

CHAPTER 22

THE EAST AFRICAN FEDERATION OR CLOSER UNION OF EAST AFRICAN COUNTRIES

REASONS FOR THE EAST AFRICAN CLOSER UNION

1. Federation involved bringing together all the three East African countries of Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika into a unitary government.
2. It was an attempt aimed at merging all the East African countries into one state.
3. The earlier British Colonial leaders like Fredrick Lugard, Sir Harry Johnstone and Charles Eliot had recommended one administration of East African countries.
4. The idea therefore came up as early as 1896 during Lugard's reign and it was bought by Sir Harry Johnstone in 1900.
5. Charles Eliot also supported the idea of a federation between 1900 and 1905 before he retired.
6. It was not until after the First World War that there was an official attempt to consider a possible union of the three East African countries.
7. The reasons for the move were political, social and economic in nature.
8. Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika were jointly ruled by the British government. Britain wanted the three united for easy administration.
9. Because of the need for firm control over the source of the Nile River and control of the Nile valley up to Egypt.
10. After the First World War, the newly formed League of Nations handed over Tanganyika as a mandate to the British. This promoted the idea of a federation because East African countries were already all under one power.
11. Uganda was a landlocked country depending on Kenya and this status made Britain to think of a union to ease transport and communication in East Africa.
12. Makerere University before independence was considered "the University of East Africa" attended by intellectuals from all the three countries. This helped in the idea of bringing the three countries together intellectually.
13. Britain preferred united administration of her East African empire given the fact that she was the only colonial master in East Africa after World War I.

14. The three East African countries shared the same problems thus it would be wise to handle them as one territory.
15. The boundaries of the three East African countries were artificial and there would be much gain by sharing resources hence need for a federation.
16. Similar laws would also be used once integration was arrived at.
17. There would also be joint customs control, postal services, currencies, defense and agricultural research.
18. The capital and human resources would also be merged and this would avoid duplication of services.
19. There would be joint market and currencies for economic gain.
20. Unity and brotherhood among the East African people would also be achieved through East African federation.
21. The union would also make the East African countries that were affected by World War I recover quickly from the war effects because they had accumulated a lot of debt.
22. The First World War had seen the need for a federation in coordination and sharing resources so as to win the war. The idea therefore picked up after the war had ended.

REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OF EAST AFRICAN FEDERATION

1. The reasons for the failure of East African federation were both internal and external.
2. Uganda and Tanganyika strongly opposed the idea. They feared to be turned into white settlers' colonies.
3. The Baganda in Uganda also feared that the federation would undermine their privileged position. They looked at the federation as an arrangement that would block their social and political progress.
4. The East African states all along wanted independence. They feared that if they went into a federation their quest for freedom would be shattered.
5. The Africans also feared the white domination over them incase the federation was formed.
6. There was yet another fear that Tanganyika would return to the Germans because there were still some few Germans in Tanganyika and they were still a very big threat.

7. The new British Governor in Tanganyika, Sir Donald Cameron also opposed the idea greatly.
8. There was a fear that business in East Africa would be dominated by the White settlers if the federation was achieved.
9. At independence the federation would still be impossible because each of the three East African countries took different ideology. For example, Kenya took capitalist ideology while Tanganyika went in for socialist policy.
10. The Africans had calculated and found out that the idea would benefit the British government, so they rejected out rightly.
11. The Africans in Kenya discovered that the union would interfere with their representation in the Legislative council.
12. The idea of a federation had its origin from outside East Africa thus the Africans rejected it in totality.
13. Africans had already made drastic steps in influencing politics in their respective countries thus the union would be an interruption to their progress so far made.
14. Lord Delamare the major advocate for white settlers had passed away in 1931 and, therefore the idea lacked a figure head to follow it critically.
15. The bodies that had been put in place did not recommend that federation was practical in East Africa, for example the L.S Ormsby and Hilton Young Commissions.
16. The British government itself never wanted to put in danger its responsibility to the League of Nations as she was charged with responsibility of looking after East African territories.
17. East Africa was also hit by the economic depression of 1931, so she was looking for ways of recovering.
18. East African countries had different arrangement in leadership, Uganda was a protectorate, Kenya was a settler colony and Tanganyika was a mandated territory under the League of Nations.

Revision question

- i. Why was there need for the closer union of the east African countries between 1900 and 1945?
- ii. Why was this attempt unsuccessful?