

Malawi Cases, 1970-2012
Last Updated: 4 June 2019

torg	gname	onset	min	max
T1951	YOUNG PIONEERS		1992	1992

I. YOUNG PIONEERS

Torg ID: 1951

Min. Group Date: 1992

Max. Group Date: 1992

Onset: NA

Aliases: None

Part 1. Bibliography

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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: None

Group Formation: 1963 - organization formation (GS)

Group End: 1994 - Operation Brenzi

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The Malawi Young Pioneers was a youth organization founded in 1963 as a branch of the Malawi Congress Party (Phiri 2000; Kachipande 2013). They are an extension of MCP's nationalist movement (Phiri 2000). They were created for youth mobilization and collaboration in a newly independent nation from Britain (Phiri 2000). They initially focused on agricultural development and various rural trades they were trained in (Phiri 2000; Kachipande 2013).

The main ideology for the group was Kamuzu Ism. Kamuzu Ism was the belief that Dr. Hastings Banda, the founder of Zambia, was the only true leader and held infinite wisdom (Chirambo 2004). By following this ideology, the Young Pioneers intended to inspire national loyalty to Dr. Banda (Chirambo 2004). That is, the group became a paramilitary force to help keep Banda in power (Canada IRB 2002; Kachipande 2013). The first recorded violent incident was in March 1992 when the Young Pioneers attempted to burn a Catholic media that criticized the Banda government (Canada IRB 1992). However, the group had been associated with human rights abuses at an earlier date and may have conducted its first violent attack as early as 1962 when Laurence Makata was murdered (Canada IRB 1992).

Geography

The group conducted their first attack in the city of Blantyre in Malawi (GTD 2018). They recruit youth from various cities including Zomba, Blantyre, Mzuzu, and Lilongwe (Phiri 2000). The Malawi branch modeled itself out of Israel and Canada's version. Denmark,

Germany, and Canada have access to their facilities to the MYP for training (Phiri 2000). In Mangochi and Rumphu, families who expressed political dissent to Banda were terrorized into leaving Malawi (Phiri 2000). Their intelligence gathering base was located outside of Blantyre (Phiri 2000). The Young Pioneers primary headquarters is stationed in the city of Lilongwe (Phiri 2000). In the 1980's, members of Malawi's government were assisting the Mozambique Resistance (RENAMO) in a war within Mozambique (Carver 1994). This created major political turmoil between the two countries only to be de-escalated by the death of Mozambique's president (Carver 1994). The Malawi troops were defending the route to the port of Nacala, Malawi's only access to the sea, against RENAMO (Carver 1994). The government aiding a group its own army was fighting created major rifts between the government and army that set the stage for Operation Brenzi (Carver 1994). Following the betterment of relations between Malawi and Mozambique, the governments are collaborating on returning the Young Pioneers who fled to Mozambique following Operation Brenzi (Carver 1994).

Organizational Structure

The MYP was a branch of the Malawi Congress Party and because Malawi is a one party state was are a branch of the government (Phiri 2000). The ranks and hierarchy in the group is very similar to an army because the organization functions as an army (Phiri 2000). There were 24 districts were bases were sustained and following training, members would be sent out to different locations (Phiri 2000).

In 1992, there were 6,000 armed active members of MYP who carried out orders in the organization (Phiri 2000). This did not include the 45,000 Young Pioneers who had been in training or had been trained but not active (Phiri 2000). The Malawi Congress Party provided incredible financial support including covering officers salaries and travel expenses (Phiri 2000). 150% of Malawi's health budget was given to the MYP (Phiri 2000). Primarily, the MYP served as a personal army and executors of Dr. Banda's authoritarian one party state rule (Phiri 2000).

External Ties

Following the war in Mozambique, a new alliance formed between Banda and the Mozambique political party, RENAMO (Phiri 2000). The Young Pioneers were speculated to have trained at the bases along with the RENAMO (Canada IRB 1992). Considering the Malawi army was fighting in this war as well and the MYP were supporting the opposition, this alliance heightened tensions (Phiri 2000). MYP also supported Portuguese control over Mozambique, when the regime was still in control (Phiri 2000). MYP received a majority of funding from the Malawi Congress Party (Phiri 2000). In the 1980's, members of Malawi's government were assisting the Mozambique Resistance (RENAMO) in a war within Mozambique (Carver 1994). This created major political

turmoil between the two countries only to be de-escalated by the death of Mozambique's president (Carver 1994). The Malwai troops were defending the route to the port of Nacala, Malawi's only access to the sea, against RENAMO (Carver 1994). The government aiding a group its own army was fighting created major rifts between the government and army that set the stage for Operation Brenzi (Carver 1994). Following the betterment of relations between Malawi and Mozambique, the governments are collaborating on returning the Young Pioneers who fled to Mozambique following Operation Brenzi (Carver 1994). There are reports that Taiwan and Israel assisted the Young Pioneers with combat training, weaponry use, and provided some equipment (Phiri 2000, Kachipande 2013).

Group Outcome

The MYP was associated with multiple human right abuses during its tenure (State Department 1995). In 1993-1994, the Malawi government launched Operation Brenzi to forcibly disarm the Young Pioneers (State Department 1995; Phiri 2000; Kachipande 2013). Following a bar brawl between Malawi army officers and MYP officers in Mzuzu on December 1, 1993, tensions between the two organizations escalated (Carver 1994; Phiri 2000). The incident resulted in the death of two army officers and 30 others (Carver 1994; Phiri 2000). Soldiers gathered in Mzuzu and Lilongwe demanded immediate action be taken against the Young Pioneers (Phiri 2000). During the week, the army began taking decisive action against the MYP in the cities of Blantyre and Zomba (Phiri 2000). On December 8, 1994, the army officially declared Operation Brenzi where they would disarm all members of the MYP (Phiri 2000; Kachipande 2013). For the rest of the month, Operation Brenzi proved to be successful and gained a lot of civilian support where it was executed (Phiri 2000; Kachipande 2013). The operation resulted in 25 casualties with 123 injured due to unanticipated resistance from the Young Pioneers (Phiri 2000). Most MYP soldiers surrendered or were reported to have fled to RENAMO camps (Phiri 2000). Since 1994, the Young Pioneers have not existed.

Notes for Iris:

- interesting ties to the government (similar to paramilitary youth groups in Indonesia)
- Malawi had to defend the route to the sea
- Young Pioneers became the target
- Operation Brenzi is hugely successful - might suggest the govt had the capability to act and was just waiting until it started to boil over
- 1993 brawl might be the first incident targeted against the Malawi government and then prompts a massive government response
- domestic political incentives to suppress? (what is military-govt relations?)