a paid-up and active member of the Congress.

Alison and he resigned from the Church of Scotland in 1958 and they and their family joined the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, and their daughter was baptised in that Church by the Rev. Jonathan Sangaya.

By that time Colin and his family were ostracised by the white community (apart from some missionaries) due to their association with the local people, and this continued until the Elections in 1961.

03.03.59

By now the political climate had reached fever pitch. The Government declared a State of Emergency and outlawed the Nyasaland African Congress. Many Africans were shot, and hundreds were arrested, and sent to prison, not only in Malawi but also to Southern Rhodesia. The Government set up and financed a Legal Aid Scheme to enable detainees and others involved in the Emergency to have the opportunity of legal defence.

As Secretary of the Nyasaland at that time Colin took this as a unique opportunity to arrange for the defence of detainees and others charged with offences under the Emergency Regulations. This was done effectively by him throughout the country.

At the same time he organised publicity in the United Kingdom, questions in Westminster and elsewhere as to what was then really happening in the country.

He visited with Malawians and friends the Detainees in Khami Prison, in Gwelo and Marandellas all in Southern Rhodesia and in more than one occasion as well as locally at Kanjadza in Soche. Arrested and interrogated by the Portuguese Authorities on each occasion both at the Malawi Border and at Tete.

Drafted and prepared Submissions to the Devlin Commission which was enquiring into the State of Emergency, and took part in Black Sash Demonstrations in Nyasaland against the then Colonial Governor, Sir Robert Armitage.

03.11.60

Colin's contract of employment ended in November, 1960, and it was not renewed as his employer, Michael Blackwood, was the Leader of the United Federal Party.

Before returning to Scotland with his family Dr. Banda called him to his house, and asked if he would return to Malawi and stand in the forthcoming Elections in 1961 and it would have his support. After discussion with Alison he agreed to do so.

He returned to Malawi in 1961 alone for this purpose. Alison remained in Scotland as she was expecting their third child.

He stood for election on Higher Roll in the Constituency of Soche on the principles of

- (a) End of Discrimination
- (b) Secession from the Federation
- (c) Independence for Malawi, and
- (d) Other economic and social development proposals.

He was successful and was appointed Minister of Works and Transport by Dr. Banda in his first Cabinet.

He also took part as a full Delegate at the Marlborough House Conference in London when the future independence of Malawi and its Constitution were successfully negotiated. Dr. Banda insisted that Colin sit at right hand during the Conference.

On achieving internal self government Dr. Banda appointed Colin to the newly created Ministry of Transport and Communications and he was given the responsibility of setting it up and take over the following functions from both the Federal Government and the British Government

- (a) Post Office and Telecommunications
- (b) Planning the main national road network
- (c) Nyasaland Railways
- (d) A Civil Aviation Authority and setting up and establishing Air Malawi
- (e) The Lake Malawi Shipping Service, and
- (f) Road Transport Licensing.

All these tasks were completed satisfactorily with the extensive legislation drafted and passed by Parliament prior to independence.

March 1964

Violent argument took place between Tiny Rowland of Lonrho Limited and Colin on his (Colin's) proposals to reorganise the financial structure of the three railway companies involved to reflect correctly the Government's financial interest, and to prevent Lonrho making a huge financial gain at the expense of the country. Dr. Banda did not support Colin in this and it eventually led to his return to the Ministry of Works & Housing. Lonrho and Dr. Banda succeeded. Unfortunately the people of Malawi lost.

06.07.64

Shortly after Independence Dr. Banda introduced a change to the Independence Constitution to allow "Detention without Trial" as part of the normal law of the country, and he (Colin) resigned from the Cabinet on this issue. The other Cabinet members had been lobbied by Colin, but they took the view that this should be challenged when the Bill to implement this in detail came before Parliament for debate. Colin's view was firmly that by that time it would be too late as the Constitution had been amended. So it proved in practice, and Mikuyu and Dzelaka were established, and the Cabinet crisis quickly erupted on this and other issues.

After his resignation Colin resumed private legal practice in Blantyre with Dr. Banda's encouragement and he set up his own firm named "C Cameron & Company".

October, 1964

When the Cabinet crisis developed between Dr. Banda and his Senior, but younger Ministers, Colin arranged a personal meeting with Dr. Banda to try and negotiate a reconciliation, particularly with Masauko Chipembere, but this was singularly unsuccessful. Dr. Banda became violently out of control at the meeting and against the proposal and it ended abruptly.

A few days later Chipembere, as Leader of the ex Ministers, instructed Colin as a Solicitor from his place of hiding at Mangoche to take a Constitutional case in the High Court against Dr. Banda, the Prime Minister. Colin realised the implications of this but as a lawyer in a Joint Bar he felt that he had no choice professionally but to carry out these instructions which he did. The case got no further than its lodging in the High Court.

November, 1964

Within two days members of the Malawi Youth League, under instructions from Mwalo, sent a group of Young Pioneers to pick Colin up to be taken away, presumably permanently, as was then happening to many other local people at the time. By good luck this failed, and with the intervention of the Governor the Young Pioneers were removed. The result of this was Colin and his family in their home were given 24 hours armed police protection and two days later he and his family were deported with armed protection up to and entering the aircraft at Chileka, leaving behind all their possessions. He took with them (at Chipembere's request) Chipembere's Passport and his personal money which were later passed to him when he moved to Tanzania after his revolt was unsuccessful.

1964 to 1994

Resumed legal practice in Scotland and later established his own legal practice.

He continued to work closely with the former Ministers in their exile and their organisations outwith Malawi. He took over a responsibility of receiving their literature principally from Tanzania and Zambia and distributing this to their supporters and other interested parties throughout the United Kingdom.

1968

Interrogated by the British MI5 regarding an alleged plot against Dr. Banda while he was staying at the Cumberland Hotel, London. Colin was unable to assist.

1989 to 1991

Alison and Colin volunteered for VSO work in Africa, but outwith Malawi. This was declined as Dr. Banda was still in power in Malawi.

They were then posted to the Province of Malaita in the Solomon Islands in the Pacific where they served as a Midwife and Lawyer, respectively, as they had done initially in Malawi.

1994

In July multi-party democracy returned to Malawi and they were, within days, invited to return there after their thirty year period of exile. The new President, Dr. Bakili Muluzi, offered, and appointed Colin to be the Hon Consul for Malawi in Scotland, a position which he continued to hold and also under the Presidency of the late Professor Bingu Ngawzi Wa Muthairka until his (Colin's) retirement in 2010.

November 2005

The then, First Minister of Scotland and the President of Malawi signed a Co-operation Agreement in Edinburgh, between the two countries. Much effort was and is being put into the implementing of this Agreement and as Hon. Consul he was very much involved in this.

On the civil side a Scotland Malawi Partnership was established to co-ordinate the very many links and twinning arrangements that have been and are continuing to be set up between schools, churches, hospitals, towns and districts in both countries. Both Alison and Colin continue to work to promote these and while he was Hon. Consul it was under the overall authority of the High Commissioner in London.

2011 to 2017

Alison and Colin continue to take an active interest in and support for Malawi but now on a more personal basis and they continue to do so. For example, Alison is the Scottish Patron of the Mamie Martin Fund which supports the education of girls in certain secondary schools in Northern Malawi. Dr. Vera Chirwa is her joint Malawi Patron. Also in 1988 Alison represented the Church of Scotland Guild in Malawi to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the establishing of the Mvanu.

About ten years ago when there was real food shortage in Malawi Colin established a Trust and raised substantial monies in Scotland and took it to Malawi and disbursed it to needy Communities.

As a family Alison and Colin had four children and are now mostly involved with the family life of their ten grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren in Scotland, England, Spain and Italy.

Since his return to Scotland Colin took and still takes active interest in Scottish Politics and stood as a Scottish National Party Candidate for Westminster for two elections in the 70's and 80's. He was unsuccessful on both occasions.

During his period as Hon. Consul for Malawi he withdrew from Scottish Politics and concentrated solely on his Malawi responsibilities.