

**MULTI-PARTYISM AND ITS SUSTAINABILITY IN MALAWI SINCE 1991: LESSONS  
FROM THE HISTORY OF AFORD AND UDF**

**MASTER OF ARTS (AFRICAN SOCIAL HISTORY)**

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**MULTI-PARTYISM AND ITS SUSTAINABILITY IN MALAWI SINCE 1991: LESSONS  
FROM THE HISTORY OF AFORD AND UDF**

**MA (African Social History)**

**By**

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**University of Malawi**

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## DECLARATION

I the undersigned hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used this has been appropriately acknowledged.

Full Legal Name: **PAUL CHIUDZA BANDA**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late father, Justice B.S.A. Chiudza Banda, and my mother, Florida Chiudza Banda. I dearly thank them for always 'wishing me to grow a pair of wings' in my studies.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am so grateful to my late father, Justice Chiudza Banda, who believed in me so much, and always used to encourage me to aim higher in life. How I wish he was still alive to witness my having come this far. I also appreciate the role played by my mother, for her encouragement when times were hard.

Special mention should also go to my principal supervisor, Professor Kings M. Phiri, who worked tirelessly to guide me throughout the process of writing this thesis. His comments and criticisms are what have made this thesis to be what it currently is.

I am also greatly indebted to all my informants, many of whom accepted to grant me an interview despite their busy schedules. Without their assistance this thesis would be devoid of substance.

Lastly, I thank the Almighty God, for opening this window of opportunity for me. This was a great favour and I do not take it for granted.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study is a contribution to both contemporary and empirical historical approaches. It is part of contemporary history because it sought to interpret present day occurrences in the light of past historical developments. At the same time, the study is also empirical because past historical changes and problems have been analysed in terms of their time and context. Using the Modernization Theory of analysis (which regards the development of Africa's political organizations as an extension of developments that first appeared in the West), the study presents a historical overview of the development of multi-partyism in Malawi's political history, with special focus on the second-wave of multi-partyism which swept across many African countries from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. Two political parties (AFORD and UDF) were selected for the study, basically because they were the two most prominent political pressure groups (later political parties) that fought for the re-introduction of multi-partyism in Malawi; and also due to the fact that from the time multi-partyism was re-introduced in the country, these two parties, together with the MCP, were the most prominent on the country's political scene.

The study has established that there are mainly two schools of thought that explain the development of multi-partyism in Africa, namely; the Externalist School and the Internalist School. The Externalist School attributes the failure of the first wave of multi-partyism in Africa to factors beyond the control of the parties concerned. Such factors

included Africa's ethnic diversity; the influence of colonial rule; the intervention of the military in mainstream politics; the desire to build nations that are unified and economically stable, etc. On the other hand, the Internalist School faults the internal organization of the political parties as being the major cause of the failure of multi-partyism in Africa. Such factors include lack of reliable sources of funding; lack of or non-adherence to ideologies; and ethnic rivalries, among other issues.

This study has established that in Malawi, as elsewhere in Africa, both externalist and internalist factors accounted for the failure of the first wave of multi-partyism which waned with the attainment of independence in the mid 1960s. As for the second wave of multi-partyism which began in the early 1990s, however, the main problems encountered have been mainly internal to political parties at stake. Both AFORD and UDF, which the study set out to examine, have been plagued by serious internal problems over the past fifteen years or so- a period spanning the three general elections held in 1994, 1999 and 2004. The problems have almost gotten out of control as far as AFORD is concerned. They include lack of proper conflict resolution mechanisms, intra-party democracy, party ideologies, reliable sources of funding, and sound leadership. In the light of such an assessment, the study concludes that multi-partyism in Malawi has yet to be entrenched.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED

<b>AFORD</b>	Alliance for Democracy
<b>ANC</b>	African National Congress
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>BDP</b>	Botswana Democratic Party
<b>CDP</b>	Christian Democratic Party
<b>CLP</b>	Christian Liberation Party
<b>CONU</b>	Congress of National Unity
<b>CSR</b>	Congress for the Second Republic
<b>DPP</b>	Democratic Progressive Party
<b>GAFORD</b>	Genuine Alliance for Democracy
<b>HON.</b>	Honourable
<b>ICDA</b>	Interim Committee for a Democratic Alliance
<b>IFES</b>	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
<b>IMD</b>	Institute for Multi-Party Democracy
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>KIA</b>	Kamuzu International Airport
<b>LESOMA</b>	The Socialist League of Malawi
<b>MAFREMO</b>	Malawi Freedom Movement
<b>MBC</b>	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
<b>MCP</b>	Malawi Congress Party
<b>MDP</b>	Malawi Democratic Party
<b>MDU</b>	Malawi Democratic Union

<b>MGODE</b>	Movement for Genuine Democracy
<b>MMD</b>	Movement for Multi-Party Democracy
<b>MNA</b>	Malawi National Archives
<b>MNDP</b>	Malawi National Democratic Party
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>MYP</b>	Malawi Young Pioneers
<b>NAC</b>	Nyasaland African Congress
<b>NDA</b>	National Democratic Alliance
<b>NEC</b>	National Executive Committee
<b>NIB</b>	National Intelligence Bureau
<b>PAC</b>	Public Affairs Committee
<b>PDGE</b>	Partido Democratico de Guinea Ecuatorial
<b>PETRA</b>	People's Transformation Party
<b>PPM</b>	People's Progressive Movement
<b>PMF</b>	Police Mobile Force
<b>RP</b>	Republican Party
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SATUCC</b>	Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council
<b>TANU</b>	Tanzania African National Union
<b>UDF</b>	United Democratic Front
<b>UDP</b>	United Democratic Party
<b>UFMD</b>	United Front for Multi-Party Democracy
<b>UFP</b>	United Federal Party

<b>UNIP</b>	United National Independence Party
<b>UP</b>	United Party
<b>ZANC</b>	Zambia African National Congress
<b>ZANU PF</b>	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
<b>ZAPU</b>	Zimbabwe African People's Union

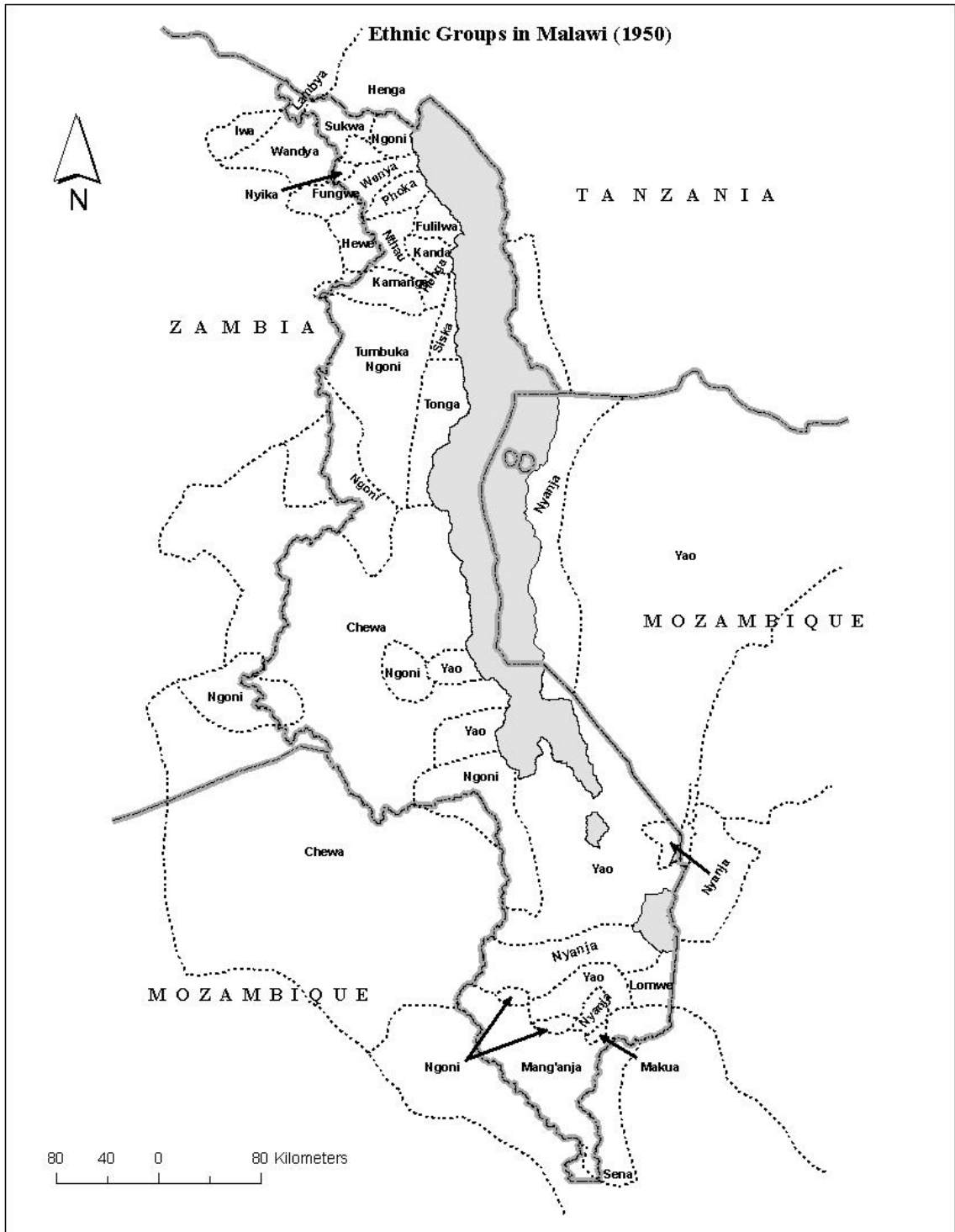
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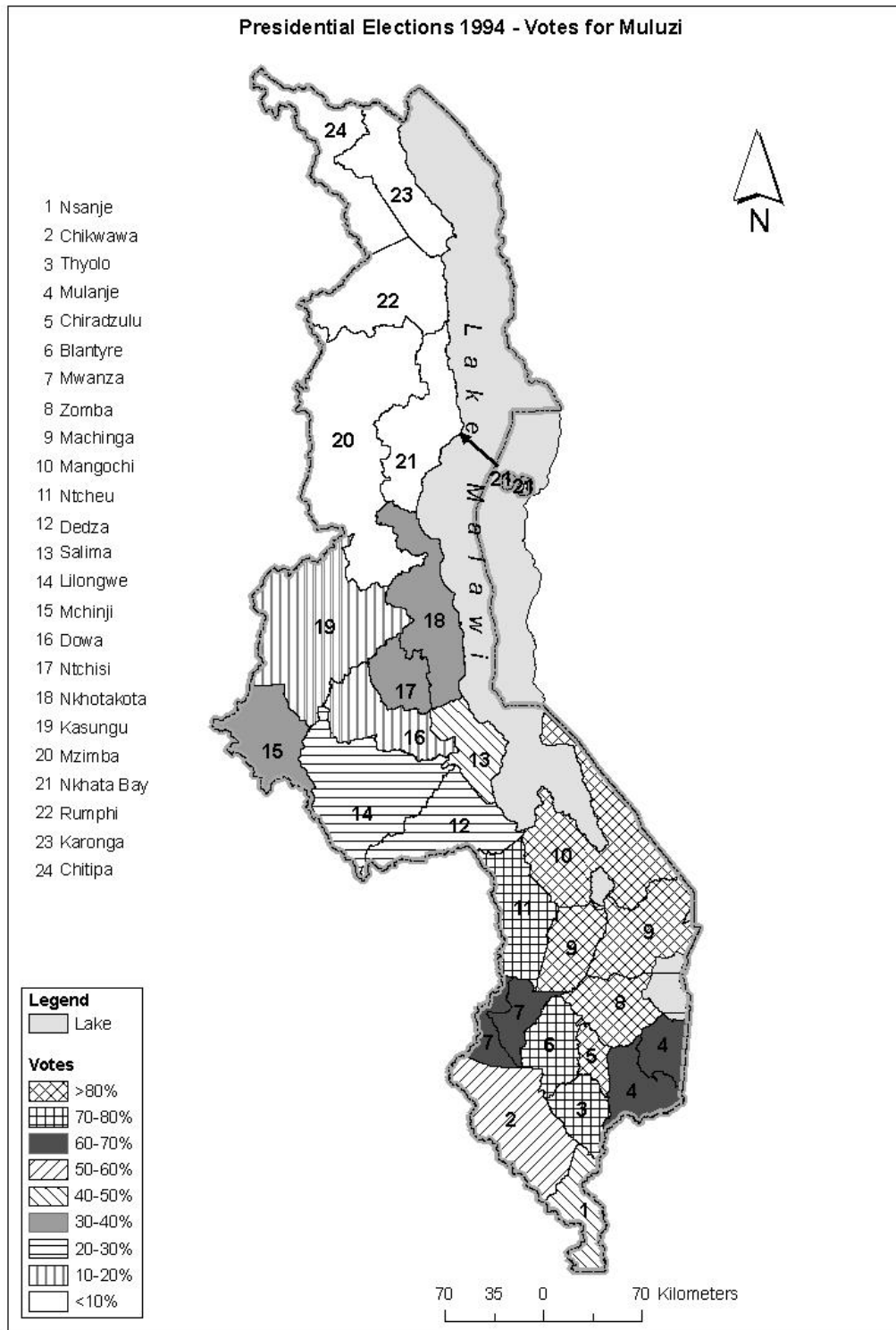
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MAP 1: ETHNIC GROUPS IN MALAWI

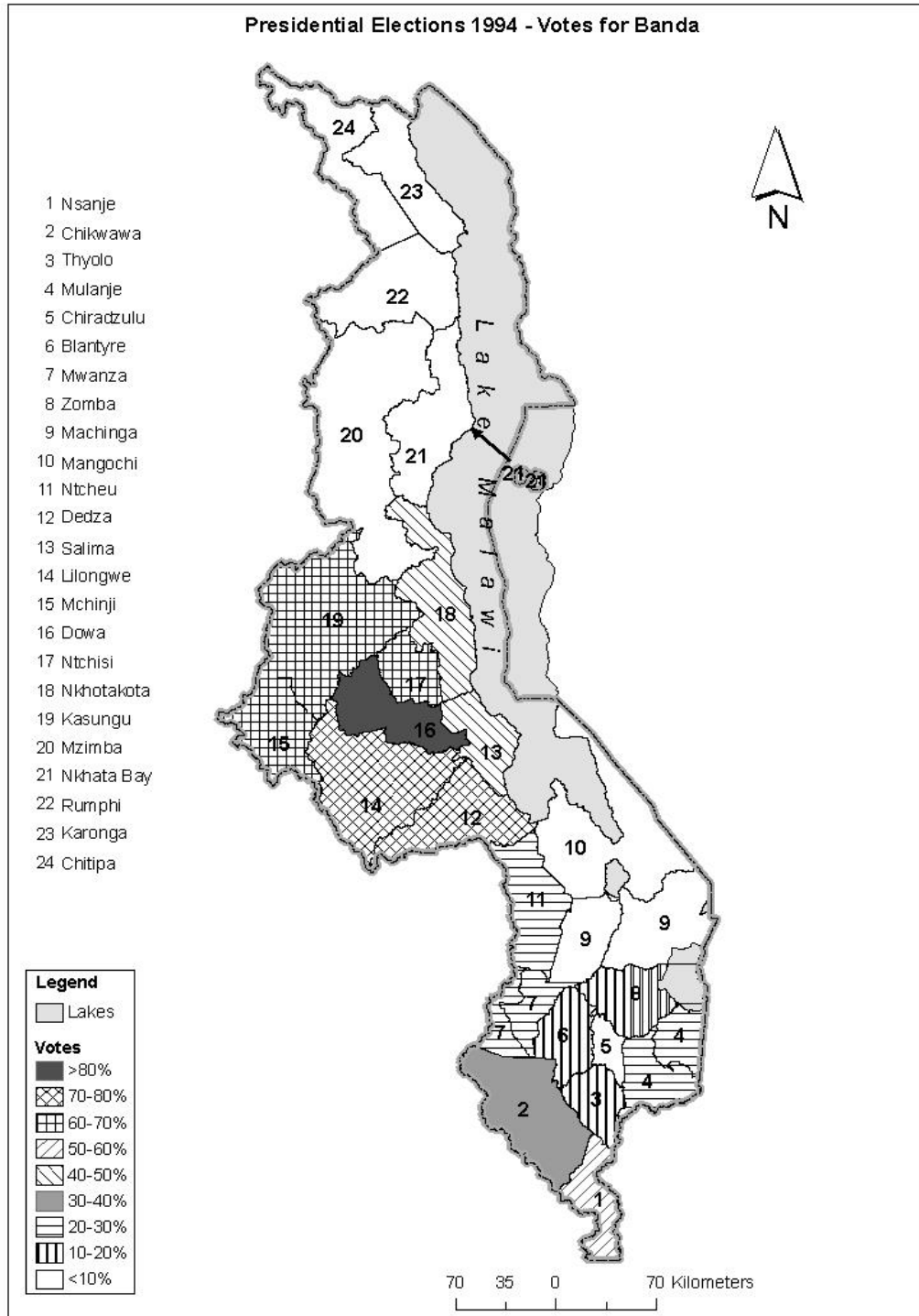


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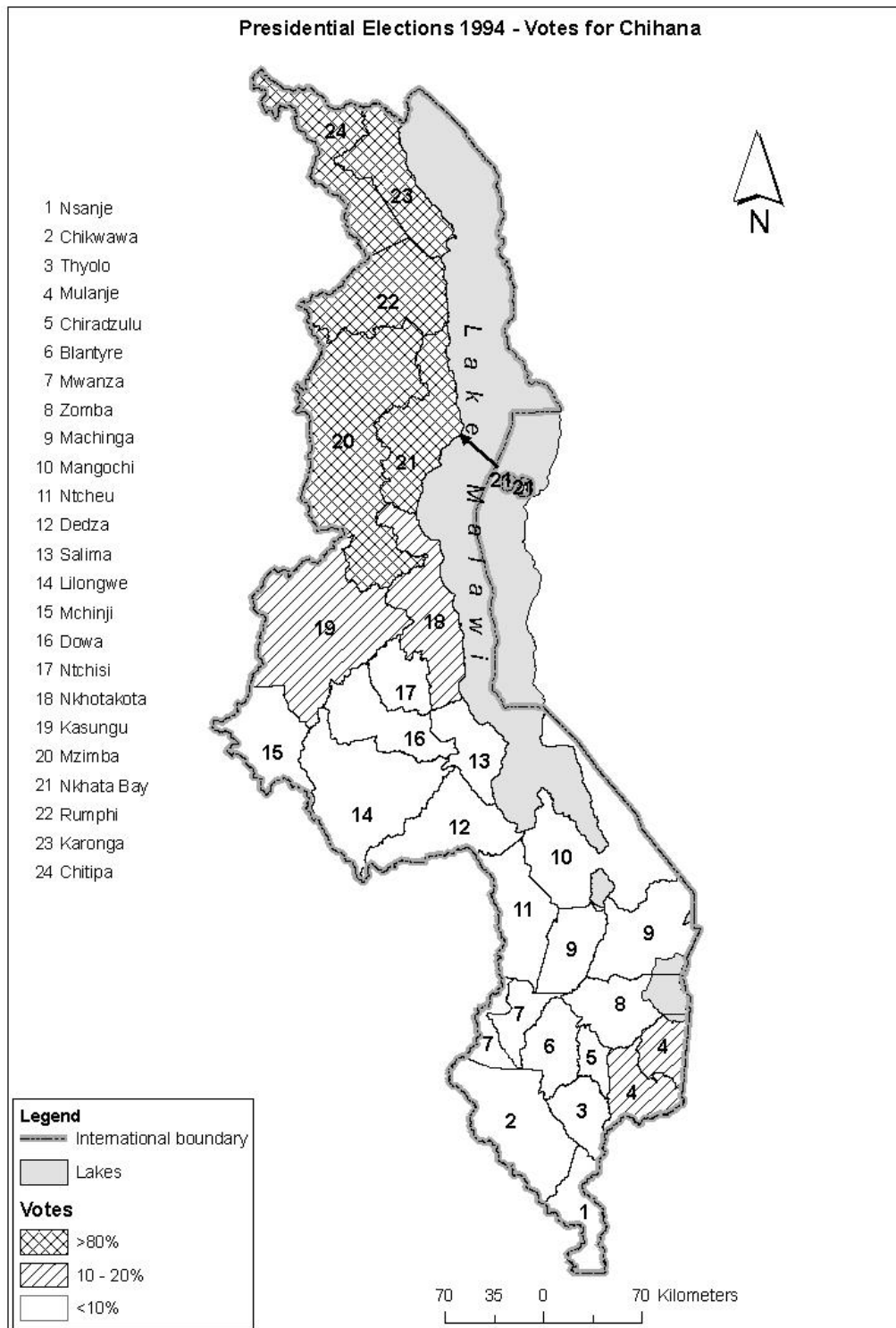
MAP 2: VOTES FOR BAKILI MULUZI



MAP 3: VOTES FOR DR. BANDA



MAP 4: VOTES FOR CHIHANA



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background**

Malawians, just like people in other African countries, adopted the Western system of party politics in the early 1940s, with the aim of winning independence from the British colonialists. As such, from the 1940s to the present (2008), there have been at least four different phases in the development of political parties in Malawi.

The first phase ranged from about 1944 to 1965. This was a phase which was characterized by the development of multiple political parties one of which led the country to independence in the early 1960s.

The first political party to be established was the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC), which was formed in May 1944, after the union of a number of Native Associations (welfare groups formed by Malawians at local and/or regional levels), which had existed since 1912. The founding members of the NAC were Levi Zililo Mumba (president), James Frederick Sangala (secretary general), Lewis M. Bandawe, Charles Mlanga, Issa M. Lawrence, and Charles Chidongo Chinula.<sup>1</sup> The other political parties

included the United Federal Party (UFP), Christian Liberation Party (CLP) and Christian Democratic Party (CDP).

From its beginnings, the NAC faced a number of challenges, from both within the party and from without, which threatened the party's survival. These challenges included, firstly, that the party did not have clearly defined practical objectives. For instance, the party remained silent on the attainment of self-rule and independence. As a result, the party failed to mobilize the masses and achieve political advancement. Secondly, the NAC leaders also lacked leadership qualities, to take the party to the desired destination. Apart from the early leaders, such as Levi Zililo Mumba and Issa McDonald Lawrence, who died within a year of establishing the party, the subsequent leaders were less capable of leading and organizing the party. For instance, some of the leaders were highly tribalistic in their behaviour and conduct.

Another challenge which the N.A.C. encountered was that of lack of funds, which hindered the smooth running of party activities. The party depended, for its finances, on irregular support of its well-wishers, such as Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda (who was then a medical practitioner in Britain) and Mr. W.H. Timcke. Unfortunately, the limited amount of money which the party got from such sources was often embezzled by some of its members. Thus, these financial problems made it hard or difficult for the party officials to travel countrywide to sell their agenda. Furthermore, there was no cohesion and/or coordination between various structures of the party. The other problem, which is closely related to that of the lack of funds, was that the party did not have full-time employees.

People did party work on part-time basis, and what is more, there was very little communication between members of the party's National Executive Committee.<sup>2</sup>

The NAC was also rocked by the problem of inconsistency in party ideology (action to be taken towards the colonial government). From the mid 1950s, radical young men ("The Young Turks"), such as Henry Masauko Chipembere, Kanyama Chiume, Dunduzu Chisiza, Yatuta Chisiza, T.D.T. Banda, wanted to fight for immediate independence for Africans. This group faced opposition from the old, conservative and moderate NAC founding members who maintained that both Africans and European colonialists should run state affairs together. To the radicals, freedom was to be fought for and not begged.<sup>3</sup>

There was a major development in the NAC, when in July 1958, the members decided to call Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda back from exile (in Ghana), to lead the fight for independence. Upon his arrival and subsequent rise to the party's presidency, Dr. Banda embarked on a drive to improve the party's organization. For instance, under him, Congress employed full-time staff; organized country-wide rallies; improved communication in the National Executive Committee (NEC), which among other things helped the party to gain popularity. And in his speeches, Dr. Banda started demanding immediate independence for Nyasaland, such that this encouraged young militant men (and women) to embark on widespread riots, strikes and demonstrations, especially in Blantyre, Thyolo, Mangochi and Nkhata-Bay. The then British Governor for Nyasaland, Robert Armitage, reacted by declaring a State of Emergency on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1959. In this State of Emergency, about 1346 NAC leaders, including Dr. Banda, were jailed in

various prisons in both Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). On top of that, the NAC was officially banned.<sup>4</sup>

It was the remnants of the NAC who formed the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1959, under the provisional leadership of Mr. Orton Chirwa, a barrister. Such that, upon the release of Dr. Banda from Gweru Prison, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1960, the leadership of the new party was surrendered to him.

By the early 1960s, Nyasaland (Malawi) had three main political parties, namely: MCP, United Federal Party (UFP) and Christian Liberation Party (CLP). For instance, in the country's first ever multi-party general elections, held on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1961, these three political parties contested, with the MCP doing far much better than the other two. It was these same political parties that contested in the April 1964 General Elections, which the MCP again won overwhelmingly, to lead Nyasaland to independence, on 6<sup>th</sup> July of that same year.<sup>5</sup>

The second phase in the development of political parties in Malawi ranged from 1965 to 1994. This phase is well-known for the one-party system and autocratic style of government, which was dominated by Dr. Banda and the ruling Malawi Congress Party. Through the 1966 Act of Parliament, the MCP was legally allowed to exist as the only party, and by 1971, Dr. Banda himself had been declared the 'Life President' of the Republic of Malawi.<sup>6</sup>

Some of the major arguments behind the declaration of a one-party state (not only in Malawi, but in other African states as well), included the need to foster national unity under one main political party. The other had to do with the need to develop the nation and consolidate the young state, and the feeling that this could only be achieved through unity in one political party.<sup>7</sup> A comment from *The Times* of 19<sup>th</sup> October 1965 (a paper owned by MCP officials), clearly articulated the argument against multi-partyism. Part of the comment read:

Malawi's Republican Constitution is bound to provoke comment, since it proposes a one-party state. However, Malawi has been *de-facto* a one-party state for some time and does not appear to have suffered from it. Single party certainly offers stability vital to any country seeking financial aid and is the only sure guarantee of political unity. In Malawi's case, it is not a question of banning opposition; it merely gives recognition to the fact that there is not any.<sup>8</sup>

Thus for a period of about thirty years, Malawi was ruled by one political party, in the name of the MCP, whose rule was one of the most brutal to be experienced in Africa. The most notorious group behind this brutality was the party's youth wing (League of Malawi Youth), which was forcing people to attend party meetings; buy party membership cards, among other exactions.<sup>9</sup> The MCP Government also used the party's paramilitary wing (Malawi Young Pioneers), which received most of its military training in Israel and Taiwan, and became an object of fear as it committed many atrocities, especially against those that showed signs of opposition to Dr. Banda's rule.<sup>10</sup>

The third major phase in the development of political parties in Malawi stretched from 1993/94 to 2003/4. During this phase, Malawi regained its multi-party status, following

the 14<sup>th</sup> June 1993 National Referendum, in which sixty three percent of Malawians voted in favour of multi-partyism. Thus, under a new constitution, more than one political party was allowed to operate in Malawi. Following the May 17, 1994, General Elections, the United Democratic Front (UDF) emerged the winner and subsequently became the country's new ruling party. But on the political scene, there were three major political parties that emerged dominant within their respective spheres, and these were the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD). The latter two political parties were the ones that championed the reintroduction of multi-party democracy. Most members in both AFORD and UDF had at one time or another been active and senior members of the MCP. Thus, perhaps not surprisingly, the relationship between these three political parties was characterized by both alliance and competition, because they all shared an identical background. For instance, in June 1994, AFORD entered into an alliance with the MCP, only to walk out of it to join the UDF led Government in the same year (September 1994). After less than a year in Government, AFORD pulled out, citing corruption in the Government as the reason behind their move. The consequences of these alliances and competitions will form part of the major discussion in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

The fourth major phase in the development of political parties in Malawi has ranged from late 2003 to the present (2008). This period has been notorious in terms of political developments, due to the numerous party splits, mergers and alliances and also the increase in the number of political parties in the country. The three major political parties (UDF, AFORD and MCP) have all experienced breakaways, partly because of long-time

internal conflicts over leadership, and partly because of conflicts over alliances and the Third Term (and Open Term) debates that were championed by the ruling UDF prior to the 2004 General Election.<sup>11</sup>

For instance, the UDF got itself internally divided between people who supported or opposed the lifting of the term limit rule in the constitution of the Republic of Malawi. In the process, several people moved out of the UDF, while others were expelled from the party, and it is such people who later formed new political parties such as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and People's Progressive Movement (PPM), just to mention a few.<sup>12</sup>

AFORD also experienced continuing defections, especially due to differences that emerged from the stand of some of the party's leaders to support Dr Bakili Muluzi's presidential third term bid and also due to the party's alliance with UDF. The party's leadership had gone ahead to get involved in activities that had been rejected at the party's convention. As a result, splinter political parties emerged out of AFORD, which included Genuine Alliance for Democracy (GAFORD) and Movement for Genuine Democracy (MGODE).<sup>13</sup>

After the 2004 General Elections, which saw the UDF again winning the elections, with a Presidential candidate who was imposed (Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika), some major developments also took place. As will be discussed in the subsequent chapters, both AFORD and UDF, who supported Dr. Mutharika in the 2004 General Elections, were to

pay heavy prices (in terms of loss of personnel) after Dr. Mutharika defected from the ruling UDF to form the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 2005.

This background to the development of political parties in Malawi, therefore presents a lot of food for thought, especially by looking at the instability and the unsustainability of some of the political parties that have emerged since 1993.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Many African countries, including Malawi, have in the past adopted Western ideologies and systems of governance. One of such political system is that involving the formation of political parties. This started to gain ground immediately before and after the Second World War. The major aim behind the formation of political parties was to fight for the independence of respective African countries. Experience and studies have shown that most political parties in Malawi (and indeed in other African countries) have been weak in structure and organization, such that some political parties have disappeared from the political scene after promising so much at the time of their launch. Other political parties have only appeared in one General Election and then disappeared. Although political parties started to appear on the Malawian political scene in the 1940s, it seems some of the problems which the earlier political parties had, can still be observed in the political parties that were formed in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century. Such problems include what to do with party funding; lack of proper ideologies; lack of intra-party democracy; lack of quality leadership, just to mention some.

Although a number of studies have analyzed the weaknesses and challenges being faced by political parties in Malawi (and also in other African countries), one observes a number of shortfalls in them. The major shortfall is that such studies have not been linked to well-known theories or schools of thought. This is problematical because the studies lack a historical and analytical perspective; as a result the studies in question only identify the problem without analysing its historical background and causes. In other words, such studies only succeed in explaining what happened and how it happened, without necessarily explaining why things happened the way they did. But as Walsh (1958) put it, “The historian is not content to tell us merely what happened; he wishes to make us see why it happened too. It is the aim of a historian to reconstruct the past, which is both intelligent and intelligible.”<sup>14</sup> For the two parties under study (AFORD and UDF), that initiated the second wave of multi-party politics in Malawi, there have so far been no studies that offer an in-depth analysis and perspective. What the earlier studies have managed to do has been to adopt a synchronic approach (studying a particular issue at a particular point in time), as opposed to a diachronic approach (to study a particular set of developments over time), which is what this study intends to do.

This study therefore embarks on an analysis of the developments in political parties in Malawi (notably AFORD and U.D.F.), by focusing on the internal and external processes that have affected the progress of such political parties. The major focus is on the analysis of the internal functioning and structure of these two political parties, as well as the external regulations and environment that have shaped their development, from the year

1991 (when they were established, at first as ‘pressure groups’) to 2007 (the time this study was initiated).

### **1.3 General Objective**

The study aims at presenting a historical analysis of the problems that have affected the sustainability of political parties in Malawi since the dawn of the current multi-party era in 1991, thereby drawing lessons that would enhance the country’s multi-party democracy.

### **1.4 Specific Objectives**

This study is aimed at finding out the following, using the histories of AFORD and U.D.F. as case studies:

- to examine the background to the failure of the multi-party system in Malawi before 1991.
- to highlight the factors behind Malawi’s second wave of multi-partyism and the subsequent emergence of AFORD and UDF.
- to analyse the fortunes of AFORD and UDF in the last three General Elections.
- to assess the factors that have negatively affected the progress of AFORD and UDF since their establishment around 1991.

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study is of significance in several ways. Firstly, being an academic paper exercise, it seeks to contribute to the writing of Contemporary African History, with particular reference to transitions of the past twenty-five years or so in Malawi. Contemporary History is a form of historical writing that focuses on events and processes that are immediately relevant to the present. Its major aim is to conceptualize, contextualize and historicize some aspects of the recent past and/or to provide a historical understanding of current trends or developments.<sup>15</sup>

Following such an understanding, the major aim of this study is to analyze and/or evaluate developments that had taken place in the political institutions (i.e. political parties) that emerged in the country as an indirect result of events that had taken place in the West (such as the end of the Cold War), on one hand, and also of home grown agitation locally.

By the time of conducting this study, both parties had undergone a number of notable developments, such as participation in three general elections; high profile conflicts and splits; signing of electoral alliances and coalition governments; being in and out government; and also that splinter political parties had emerged formed by disgruntled members from both parties. As such, it was necessary to historicize the state in which the two parties were as of the year 2008, so as to find out whether past events and processes had a hand in the situation which both parties were in. By the year 2008, the problems or

challenges being faced by these two parties had taken a ‘visible shape’ warranting a study of this nature.

The findings of this study should also be useful in strengthening political parties in Malawi, relative to the variables that are analysed. These include party funding; party ideology; intra-party democracy; party organization; party leadership, among others, which are crucial to the organization of political parties elsewhere.

It also has to be taken into consideration that political parties are very important institutions, which are credited with winning independence for African countries; and that once formed, they serve a number of functions. The most notable functions include the fact parties serve as foras that give people freedom of association (or assembly) and freedom of expression; the parties also serve as agents that give people information on events going on both within and outside their country; the parties are also intrinsically important because they form governments, by providing candidates who contest in elections, among other functions.

As noted by Matlosa (2005), political parties play a critical role in the democratization process, such that a sustainable democracy (which Malawi is striving to be), is dependent upon the well-functioning and effectiveness of political parties. From experience and observation, parties everywhere have the potential to be effective and accountable, although they face enormous challenges. As such, it is necessary to study, among other things, the political context and the legal context in which they function, as well as their

systems of internal organization, management and operation, which require attention and are often in need of reform. As such, if political parties are weak or suffer certain deficiencies, not only are they likely to fail to play their rightful role in the political system, but democracy itself is likely to suffer adverse repercussions.<sup>16</sup>

## **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

This study has been guided by the Modernization School of Thought (or Modernization Theory), whereby the political system of using political parties or multi-partyism was taken to be a copy of how the political systems of the West operate. As propounded by Eisenstadt (1966): ‘Historically, modernization is the process of change towards those types of social, economic and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America, from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century, and have then spread to other European countries, and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the South American, Asian and African continents.’<sup>17</sup> Under this conceptualization, ‘traditional societies’ (such as Malawi) will gradually eliminate their economic, political and cultural institutions and values, and replace them with modern ones of Western origin.

In political circles, Modernization Theory is a body of thought which attempts to incorporate a large number of societies, many of which were in the process of becoming new states into a theory about change. It had its roots in the optimism following the Second World War, and the widespread belief that the countries achieving or

approaching independence would not only be freed from exploitation by the First World, but would also benefit from contacts with the exploiter's technology, culture, liberal democracy and capitalism.<sup>18</sup>

As such, in practice, Modernization Theory is a school of thought that assists in studying social change over a given period of time, in different fields of study. For instance, political analysts would use it to study the various forms of nationalistic movements that developed in most African countries, following the establishment of independence, the various new forms of political organization, more especially the basic political institutions on one hand, and political parties and other types of political organizations on the other.<sup>19</sup> In practice, 'Modernization Theory' creates in its wake, problems of sustained social, economic and political growth. The ability to deal with continuous changes of political demands is the crucial test of such sustained growth, development or modernization.<sup>20</sup>

According to Tordoff (1984), the Modernization School of Thought blossomed in the mid 1950s and was predominantly of American origin. Its main emphasis was to carry out a comparative study of politics (political system) that was extended to the Third World (Developing Countries), after its origins in the West. Among its central concerns were problems of national integration, democracy and institutional stability and cultural problems, such as ethnicity, the impact of Western Education and role conflicts.<sup>21</sup> In the political sphere, Modernization studies tackle areas such as the centralization of power in the state, coupled with a weakening of traditional sources of authority; differentiated

political structures (such as political parties), sub-system autonomy and widened political participation, among others.<sup>22</sup>

In Africa, the vehicle for modernization was the state bequeathed by the colonial power, in a way that the ruling elites at independence had mostly been educated in, or by academics drawn from, the metropolitan country, and that the latter remained the dominant trading partner for many years after independence. Inevitably, therefore, Western influences on the new African states were strong. This involved ‘transplanting Western political institutions, emphasizing the virtues of stability and democracy, and including Western and non-traditional values.’<sup>23</sup>

The assumed problem with African politicians is with regard to their ability to implement the manifold changes (to match with developments in the West), such that most of them (the political leaders and the institutions to which they belong) have suffered from a lack of stability and sustainability. In other words, one would conclude to say that political parties in Africa have failed to modernize politically. As such, the idea of catching up with the West has had little success.

## **1.7 Literature Review**

In most African countries the wind of political change that led to ‘independence’ did not bring about the desired goals, as far as multi-partyism is concerned. In most instances, there was a change within a short period from multi-partyism to either one-party states or

to no party at all (either through legal or illegal means, as in the case of military coups d'état). As a result, over the years, the development of Africa's political institutions (such as political parties) has experienced major setbacks. For nearly three decades since the achievement of independence, the African continent was generally referred to as an area where liberal democracy (with its emphasis on multi-partyism) had failed. Compared to other parts of the world, Sub-Saharan African countries have witnessed drastic changes of political dispensations, military coups d'état, internal conflicts, border disputes, genocides and other malpractices that have hindered the growth of multi-partyism.

This study has been influenced by the works of a number of key contributors to the debate on the development of multi-partyism across the whole African continent and indeed in Malawi in particular. From the contributions of these various authors, there are three major issues and arguments that clearly come out to explain the development of multi-partyism across the African continent. These issues include the rationale for the formation of political parties in Africa; the erratic fortunes of multi-partyism in Africa since the decade of independence (1957-1967); and the factors accounting for the ineffectiveness of political parties in Africa (and these are analysed from two main perspectives, namely the Internalist Perspective and the Externalist Perspective).

Most of the leaders of these 'newly' established political parties were greatly influenced by Western ideologies and cultures, partly as a result of their contacts with Europeans, since a good number of them received their formal education in the West, or had been educated by Westerners in their respective African countries. That experience gave most

of these African politicians an awareness of how Western political systems were organized, and also what they thought would be best for Africa if and when independence would be attained.

The earliest political parties in Africa were formed as part of both the 'nationalist' and 'Pan-Africanist' influences that swept across the African continent in the first half of the twentieth century. According to Nengwekhulu (1979), by the early years of the twentieth century, Africans had already shown signs of unhappiness with both imperialism and colonialism, whose oppression and exploitation of the indigenous Africans deprived the people the opportunity to create and remake their own history. The result of this colonial exploitation was the birth of anti-colonial resistance movements in Africa, to eliminate the process of the erosion of their national freedom. The anger which the oppression and exploitation generated amongst Africans helped greatly in fanning the fire of nationalism (the desire that a given people have to achieve political independence) that had been smoldering for a long time since the arrival of the colonialists in Africa. The first group of Africans that came clearly to oppose the colonial rulers was that of people who had had the closest and intimate contact with colonialism, and these included those who had attended European governed schools, as well as those who had fought alongside the Europeans in the First World War.<sup>24</sup>

Pan-Africanism, on the other hand, was borne out of the belief that Africans should be left to rule themselves. It generated political programmes and slogans that Africa was to the Africans what Europe was to the Europeans. And in the context of the development of

African nationalism, Pan-Africanism represented a radical strain of African nationalism (i.e. with the aim of completely destroying the status quo).<sup>25</sup>

As a result of these ideologies, a number of political movements (later political parties) were formed across the African continent. For instance, in Southern Africa, the main theatre of African resistance to colonialism was South Africa. It was in South Africa that resistance movements first emerged culminating in the formation of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912, which thus became the first nationalist movement to be formed in the sub-continent. The nationalist movements that were formed in other Southern African countries followed almost the same pattern as that of the ANC (i.e. agitating for national liberation from colonialism), with a major focus on mobilizing the masses against colonialism and imperialism in their respective countries.<sup>26</sup> Political parties such as the NAC, UFP and CDP in Malawi; Zambian African National Congress (ZANC) and United National Independence Party (UNIP) in Zambia; Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) in Zimbabwe; Congress People's Party (CPP) in Ghana; and Tanzania African People's Union (TANU) in Tanzania, all followed the example set by the ANC in South Africa.<sup>27</sup>

Over the years, there have been numerous obstacles to the development of these political parties, and these include issues to do with dictatorial tendencies; influence of colonial rule; statism; lack of reliable sources of party funding and financing; lack of intra and inter-party conflict resolution mechanisms; and poor leadership and management.

As noted by Ajayi (1982), post-independence processes in Africa, (in the spheres of politics, economics and agriculture) have generally been hampered by ‘the elusiveness of development’. Politically, Africa has been characterized by civil unrest and civil wars, because populations have not been happy with the way things are organized, and also because very few constitutional and legal rules are being obeyed by those in power. As a result, in many cases, the masses have lacked real political participation and representation.<sup>28</sup>

On the dictatorial tendencies of the post-colonial African leaders, Sylvester (1995) writing on Zimbabwe; Makinda (1996) writing on Kenya; and Mujagu and Oloka-Onyango (2000) writing on Uganda, all argue that almost all the political parties that won independence in these countries assumed a hostile attitude towards any sort of opposition once independence had been achieved. In these and other African countries, opposition politicians were either cowed into silence or detained, thus making it extremely difficult for multi-partyism to flourish. Multi-partyism was seen as an ‘exported luxury’, neither needed nor affordable in the newly independent states. As a result, opposition political parties were subsequently banned in these countries, and in the case of Uganda, a ‘no-party’ system was eventually adopted.<sup>29</sup>

Other political analysts attribute these developments to the influence of colonial rule on the African political leaders. Decalo (1992) and Hameso (2002) both argue that the post-colonial African leaders just embraced the oppressive and repressive tendencies of the colonial masters whose rule provided a foundation on which the post-colonial leaders

could build their own political platforms. As such, since the colonial rulers did not tolerate any sort of opposition to their governments, it was also inevitable that the post-colonial rulers would follow suit, hence their suppression of opposition parties.<sup>30</sup> In other instances, the opposition politicians could be forcibly incorporated into the state machinery, which again was one way of annihilating the opposition.<sup>31</sup>

Africa's overwhelming ethnic diversity has also shouldered some of the blame for the failure of multi-partyism across the continent. Hameso (2002) posits that this problem was also compounded by the arbitrary and illogical carving of the boundaries (by colonial masters), irrespective of the social and natural divisions of geography and population settlement which harnessed profound national identity crisis. His argument was that due to such an ethnic diversity, it was/is difficult to come up with political parties that cut across ethnic divisions, as such the party that wins power would like to maintain its position in power at the expense of those ethnic groups that are not allied to it.<sup>32</sup> In other African countries, these ethnic tensions have given an excuse to the military to intervene through coups d'état, in the name of bringing order, to stop ethnic and regional rivalries from developing into civil wars. For instance, between 1960 and 1985, there were 131 attempted military coups in Africa, of which sixty (60) were successful. More to that, wherever military regimes operated, they acted in distrust of political parties, and hence banned their activities.<sup>33</sup>

Fingers have also been pointed towards the lack of intra and inter-party conflict resolution mechanisms. According to Kanyongolo and Maliyamkono (2003), such

conflicts often arise due to the inequalities over access to desired resources, and also due to the struggle to win favors from voters. As such, politicians and political parties always plan to outwit one another in the eyes of the ordinary people, thus breeding conflict in the process. Such conflicts contributed to the break-ups of a number of parties or even the banning of opposition parties by those in power.<sup>34</sup>

There are generally two schools of thought that explain the problems associated with the effectiveness of political parties in Africa, and these are the ‘internalist perspective’ and the ‘externalist perspective’. The former pushes the blame on the internal developments within the parties themselves, whereas the latter attributes the ineffectiveness of political parties on factors external to the parties. The internal problems include those to do with party funding and financing; lack of conflict resolution mechanisms; lack of intra-party democracy; poor quality of party leadership and organization, among others. On the other hand, the external factors include issues such as military intervention in politics; dictatorial tendencies by ruling parties, and other factors (that have already been highlighted above).

On the issue of party funding and financing, as noted by Patel and Meinhardt (2003), in their study on Malawian political parties, most of the parties do not have well-established sources of funding (such as companies or other investments). As such, most of the parties are forced to rely on the fundraising initiatives of individuals, which is not a reliable mechanism. This problem is also further compounded by the fact that the funding provided through the state constitution is not always adequate nor has it been evenly

distributed. Section 40 (2) of the Malawi's constitution allows for the state to provide funding to parties that amass more than one tenth of the parliamentary seats. Unfortunately this works to the disadvantage of 'small parties' that can not reach that goal.<sup>35</sup>

Political parties in Africa have also been hit by the lack of intra-party democracy, a development that has contributed to the splintering or break-aways in many parties. For instance, Patel and Meinhardt (2003) traced the undemocratic tendencies in Malawi's UDF, in a case where the party resorted to expel party members who were against a presidential third term bid for the country's former president, Bakili Muluzi. A number of officials were forced to leave the party, hence affecting its stability.<sup>36</sup>

Yet another problem with African political parties has been the lack of capable leaders, some of whom have been accused of not formulating well-spelt out ideologies, or non adherence to party ideologies (if the party has any). For instance, Phiri (2000), in his analysis of the activities of the then three major political parties in Malawi (UDF, MCP and AFORD), noted that although all these parties claimed to have some sort of an ideology, their actions (and the actions of the party officials in particular) were contrary to what the ideologies in question represent. The activities of the party officials actually made the parties to have no clear sense of direction.<sup>37</sup>

It was from this background that this study was undertaken, firstly, to fill the gaps that characterized the earlier studies on the development of multi-partyism in Africa. More

specifically, the study was also undertaken to locate the development of multi-partyism in Malawi in the context of Africa-wide developments, since political events and processes taking place in Malawi are not a unique occurrence, but reflect a general trend of events and processes of the progress of multi-partyism across the African continent (more especially the Sub-Saharan part of it).

### **1.8 Research Design and Methodology**

This study was designed to provide a historical analysis of the way political parties have been developing in Malawi since the dawn of the neo-multi-party era, at the beginning of the 1990s. As such, it involved longitudinal case studies of the two political parties (AFORD and UDF); the major parties that were in the forefront of the movement to bring this second wave of multi-partyism in the country.

Data for this study was drawn from both oral and written sources. The oral sources included spokespersons and other officials from the two political parties (AFORD and UDF), and also from ordinary party members. Oral data was also collected from informed non-partisan observers, and these included those from the Academia, Churches, and the labor force at large, who presented what appeared to be an objective view of what they have been observing in the history of the two political parties. I conducted all the interviews for this study between the months of October and December, 2007, with a total of fifty-six respondents. The questions asked included those concerning party funding, intra-party democracy, conflict resolution mechanisms, party leadership

qualities, party ideologies, among other issues. Most of the respondents were so enthusiastic to share the sort of information they had with me, more especially because the issue at hand is of public interest. However, in other instances, some people were less willing to share information with me, saying that they had lost interest in politics. The interviews were conducted in the country's four major urban areas of Zomba, Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu, in places that were convenient to both the researcher and the respondents. The respondents were sampled through two main techniques. Firstly, there was 'purposeful sampling', where information was sought from specific individuals, such as the party members (from either AFORD or UDF) and non-partisan observers. Secondly, 'snowball sampling' was also applied where party members were asked to identify fellow party members. This was done because it could have been difficult for the researcher to identify party members, especially the ordinary ones.

Written data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included newspaper articles, magazine articles and parliamentary debates, and also from books that were written by observers and participants in a number of historical events. The primary sources in question were drawn from the Malawi National Archives (MNA), Chancellor College Library, National Library Service, and the National Assembly Library. The data sought was that which could provide more insights of the developments in these two parties. The secondary sources included a number of books, book reviews, journal articles, on-line articles, party constitutions and manifestos, all of which are readily available in public libraries. Both parties do not have special archives

where party information is stored, such that all the information for this study was collected from the public archives.

Most of the data was analyzed qualitatively (but where quantitative data was available this was manipulated arithmetically for the purpose of producing tables). The oral data was manipulated through 'content analysis', whereby the responses provided by the interviewees were tallied against the themes adopted for this study. The themes include conflict resolution; intra-party democracy; party funding; party ideology; party organization and leadership qualities. Proceeding on the basis of 'ground theory', the responses that have been incorporated into this thesis are those that were common in the interviews, and also those that were remarkably different from the other responses (which gave new insights on the developments in AFORD and UDF).

The primary written sources were subjected to both 'external and external criticism'. This was as such because I (the researcher) was not involved in a direct observation of a number of historical events and processes as reported by the other authors. It was thus necessary to subject the documents to careful analysis, to come up with the usable data or historical evidence. External criticism was used to establish the authenticity or genuineness of the sources. Such an analysis mainly centered on issues to do with the outward characteristics of the documents used. On the other hand, internal criticism was used to evaluate the accuracy and/or worthiness of what the documents have to say. Here, the issues under analysis included those to do with the author's competence, honesty and biasness, as well as closeness to the reported events.

## **1.9 Layout of the study**

The findings of this study are presented in five chapters. The first of these is introductory and includes information concerning the background to the study; a statement of the research problem; a statement of objectives of the study; selected literature review (including schools of thought on the development of multi-partyism in Africa); articulation of theoretical framework and the significance of the study. The second chapter is basically an exploration of the major factors that hindered the growth of multi-partyism in post-colonial Malawi, during the MCP regime, from 1964 to 1991 (when calls for multi-partyism resurfaced within the country). Chapter three covers debates about the factors behind the transition to the second wave of multi-partyism in most African countries (including Malawi), which eventually led the emergence of AFORD and UDF (the two political parties under study). Chapter four analyses the fortunes of the two parties (AFORD and UDF) in the last three general elections (held in 1994, 1999, and 2004), on the basis of which it is determined that the fortunes of these two parties are in decline. Chapter five, which is also the concluding chapter, is basically an assessment of the factors that have negatively affected the development of multi-partyism in Malawi since 1991, with special reference to developments in AFORD and UDF. Such factors have mainly been approached from the internalist perspective. The internal factors include lack of permanent and reliable sources of funding, lack of intra-party democracy, lack of party ideology or non-adherence to any ideology, poor leadership qualities, and lack of conflict resolution strategies, among others. The chapter also draws the reader to the limitations of the study as well as areas that call for further research.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> B. Muluzi, et al, Democracy with a Price: A History of Malawi Since 1900 (Blantyre and Oxford: Jhango-Heinemann, 1999). Pp 39-40.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp 41-42.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.46.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp 49-50.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp 76-77
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.90.
- <sup>7</sup> L. Svasand and N. Khembo, “Political Parties” in N. Patel and L. Svasand, Government and Politics in Malawi ( Zomba: Kachere Series, 2007). P. 215.
- <sup>8</sup> The Times, “One-Party State” (MNA, 19<sup>th</sup> October, 1965). P.1
- <sup>9</sup> B. Muluzi, et al, Democracy with a Price: A History of Malawi Since 1900. p. 91.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid, pp91-92.
- <sup>11</sup> L. Svasand and N. Khembo, “Political Parties” p. 217.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.217
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.218
- <sup>14</sup> W.H. Walsh, An Introduction to the Philosophy of History (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1958),p.32.
- <sup>15</sup> See M.D. Kandiah, “Making History: The Changing Face of the Profession in Britain” (Britain: Institute of Historical Research, accessed from [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), on 08/01/2010), pp1-2).
- <sup>16</sup> K. Matlosa, Political Parties and Democratization in the Southern African Development Community Region: The Weakest Link? (Johannesburg, S.A.: The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, 2005).p.vii and xiii.
- <sup>17</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt (1966:1) in B.C. Smith, Understanding Third World Politics: Theories of Political Change and Development (London: Macmillan Press, 1996) p.64.
- <sup>18</sup> B.C. Smith, Understanding Third World Politics: Theories of Political Change and Development . p. 61.
- <sup>19</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, “Social Change and Modernization in African Societies south of the Sahara” in M.E. Doro and N.M. Stultz (eds.), Governing in Black Africa: Perspectives on New States (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1970). P. 236.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 238.
- <sup>21</sup> W. Tordoff, Government and Politics in Africa (London: Macmillan Education Limited, 1984). P.15.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.16

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.19

<sup>24</sup> R. Nengwekhulu, "Some Findings on the Origins of Political Parties in Botswana", (Journal of African Studies, vol.1, No.2, 1979, pp47-77), pp48-49.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.49.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.49.

<sup>27</sup> See also B. Muluzi, et al op cit (on Malawi); P.H.O. Kaya and D. van Wyk, "Multi-Party Democracy and the Political System in Africa: Cases from East and Southern Africa", in Collecion Edicion Especial, pp120-151 (unpublished document); R. Rotberg, The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964 (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972).

<sup>28</sup> A.J.F. Ajayi, "Expectations of Independence in Africa" (in Daedalus, vol. 3, No.1, 1982), pp6-7.

<sup>29</sup> See C. Sylvester, "Whither Opposition in Zimbabwe?" in The Journal Of Modern African Studies (Vol.33, No.3, 1995, pp403-423); S. Makinda, "Democracy and Multi-Party Politics in Africa", in The Journal of Modern African Studies (vol.34, No.4, Dec.1996, pp555-573); and J. Mujagu and J. Oloka-Onyango, No Party Democracy in Uganda (Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> See S. Decalo, "The Process, Prospects and Constraints of Democratization in Africa", in Journal of African Affairs, (vol.91, No.362, 1992, pp7-35); C. Ake, The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa (Great Britain: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2000), pp35-36; and S. Hameso, "Issues and Dilemmas of Multi-Party Democracy in Africa", in West Africa Review (2002).

<sup>31</sup> J.E. Nyang'oro, "Reform Politics and the Democratization Process in Africa", in African Studies Review (vol.37, No.1, April 1994, pp133-149), p.133.

<sup>32</sup> S. Hameso, op cit.

<sup>33</sup> Center for African Studies, "Politics and Government in Post-Colonial Africa" in Exploring Africa (from www.google.com).

<sup>34</sup> See F.E. Kanyongolo and T.L. Maliyamkono, When Political Parties Clash (Tanzania: Tema Publishing Company Ltd, 2003), pp2-3 and pp260-261.

<sup>35</sup> N. Patel and H. Meinhardt, Malawi's Process of Democratic Transition (Balaka: Montfort Press, 2003), p.32; and A. Magolowondo, "A Critique on the Legislative Framework governing political parties in Malawi", The Lamp, September-October 2006.

<sup>36</sup> N. Patel and H. Meinhardt, op cit, p.63. See also Jan Kees van Donge, "Kaunda and Chiluba: enduring patterns of political culture", in J.A. Wiseman (ed.), Democracy and Political Change in sub-Saharan Africa (London: Routledge, 1995), p.211.

<sup>37</sup> See K.M. Phiri, "Reflections on Party Ideologies and Programmes", in M. Ott, K.M. Phiri and N. Patel (eds.), Malawi's Second Democratic Elections: Process, Problems (Balaka: Montford Media, 2000), p.68. See also Z.D. Kadzamira, N. Patel, et al, Profiles and Views of Political Parties in Malawi: A Study Commissioned by PAC and GTZ (Zomba, December 1998), pp73-74.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **MULTI-PARTYISM IN MALAWI BEFORE 1991**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter is aimed at highlighting how efforts to have a multi-party political system in Malawi were thwarted during the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) regime (from 1964 to the early 1990s). It will be argued that even before the MCP took over power, following its victory in the 1964 multi-party General Elections, the party already had incipient seeds of dictatorship and hence its non-tolerance of opposition from both within and outside the party. Such traits were clearly observed in the party's long-time leader, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda.<sup>1</sup> Things took a major twist following the 1964 'Cabinet Crisis', in which Dr. Banda differed with his Cabinet Ministers on issues to do with the country's domestic and foreign policies. During this so-called crisis, most Cabinet Ministers resigned en masse and went into exile where they formed political parties to criticize the MCP from abroad. But the activities of such parties were unfortunately closely monitored by Dr. Banda's Secret Service, who at times arrested or assassinated the exiled opposition leaders. Such a trend delayed (postponed), for close to thirty years, the development of multi-partyism. What is more, the exiled opposition groups also had their own internal problems (such as struggles over leadership positions; lack of permanent sources of

funding; and ideological differences) which hampered their progress and ability to undermine the dictatorial MCP regime.

## **2.1 Constraints to multi-partyism in the Pre-Independence Era**

The seeds of dictatorship in the MCP, which started as the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) were sown even before the party assumed power. As stated by Rotberg (2002), one of the early NAC leaders, Henry Masauko Chipembere, had told Dr. Banda whilst the latter was in exile, that upon his return to Nyasaland (to fight against the colonial government) he would have to be built up into a man with a hero image if the struggle was to succeed. Thus, upon his return to Nyasaland, in July 1958, Dr. Banda had already psychologically prepared himself to play the role of a hero and savior of his countrymen who could not stand opposition. Perhaps this explains why from his early days in Malawi, Dr. Banda hated to be crossed in any way. He showed that he was not the type of man to be criticized openly and directly. All he wanted was to be praised and applauded.<sup>2</sup>

McCracken (1998) also notes that as the NAC grew in popularity, with Dr. Banda's arrival, elements of a totalitarian ideology, deeply intolerant of dissent began to appear, not only in Dr. Banda's speeches, but also in those of his lieutenants and subsequent opponents, such as H.M. Chipembere and Kanyama Chiume. This tendency increased with the founding of the MCP which developed as an absolutist body both in terms of its own internal structure and the demands it made on Malawian society. Some politicians even drew on the autocratic tradition of the colonial era to produce justifications for the

establishment of an African-controlled dictatorship. A totalitarian strain, deeply intolerant of opposition (dissent) thus entered Malawian politics prior to 1964.<sup>3</sup> Upon the release of Dr. Banda from Gweru Prison in 1960, he added to his authority by becoming the ‘Life President’ of the MCP and the centre of a personality cult.

The MCP also developed as a threat to other African-headed political parties, such as the Christian Liberation Party (CLP, headed by Chester Katsonga), whose members were subjected to harassment and assault.<sup>4</sup>

Speaking on the eve of independence, the party’s Publicity Secretary, Kanyama Chiume, reiterated the party’s stand against any sort of opposition once it assumed power by saying:

To the day when this country will be so organized that there will be no opposition at all, and all of us will be sitting like in a real *mphara*.<sup>5</sup>

Lwanda (1993) posits that Dr. Banda’s young colleagues (in the NAC, and later MCP) had given him a blank cheque prior to independence. These young colleagues (including H.M. Chipembere, Kanyama Chiume, and others) had built him up as a towering figure far above anything else that had gone before or was likely to follow. For instance, these young colleagues (Young Turks) would address Banda by his full quota of qualifications viz: PhB., MD, LRCP, LRCS, LRFPS (the last three of which were fellowships of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh), plus a clutch of honorary degrees. More to that, the NAC run a big propaganda campaign often likening Dr. Banda to Jesus Christ (the Christian saviour of mankind).<sup>6</sup> The blank cheque the Congress leaders gave Dr.

Banda was filled within six months of his arrival in Malawi. So determined were the young Congress leaders to create a 'messiah' that they even initiated the rewriting of history and the erasure from history books of some earlier Malawian makers of history. For example, Dr. Daniel Malikebu, the first Malawian to become a medical doctor was quietly marginalized and Dr. Banda was officially proclaimed as the first doctor.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Banda himself took advantage of this hero-worshipping to grow dictatorial wings. For instance, speaking in the Legislative Assembly in June 1962, he declared: 'There is no dispute in our party. We do not say what do you want, what is it? It is what Kamuzu says that goes.'<sup>8</sup> And in May 1964, speaking at a political rally in Blantyre, Dr. Banda also declared his wish to hold on to power and reject any form of dissent, by saying that:

This kind of thing where the leader says this but somebody else says that: now who is the leader? That is not the Malawi system. The Malawi system; the Malawi style is that Kamuzu says it is just that, and then it is finished.<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Banda often told his Western critics that he would practice democracy, only in the 'Malawian style'. This was not to say that there had to be more than one political party, but that people should be given the right to choose a party which they wanted (i.e. the MCP). Banda was quoted as having said:

I am not opposed to the existence of opposition parties; at the same time I do not myself propose to take the initiative in building up an effective opposition to my party. Moreover, if opposition parties should appeal, then, on the political level, my party will, like other parties elsewhere, seek to minimize their influence.<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Banda also said that Malawi could not be a ‘carbon copy’ of any other country, and insisted that he would make sure that the country should practice what he called ‘a guided democracy’. Speaking in Lilongwe in early 1964, Dr. Banda had this to say:

Democracy in Europe cannot be democracy in Africa. Any politician, any statesman who interprets democracy in Africa in terms of the British Constitution, the American Constitution...does not know what he is doing. Because we are not here living under the British conditions, the American conditions....What is politics? You say politics is the art of the possible. Possible where? Possible here, not Europe or America...possible here, here in Malawi....Here we have our own way of doing things, we are copying from nobody. We will adopt from outside what suits and fits the conditions of this country.<sup>11</sup>

By this stage in early 1964, Dr. Banda was beginning consciously to consider the possibility of achieving a fusion of the African and Western political traditions. At the same time, he was moving further away from his former acceptance of the multi-party ideal. Apparently, Dr. Banda (and the MCP) had strategic differences with the other existing political parties, such as the European dominated United Federal Party (UFP) and the African-led Congress Liberation Party (CLP), led by T.D.T. Banda. Their differences were centred on ‘when and how’ political independence would be granted to Nyasaland. These differences had been made even more severe at the Lancaster House Conference in July 1960. Such that as soon as the MCP delegation arrived back home (Nyasaland) and presented the new constitution to the people (which favoured black majority rule), unforeseen and uncalled-for consequences followed. For example, in August 1960, two Malawian nationals, a Mr. Nephas Kwenje and Mr. Mathews Phiri (from the UFP), both of whom were delegates and opposed MCP proposals at the Lancaster House Conference, were severely beaten up in Blantyre by rioting crowds.

This marked the beginning of a series of incidents of intimidation and politically inspired arson throughout the country leading to the 1961 General Elections. For instance, in December 1960, MCP supporters fired (burnt) the house of Chester Katsonga, leader of the then newly formed Catholic-backed Christian Democratic Party (CDP). Furthermore, between 26 and 28 July 1961, nine houses were burned at Mbobo, near Nkhotakota. One of the houses was being used by the UFP candidate in that area, Mr. Gideon Makamo, and three others were owned by UFP supporters.<sup>12</sup>

Most of these incidents of violence were actually sparked off by a series of ill-conceived and inflammatory speeches by the MCP leaders, such as Dr. Banda, Henry M. Chipembere and Kanyama Chiume. For example, Chipembere was sentenced to three years imprisonment for sedition, as the result of a speech he made at Rumphi (in December 1960), in which he was quoted as having said:

Give me the living body of Blackwood (UFP leader) to tear to pieces. I will do the job in two minutes.<sup>13</sup>

In December 1963, Banda had even warned that any non-African who financed parties like the CLP and Mbadwa ‘must expect deportation’ after independence (although he never did it). But five months later, he announced that all Clerks of District Councils had to be MCP members.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the introduction of a one-party system through the 1965 constitutional amendments was just a formalization of a process that had began long before independence was granted to Malawi in 1964.

## **2.2 Developments of the Post-Colonial Period (1964-1991)**

After the attainment of independence in July 1964, a number of developments worth taking note of also took place. Some of them were new but most of them were just mere continuations of what had gone on before independence, and these proved to be detrimental to the development of multi-partyism in the country.

This period revealed that the ‘nationalist leaders’ in MCP only used the concept of democracy as a theory with which to challenge the colonial order, but that soon after political independence had been achieved, they saw no need for a democratic system of government. The system of government that emerged was that which revolved around the strength and authoritarianism of Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda, and was characterized by patronage, repression and a totalitarian hold on all aspects of life. Under such conditions, it was impossible to organize political opposition within the country up to the early 1990s. In practice, Malawian society was permeated by elements of fear and suspicion due to the ‘informers’ and the loose definition of ‘disloyalty’ and the penalties that followed one’s ‘disobedience’ towards the state president. It was also during the same period that thousands of Malawians were detained (imprisoned) without trial, some for periods of more than ten years in detention camps that were opened at Dzeleka in Dowa and Mikuyu in Zomba and indeed in some of the country’s prisons.<sup>15</sup>

The harassment did not spare any particular group of people in the country. All professionals (such as medical doctors, lawyers, teachers, the clergy and civil servants,

just to mention some) and indeed ordinary people were subjected to harassment based on trumped up charges. The charges were of three major types, namely: political, religious and economic.

Some of the victims of this repressive regime gave out quite touching revelations to the National Compensation Tribunal (NCT), which was constituted in 1994 by the United Democratic Front (UDF) Government. For instance, one complainant identified as NCT/C/1164, and was once a senior officer in the Ministry of Trade and Industry, was arrested on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1975 by Special Branch police officers, on the accusation that he had published a novel, *Nobody's Friend*, whose contents attacked Dr. Banda and his system of government. The suspect was detained at Mikuyu Maximum Detention Centre (in Zomba) for a period of two years, which also meant that he had lost his job in the civil service. The complainant had this to say about his prison ordeal:

...At Mikuyu (prison), we slept in compartments each of which accommodated about sixty of us. One's bed space was marked by white lines painted on the floor. These delineated a space of about six by two feet for each individual. It was impossible under the circumstances to worry about hygiene and sanitation, not to speak of privacy. At night the warders posted buckets at each of the four corners of the compartment. These served as toilets and you can imagine the stench that emanated from these buckets especially as they filled up during early hours of each day.<sup>16</sup>

Others also suffered on religious grounds, such as complainant NCT/C/1324 from Chief Mpama's area in Chiradzulu, whose family was forced to go into exile in Mozambique because they belonged to the Jehovah's Witnesses religious sect. The family was subjected to torture one night in September 1972 in which all the Jehovah's Witnesses in

the village were rounded up, beaten up and undressed. Although some of the victims were bleeding heavily, they were not allowed to access government hospitals on condition that because they had rejected Dr. Banda (by not buying party membership cards), they had also rejected his hospitals.<sup>17</sup>

Others were also denied economic opportunities by the Banda regime out of sheer jealousy. For instance, complainant NCT/C/2058, who was once a top official for both the MCP and the Malawi Government, explained that his arrest and subsequent detention in January 1980 was merely out of envy and jealousy on the part of those who wanted to buy favours from Dr. Banda. The complainant spent twelve and half years in prison (at Mpyupyu Prison and Mikuyu Detention Centre), during which the Malawi Government closed his businesses (including a shop, maize mill and a filling station) and also seized his brand new vehicle (a Range Rover). The three companies which he had were also handed over to commercial and national banks of Malawi as receiverships.<sup>18</sup>

The Government insisted that it practiced a self-styled form of democracy based on the “four cornerstones” of ‘unity, obedience, discipline and loyalty’, to which every Malawian was supposed to adhere. The overseers of these cornerstones were the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP), who served as the party’s (MCP) paramilitary wing, and terrorized anyone who seemed to act to the contrary. In practice, the MYP acted as the ‘political policemen’ of the repressive Banda regime. The ‘Special Branch’ of the Malawi Police Force also became notorious for arresting anyone they suspected of a being a threat to the political system. Although it was the MYP which was notoriously

oppressive, it was the Police who had to carry out the Government policies of detention without trial. The Police Mobile Force (PMF) was used to hunt any 'dissidents', sometimes using methods such as intimidation of whole villages (as was the case with Moto Village in Mangochi district after the Chipembere uprising of 1965). Sections of the Police were also associated with political assassinations, the commonest methods of which included doctoring cars to cause accidents; severe beatings; starving those in custody; leaving those in custody in mosquito infested cells; and denying them medical care when they fell sick.<sup>19</sup>

The first major development of this period was the 'Cabinet Crisis', which took place in September 1964. This crisis came about because some cabinet ministers disagreed with Dr. Banda on both foreign and domestic policies that Malawi would follow once independence had been achieved. On foreign policy, for instance, there was disagreement over Malawi's co-existence with countries such as South Africa (which was under Apartheid) and Portugal (which had not yet granted independence to neighboring Mozambique). Dr. Banda also preferred to recognize the Free Republic of China (Taiwan) and not Communist China, for fear of angering Malawi's Western donors.<sup>20</sup> On the domestic scene, there were a number of issues that contributed to the crisis. Firstly, the cabinet ministers were not happy with Dr. Banda's preference for a slower rate of 'Africanization' (in which Dr. Banda refused to promote Malawian civil servants unless they were fully trained) and his acceptance of the 'Skinner Report', which gave Malawians lower wages than those of Europeans for doing the same kind of work. Both these ideas were rejected by the Cabinet Ministers.<sup>21</sup>

Another major cause of the crisis was Dr. Banda's authoritarian leadership. Dr. Banda had taken to calling his lieutenants 'my boys', and had made it clear both in private and in public that they were to do as told. For instance, at a mass rally at Colby Community Centre, Dr. Banda became quite explicit about this:

So what does a leader do? When I was negotiating a constitution, before my men knew what I was doing I had finished everything. I said: 'well boys, I have done this, that and that finished'. Even when they were with me in London, Orton Chirwa, Kanyama Chiume, Aleke Banda,...did not know what I was doing. ...I do the work myself. A waste of time why take them? This kind of thing, where a leader says this, but somebody else says that: now who is the leader? That is not the Malawi system. The Malawi system, the Malawi style is that Kamuzu says it is just that, and then it is finished. Whether anyone likes it or not, that is how it is going to be done. No nonsense, no nonsense. You cannot have everybody deciding what to do.<sup>22</sup>

Another major cause of the crisis was the disagreement that arose over Dr. Banda's support of the proposal to levy hospital charges. The ministers objected to the introduction of a three-penny charge at Government hospitals (before that treatment at Government hospitals was free of charge). The ministers felt that the public, particularly in the rural areas, would not be able to raise hospital fees every time they fell sick. They also feared this would be misunderstood by the public, who expected independence to bring fruits on easy terms.<sup>23</sup> The Cabinet Ministers were also not in favour of the 'Detention Bill', which Dr. Banda had adopted from Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana. This bill was aimed at detaining political opponents without necessarily declaring a state of emergency. Most Cabinet Ministers were not in favor of such a bill because it threatened the liberty of everyone, including the ministers themselves.<sup>24</sup>

Due to all these disagreements Dr. Banda decided to dismiss three Cabinet Ministers, namely; Orton Chirwa (Minister of Justice and Attorney General), Augustine Bwanausi (Minister of Labour and Social Development), and Kanyama Chiume (Minister of External Affairs). He also dismissed a Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (Mrs. Rose Chibambo). In sympathy with their colleagues, Willie Chokani, Yatuta Chisiza and John Msonthi resigned (but Msonthi later withdrew his resignation). Henry Masauko Chipembere, who was in Canada at the time, also resigned upon his return to the country.<sup>25</sup>

After the failed cabinet removal of Dr. Banda, through Parliament's vote of confidence in him, and the removal of critical minded MCP heavyweights around him, Dr. Banda now assumed powers in which he was able to suspend anyone from the MCP. Suspension from the party was a death knell for any politician in the de-facto one party state. Banda now embarked on detaining scores of people and purging the party of any doubtful elements. His aim was to be assured that there would be no opposition to both his government and the MCP.<sup>26</sup>

Cullen (1994) posits that the Cabinet Crisis proved to be a decisive event in Malawi's post-independence history. The most obvious result was that the crisis reinforced Banda's tendency towards authoritarian rule and created an exiled opposition movement. Banda was made to react swiftly by trying to consolidate his power base, thus he continued to create a climate of fear with threatening statements against his opponents:

These people are wild animals. They must be destroyed. No beating about the bush. Arrest them, but if they resist arrest, well anything you do is alright as far as I am concerned.<sup>27</sup>

It was such outbursts that killed off any semblance of opposition in the country. And perhaps not surprisingly, on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1966, the MCP was declared the only legal political party in the country, and Dr. Banda's control of both the party and the Government were made absolute.<sup>28</sup> Dr. Banda also made it possible that both the party (MCP) and Republican Constitutions were in several respects complementary, the one covering what the other omitted, to suit the characteristics of a one-party state. For instance, both constitutions allowed Banda to be President-for-life (i.e. of both party and Government).

What emerged in the aftermath of the 'Cabinet Crisis' was to set the tone for thirty years of repressive personalistic rule. After the crisis, some major trends came to characterize Malawian politics. According to Posner (1995), for example, there was the centralization of political and economic power in the hands of the country's ruler. Within two years of independence, Banda had secured for himself not only the presidency of the state and its only legal party, but also the Ministries of Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Justice and Public Works. In 1971, he was declared 'President-for-Life'. Parliament became a mere rubber-stamp institution filled with Banda's sycophants. The British-model judiciary was emasculated by the creation of a parallel system of 'traditional courts' controlled by the MCP, to which all political and serious criminal cases were referred.<sup>29</sup> A second major feature of the post cabinet crisis era was the ruthless treatment of political opponents and the total control of public life by the MCP and its appendages. Political dissenters were routinely detained and tortured in the country's notorious prisons. Those less fortunate

(usually because they were perceived as posing a threat to the regime) were simply made to disappear, often in murders set up to look like road accidents. The most shocking example was the May 1983 case of three Cabinet Ministers (Dick Matenje, Aaron Gadama and Twaibu Sangala) and an MP (David Chiwanga), whose bullet-riddled bodies were found in an overturned car in Mwanza near the Mozambique border. Apparently, the day before he was killed, Dick Matenje, who was MCP Secretary General at the time, had introduced a ‘motion’ in Parliament that would have resulted in a modest liberalization of the regime (i.e. one that would have opened up the regime to give powers to other leaders and not just in the hands of Dr. Banda and those close to him) .<sup>30</sup>

Other revelations surrounding the 1983 Mwanza case are that Dr. Banda had intended to spend a period of time abroad, which set-off a constitutional crisis (on who would act on his behalf). A faction led by Mama Cecilia Kadzamira (Dr. Banda’s Official Hostess and Mr. John Tembo’s niece) wanted John Tembo to be the ‘caretaker’ president. This was challenged by the three murdered Cabinet Ministers and the one MP who backed them, hence their subsequent assassinations in Mwanza.<sup>31</sup>

A day before the ‘killing’ of the of the four influential MCP officials in question, John Tembo had been heard denying that Dick Matenje should be referred to as a ‘boss’ in the party:

What do you mean by saying ‘our boss’ is not here? In Malawi, the only boss we know is Dr. Banda, the President and nobody else....No, no, here in Malawi, it is only Dr. Banda. You should have just said the Secretary General, that’s all, or Mr. Matenje. Not that he is our boss.<sup>32</sup>

The Mwanza incident also served as a confirmation of the fact that within the MCP, no political figure was permitted to emerge as an obvious successor to Dr. Banda, despite his being of old age.<sup>33</sup> For instance, in 1973, one of Dr. Banda's closest associates and founding member of the MCP, Mr. Aleke Banda, was actually dismissed from both the cabinet and the party after a Zambian newspaper had reported that he was a likely successor to Dr. Banda.<sup>34</sup>

Even those dissidents who were operating outside the country were not out of Dr. Banda's reach. Prior to 1992, Banda's highly organized apparatus of domination, control and repression succeeded in preventing the success of any form of organized political opposition to his regime. Through his Secret Service, the opposition leaders in exile could either be abducted or murdered. The oldest opposition movements were started by those former ministers of Banda who fled into exile in the wake of the 1964 Cabinet Crisis. Most of such opposition groups had policies which were largely socialist oriented. The success of these opposition groups was, however, hampered, not just by the MCP's threat, but also because their leaders had their own differences of content or ideology and also due to personal quarrels as each of the dismissed ministers claimed the leadership role.<sup>35</sup>

For instance, H.M. Chipembere, who resigned his ministerial portfolio following the 1964 Cabinet Crisis, founded the Pan-African Democratic Party (PDP) in the USA, which he led with an increasingly authoritarian style and developed into a platform for 'regime change' in Malawi. Chipembere was later joined by Kanyama Chiume, both

representing a socialist, anti-imperialist and pan-African ideology. The party was however hampered by communication problems, which resulted in lengthy postal delays which combined with Chipembere's authoritarian leadership style led to the party's disintegration. Chipembere was later on allegedly poisoned to death in the USA (in 1975), by agents of the Malawi Secret Service.<sup>36</sup> Thus the PDP failed to progress as an opposition front in exile due to both internal and external factors.

Kanyama Chiume later founded the Congress for the Second Republic (CSR) in Tanzania in 1975, to work as an underground movement against Dr. Banda. The effectiveness of CSR was however minimal because it operated in fear of being infiltrated by agents of the Banda regime, as such it had very few members (organized in cells in work places). The meetings of the party's officials took place in cars or secluded rooms in the rear of bars; and most of the functionaries did not even know one another, in order to make betrayal as difficult as possible. Due to communication and financial problems, the CSR never gained a prominent role. In Malawi, Chiume was also declared as 'Kamuzu's enemy number one', following his attacks on Banda in the foreign media.<sup>37</sup> As a result, no one in the country could dare to associate with him (Chiume).

Another major opposition movement in exile was The Socialist League of Malawi (LESOMA), which was founded in 1974 and operated from Mozambique. Its policy was one of radical socialism, and it set itself the goal of bringing down the Banda regime, to achieve human rights and democracy in a socialist system. The party's membership comprised primarily migrants, students and academics in exile. But Malawi's efforts to

achieve good neighbouring relations with Zambia restricted the opposition group's freedom of operation in that country. LESOMA Chairman, Dr. Attati Mpakati, was ordered to leave Zambia where he was politically active, in 1982, following heavy pressure on former Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda, by the Banda regime.<sup>38</sup> After an unsuccessful assassination attempt in 1979, Mpakati was killed four years later, in Harare, Zimbabwe, in March 1983, presumably because the Malawi Secret Service was more careful in planning the attack this time. He was found murdered in a Harare storm drain. In the earlier assassination attempt, Mpakati had eight of his fingers blown-off by a parcel bomb in Maputo, Mozambique. Dr. Banda stated publicly that 'his boys' were responsible for the attack.<sup>39</sup> Through such threats and actions, LESOMA failed to grow as an effective opposition front.

Yet another major opposition group formed by exiled politicians was the Malawi Freedom Movement (MAFREMO), which was founded by the former Justice Minister, Orton Chirwa, who fled to Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania during the Cabinet Crisis of 1964. MAFREMO was led by Chirwa until his spectacular kidnapping in the Malawi-Zambia border area by agents of the Malawi Secret Service. The MAFREMO leadership was recruited primarily from the ranks of academics, students as well as migrant workers in Zambia, which was the movement's primary base of operations. The Malawi Secret Service closely followed the movement's operations, such that in October 1989, a leading MAFREMO member and journalist, Mkwapatira Mhango, was killed by a bomb blast at his Lusaka home, for which Banda's Secret Service was held responsible. In total, ten people died, including Mhango's two wives and young children.<sup>40</sup> As for Orton Chirwa,

while on a visit to Zambia in 1981 with his wife, Vera and son (Fumbani), they were abducted, after a successful Malawi Secret Service infiltration of MAFREMO, and the three were brought to Malawi. The two elders (Orton and Vera) were brought to trial on treason charges before the Southern Region Traditional Court in May 1983 (after two years in detention). After a protracted trial, the two were sentenced to death, but due to international pressure, their sentences were commuted to life sentence imprisonment in 1984. In October 1992, only weeks after being visited by British lawyers, Orton Chirwa died in controversial circumstances at Zomba Central Prison.<sup>41</sup> All these secret attacks on opposition groups negatively affected the fortunes of multi-partyism during the Banda era.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

What has been established in this chapter is that for a period of about thirty years, Malawi progressed as a one-party state, under the personal dictatorship of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda and his MCP. The major dividing line for this state of affairs was the infamous 1964 Cabinet Crisis, in which Dr. Banda disagreed with most of his Cabinet Ministers on both foreign and domestic policies. In the aftermath of this crisis, which went in favor of Dr. Banda, he (Banda) showed his determination to rule the country with an iron fist, in which opposition political groupings were disallowed to operate both within and outside the country. This created an exiled opposition movement for the country, which however remained ineffective. This was so because even though some former MCP politicians tried to form political parties in exile, they were successfully tracked down by Dr.

Banda's Secret Service. On the other hand, these opposition groups were also faced by internal problems, such as quarrels over leadership positions, lack of funds, poor intra-party communication and also ideological differences. Some parties were also allegedly weakened because of ethnic differences. Thus, for many years the parties and all political movements in exile posed no real threat to Dr. Banda's one-party regime.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> See T. Cullen, Malawi: A Turning Point (Durham: Pentland Press Ltd, 1994), p.13. A.C. Ross, "Some Reflections on the Malawi 'Cabinet Crisis' 1964-1965" in Journal of Religion in Malawi, No.7, Nov. 1997, pp7-8.

<sup>2</sup> R. Rotberg, (ed.), Hero of the Nation: Chipembere of Malawi: An Autobiography (Blantyre: CLAIM, 2002), pp299-300, and 235-237.

<sup>3</sup> J. McCracken, "Democracy and Nationalism in Historical Perspective", in Journal of African Affairs, No. 97, 1998), p231.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.242.

<sup>5</sup> Speech by Kanyama Chiume, MCP Publicity Secretary, from the proceedings of the first meeting of the first session of the National Assembly of Malawi, 26-29 May 1964, in J. McCracken, *ibid*, p.245. Note: *mphara* is a traditional meeting place in the village.

<sup>6</sup> J.L. Lwanda, Kamuzu Banda of Malawi: Promise, Power and Paralysis, 1961-1993 (Glasgow: Dudu Nsomba Publications, 1993), pp31-32.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.34.

<sup>8</sup> T. Cullen, Malawi: A Turning Point (Durham: Pentland Press Ltd, 1994), p.12.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.13, from P. Short, Banda (1974:202).

<sup>10</sup> P. Short, Banda (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1974), p.253, from *Malawi News*, 1/03/1963.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.254: A speech by Dr. Banda, at a Local Government Conference in Lilongwe, on 16/04/1964.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, pp138 and 141.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.141, from *Nyasaland Times*, 3/02/1961.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.254.

<sup>15</sup> B. Muluzi, Y. Juwayeyi, et al, Democracy with a Price: The History of Malawi since 1900 (Blantyre: Jhango-Heinemann, 1999), p.103.

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<sup>16</sup> See Government of Malawi, The National Compensation Tribunal, History and Hope in Malawi: Repression, Suffering and Human Rights under Dr. Kamuzu Banda, 1964-1994 (March 2005), pp35-37. (Note: The complainant once served as First Secretary at the Malawi Embassy in Bonn, West Germany, between 1973-1974).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, pp40-41.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pp43-45

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, pp92-93 and 97-98. See also Lwanda, p.71 (from Amnesty International Report, AFR/36/03/92). See also N.T. Mbowela, "Democracy of Chameleons: A Historical Explanation of Democratic Setbacks in Malawi, 1958-2004" (MA Thesis, 2006), Chapter 4.

<sup>20</sup> Cullen, op cit, p.13.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.13. See also Muluzi, Juwayeyi, et al, pp84-85.

<sup>22</sup> Lwanda, op cit, p.38.

<sup>23</sup> Muluzi., Juwayeyi, et al, op cit, p.85.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, pp86-87.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.87.

<sup>26</sup> Lwanda, op cit, p.42.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.14.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.61.

<sup>29</sup> D.N. Posner, "Malawi's New Dawn", Journal of Democracy, volume 6, No. 1, January 1995, p.134.

<sup>30</sup> See ibid, p.135.

<sup>31</sup> Cullen, op cit, p.14.

<sup>32</sup> See *The Weekly Chronicle*, 16/04/1995, p.1: The Making of a Dictator Section: Speech by John Tembo, correcting the then MCP Treasurer General, Sydney Somanje, who was overheard referring to Dick Matenje (then MCP Secretary General and Administrative Secretary) as 'our boss' at Kwacha International Conference Center on 17/05/1983, a day before the four MCP officials were killed).

<sup>33</sup> See R. Brown, "Malawi: Recent History" in Africa South of the Sahara 2001 (30<sup>th</sup> edition) (England: Europa Publications, 2000, pp708-711), p.709.

<sup>34</sup> Muluzi, et al, Democracy with a Price: pp125-126. Also see *Weekend Nation*, 27-28 September 2008, pp32-33.

<sup>35</sup> O.T. Kanyama Chiume, in H. Meinhardt, Free at Last! Malawi's Democratic Transition (Balaka: Montfort Media, 2004), p.67.

<sup>36</sup> See H. Meinhardt, ibid, p.68, from K. Chiume, Autobiography (1982), pp238-240. Also see G.T. Ngubola Kamwambe, The Tragedy of Malawians: Legacy of One-Party Rule (Lusaka: 1993).

<sup>37</sup> See Meinhardt, op cit, pp68-69.

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<sup>38</sup> See Meinhardt, op cit, pp69-70, from *Chronicle*, Lusaka, 23/02/1982.

<sup>39</sup> See Cullen, op cit, p.15.

<sup>40</sup> See Cullen, op cit, p.15 and H. Meinhardt, op cit, p.72.

<sup>41</sup> See Lwanda, Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, p.238.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE SECOND WAVE OF MULTI-PARTYISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF AFORD AND UDF, 1991-1994**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss some of the developments that resulted in the second wave of multi-partyism in the country and the emergence of the two political parties, Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) and United Democratic Front (UDF) that are at the centre of this study. It will be argued that the major factors that contributed to this second wave of multi-partyism were both internal and external to the country's political system, and that despite the resistance offered by the then ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP), it became increasingly evident that Malawi would re-establish itself as a multi-party democracy. The pressure for a change of the political system (from one-party to multi-party) swept across many African countries from the late 1980s and early 1990s, and this did not spare Malawi, which for close to thirty years was under a repressive and undemocratic one-party system. Other political commentators even christened this transition period as the 'second liberation struggle', to distinguish it from the initial liberation struggle against colonial rule. This second liberation struggle was aimed at bringing wider human rights

(such as freedom of association and assembly), while the first struggle was aimed at fighting for political independence for the African majority.<sup>1</sup>

### **3.1 The Transition to Multi-Party Politics in Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s**

Bratton and Van de Walle (1994) posit that there were five major trends that generally took place in most African countries (including Malawi), where neopatrimonial leadership systems were eventually replaced by multi-party political systems in the early 1990s. Firstly, due to a combination of lack of economic opportunities and increasing exclusionary patterns of reward, there were social unrests in most African countries. The mass popular unrests were usually over the issue of declining living standards, which led to an escalation of calls for the removal of incumbent leaders. This then marked the beginning of political transitions, which were mostly started through a ‘bottom-up’ initiative. For instance, of the twenty-one cases of transition in Sub-Saharan Africa between November 1989 and May 1991, the initiative to undertake political reform was taken by opposition protesters in sixteen cases and by incumbent state leaders only in five cases. In general, the neopatrimonial leaders were driven by calculations of personal political survival, such that they resisted demands for political change for as long as possible and sought to manage the process of transition only after it had been forced upon them.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, the pressure for change came from outside the incumbent group (especially from former insiders who had fallen out of official favour). Whereas the insiders (the

ruling clique) enjoyed preferential access to state offices and associated spoils, the outsiders were left to languish in the wilderness. And that the more complete their exclusion from economic and political opportunities, the more strongly the outsiders were motivated to oppose the incumbent regimes. These outsiders grasped for control of popular protest movements, usually by promoting symbols (such as multi-party democracy) that would convert economic grievances into demands for regime change. The insiders, on the other hand, were less likely to promote political reform because of the political and economic benefits which they had been enjoying, which could have been in danger with any sort of political reform. Thus, they tended to cling to the regime and to sink or to swim with it.<sup>3</sup>

The other common trend was that the prospect of political compromise and reform depended more on the personality, management skills and governing institutions of the incumbent ruler. For instance, a leader who had attempted to legitimate a personalistic regime with popularistic rhetoric (for example, of ‘peoples democracy’ or ‘African socialism’) was more likely to respond positively to demands for political liberalization than was a leader who had ruled on the basis of claims to traditional paternalism or revolutionary purity. On the other hand, a leader who had allowed political rivals to live freely within the country was more likely to strike a deal on the rules of transition than was a leader who had systematically eliminated opponents. In both cases, however, the opposition was calling for the removal of the incumbent leadership.<sup>4</sup>

The other major characteristic of the transition period was to change the rules (laws), so as to accommodate the opposition movements in the country's political set-up. The opposition leadership, which commonly included lawyers within its ranks, called for rule of law (for example, in Mali, Togo, Cameroon and Central African Republic, where national bar associations played leading opposition roles). In Malawi, the Law Society was at the time also active for some time in discussing the legal rights of the individual citizen, and became a group to be reckoned with. The law was the major weapon that the opposition had at its disposal, thus it was forcing the incumbent regimes to lift emergency regulations, allow registration of opposition political parties, limit the constitutional powers of the executive, or hold competitive elections. What the opposition camps were doing was to attempt to reintroduce rule-governed behavior after a prolonged period in which such legal niceties had been suspended.<sup>5</sup>

Another common trend during the transition period was that most middle-class elements tended to align with the opposition. In most cases, private capitalists tended to oppose the use of the state machinery by the bureaucratic bourgeoisie to appropriate property for itself. As such, these private capitalists (or the independent middle-class) tended to use the transition from neopatrimonialism as an opportunity to include them in the new rules of the political game. As such, businessmen and professionals often took on political leadership roles in the opposition, drawing in other middle class groups (like senior public servants) whose downward economic mobility was a powerful impetus to forge an alternative ruling coalition.<sup>6</sup>

### **3.2 Major Schools of thought on the Transition from the One-Party to Multi-Party System in Africa**

P.H. Kaya and D. van Wyk posit that there are two main schools of thought that explain the major forces behind the second multi-party dispensation in African countries. These two schools of thought are namely: the external centered explanation (school) and the internal centered one. The external centered explanation can further be divided into two parts. Firstly, there is the dimension which tends to emphasize the influence of liberal democratic changes in Eastern Europe as the main cause of the new wave of multi-party democratic demands that engulfed Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Then there is that which tends to emphasize the growth of imperialist pressure at the time for multi-partyism as conditionality for getting development aid. The imperialist demand for political reforms in dictatorial regimes of the Third World was itself a by-product of the disintegration of the Soviet Union dominated communist empire and the consequent end of the Cold War. Now that the Cold War was over it became an embarrassment for Western powers to continue supporting regimes that had poor human rights records. Thus it could be argued that the demand for multi-party politics did not originate with the people of Africa, but rather it was an imposed phenomenon from outside the continent, the implication being that multi-party politics is alien to African conditions and environment.<sup>7</sup>

The internal centered explanation similarly is divided into about three parts. The first part is regarded as a ‘conspiracy’ viewpoint. It is argued that the African masses decided to

demand multi-party democracy because the democratization process in Africa was arrested after political independence by the petty bourgeoisie who consolidated political power through the one-party state. The attempt to arrest the democratization process was due to competition between the different sections of the African petty bourgeoisie for the monopoly of political power geared to enjoyment of the fruits of independence at the expense of the African masses.<sup>8</sup> The explanation is regarded as a ‘conspiracy’ viewpoint because it gives the impression that the petty bourgeoisie who led the nationalist struggles in Africa conspired to arrest the democratization process for their own interests.

The second part hinges on the crisis of ‘African democracy’, which includes the one-party system that had become characteristic of it by the 1970s and 1980s. It focuses on the configuration of class interests in post-independence Africa, and on how the one-party system ended up serving the interests of the richer petty bourgeoisie at the expense of the less privileged classes. According to Mpangala (1991), for example, the growth of class contradictions in Africa has been basically a result of the process of consolidating state power by the petty bourgeoisie under the one-party system. It is also a product of changes in class relations and the process of class formation since independence. At independence, most African societies were characterized by a class pattern that was inherited from colonialism. The major classes constituted the peasantry, the working class and the petty bourgeoisie. During the struggle for independence these classes forged considerable unity in the face of a common colonial enemy thus camouflaging contradictions between them. After independence changes began to take place within and between the classes. The working class began to grow in size, especially with the

establishment of import-substitution industries in the late 1960s and 1970s. The working class also began to grow more and more conscious of themselves as a class and yet became marginalized both politically and economically by the petty bourgeoisie. Another class which grew and became greatly marginalized is the peasantry, particularly the small peasants whose economic conditions worsened with the growth of relations of exploitation and the post-independence economic crisis.<sup>9</sup> The petty bourgeoisie largely marginalized both the working class and the peasantry, in both political and economic senses. As such, the latter classes began to agitate for multi-partyism as a remedy for their oppressed positions.

The third dimension of the internal centred explanation is that echoed by Decalo (1992) who argues that although the democracy movement came of age around 1990, popular strivings for liberalization had actually emerged (in most African countries) from the day the one-party system locked out competitive elections and started impinging upon individual civic and human rights in the name of the 'collective good'. But in those early days of 'wine and roses', so to speak, nationalism, patriotism and civic idealism did carry the day. Democratic aspirations could temporarily be put aside, especially since competitive elections proved to be little more than ethnic tugs of war. Thus it would be argued that although the pro-democracy movement of the late 1980s started in Eastern Europe, this only had a psychological effect on Africans, who for a long time had witnessed their own countries' departures from democratic standards.<sup>10</sup> As such, the spillover-effect (from Eastern Europe) cannot tell the whole story. What should be noted is that the continent was already 'ripe' for upheaval, and there were additional, internal

and external factors that played a crucial role in leading the democratic pressures to successful fruition. Among the internal variables was the fore-mentioned fact that Africa was at a political dead-end morally, economically bankrupt and inherently unstable to the degree that ‘no state could count itself safe from a wind of change once it started to blow’.<sup>11</sup> The call for democracy was not just for a political birthright, but for a total revision of the fundamental charter of the state, underpinned by political liberalism and accountability. Over the years, all ideological and developmental options had been tried under one-party rule, and found wanting; all styles of governance, including tyranny, had been unsuccessful in controlling or binding masses to leaders in stable relationships. In statistical findings, Africa scored at the bottom of every criterion for measuring development: for instance, average life expectancy was fifty years (and as low as thirty-seven in some countries); demographic growth was inordinately high; disease and famine were rampant. More distressingly, Africa was not just the poorest continent, but the only one backsliding, with its meager advances eroded by high birth rates and economic mismanagement. Unemployment rates were also high for the continent (reaching as high as seventy percent in some countries). All these problems were regarded as a failure of those who were in charge.<sup>12</sup>

### **3.3 The Democratic Transition in Malawi, 1991-1994**

The democratic transition Malawi underwent from 1991 to 1994 was induced by both external and internal factors, and it is the purpose of this section to highlight the developments that accounted for the scenario. The external factors included the influence

which the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent democratic changes in Eastern Europe had on the country's political opposition. There was also the influence of donor pressure that came from the country's main donors, such as Britain, France, Germany and the USA, all of whom called for a change in the country's political set-up. Furthermore, developments in other African countries such as Kenya, Zambia, South Africa and Namibia, where constitutions had been amended to allow for multi-party systems also influenced Malawian opposition politicians and pressure groups to agitate for multi-partyism. The internal pressure for change came from people of different professions, including the clergy; former prominent politicians in the MCP regime; former civil servants; lawyers; businessmen; university students and indeed all those who were fed-up with the dictatorial leadership of the MCP regime.

Externally, the pressure for change of the one-party system of government in Malawi began with the fall of the Soviet Union in the mid 1980s and the end of the Cold War which followed. That development in Eastern Europe forced the Western powers from the perceived need to turn a blind eye to the domestic excesses of Cold War allies, and led them to the view that the absence of democratic government and political accountability in Africa was a significant contributory factor in Africa's economic malaise. A number of Western governments and international financial agencies, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) began to insist that aid and investment had to be linked to political reform in Africa. Thus, at the end of the 1980s, political conditionality was added to the economic conditionality which had emerged about a decade earlier. The fundamental concept of political conditionality was that aid

and investment should be withheld from African governments that abused human rights and denied political freedoms to their citizens until such a time these abuses were removed.<sup>13</sup> For Malawi, the Paris donor meeting, held in May 1992, suspended all new aid except for drought and refugee relief, and expressed deep concern about the lack of progress in the area of basic freedoms and human rights and linked new aid to ‘good governance’.<sup>14</sup> In the case of Britain, Douglas Herd, the then Foreign Secretary, also indicated a possible change in British policy towards Malawi, by declaring: ‘countries tending towards pluralism, public accountability, respect for human rights and market principles should be encouraged. Governments who persist with repressive policies should not expect us to support their folly’.<sup>15</sup> And in March 1991, American foreign aid guidelines were clearly spelled out in Congress: ‘foreign aid to individual countries will take into account their progress towards establishing democracy...democracy will be placed on equal footing with progress towards economic reforms and the establishment of a market-oriented economy, two key factors which have already been used as criteria for allocating US foreign aid’.<sup>16</sup>

This condition for the withdrawal of donor aid worked according to plan in most African countries because many countries greatly depended on such funds to meet the remainder of their budgets. For instance, in Benin, the desperate need to pay state employees obliged President Kerekou to accept all the conditions, including the nomination of a technocrat (Mr. Nicephore Soglo), as Prime Minister, which the French had imposed on him. On the other hand, in those countries that were almost economically independent, it

took long to induce political change. For example, President Omar Bongo in oil-rich Gabon could afford to ridicule French pressure for political reform.<sup>17</sup>

According to Newell (1996), the withdrawal of donor aid proved to be a serious blow to Dr. Banda especially that it came at a time when the country's economy was already showing signs of strain because of the prolonged drought in much of Southern Africa. As a result, 1992 became a 'nightmare year' for the economy with inflation reaching 22.7 percent, and the suspension of aid entailing a reported loss of over 270 million Kwacha. The overall effect of all these factors was the biggest decline (seven percent) in the output of goods and services (real GDP) since independence.<sup>18</sup>

Also worth noting is the work done by Amnesty International, an independent human rights body based in London, which brought to the attention of the world Kamuzu Banda's abuses of human rights. In particular, they accused Malawi of mistreating inmates in prisons. They also made information available to the media, which helped Malawian agitation for multi-party democracy as people became aware of the ills being practiced by their Government or those in power.<sup>19</sup>

Apart from the pressure from the West, another source of influence came from other African countries. By 1990, multi-party movements had emerged in East, Central and Southern Africa. The changes taking place there began to influence the course of events in Malawi. For instance, Malawians had come to note that pressure groups in Zambia and Kenya had, with the support of donor countries, forced the presidents of those countries

to allow other parties to exist and take part in elections; and also that in Zambia, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) had won a landslide victory against the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP).<sup>20</sup> The independence of Namibia in April 1990, under a liberal constitution and a multi-party electoral system was also celebrated across the continent. Furthermore, the prospect of meaningful political reform in South Africa, which suddenly arose with the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990, the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), and the preparations for constitutional negotiations, all led to a review of domestic policies, especially in the Southern African frontline states.<sup>21</sup>

Although there was this external pressure for change in the development of Malawian politics, the major pressure for change also came from within Malawi. Underground movements and the clergy played a major role towards the return of multi-partyism and democracy in the country. This pressure came because most Malawians had been disappointed with the one-party rule and the dictatorship associated with it, such that they started to agitate for political change.

The first sign of dissent came from a 'Pastoral Letter', which was authored by Roman Catholic Bishops in the country. The letter, entitled 'Living Our Faith', was pronounced in Roman Catholic Churches across the country on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1992. The letter blamed the MCP-led government for a number of failures in the country, which included the spread of corruption; the increasing gap between the rich and the poor; serious flaws within the education system; cutbacks in health care; denial of basic freedoms; blatant injustices;

inadequacies in the judicial system, among other issues.<sup>22</sup> It is widely held in other circles that the Catholic Bishops were actually encouraged by Pope John Paul II (who visited Malawi in 1989) to face up to their responsibilities and tackle the major social issues which concerned members of their congregations. The Pope had allegedly told the Bishops of the Catholic Church's involvement in bringing down communist governments in Eastern Europe, and replacing them with governments that were based on the promotion of wider human rights.<sup>23</sup> Apart from the Pope's influence, developments in neighboring Zambia also influenced the action taken by the Catholic Bishops in Malawi. In 1990 and 1991, the Zambian Catholic Secretariat had published Pastoral Letters in support of multi-party politics, and at the same time criticised the one-party political system for being inefficient and corrupt. Thus the church supported calls for a multi-party referendum to decide that country's political future. The practice of writing pastoral letters by the Roman Catholics (and other churches such as Presbyterians) proved to be effective since about eighty-three percent of Zambians claim membership of the church and the message could easily get across.<sup>24</sup>

After the distribution of the 16,000 copies of the Pastoral Letter, Dr. Banda's government, predictably, reacted angrily, more especially as Banda had met the Bishops just a few days before the letter was published and distributed. On 10<sup>th</sup> March 1992 the Bishops were interrogated for eight hours at Kanjedza Police Station in Blantyre. When they left, they were ordered to remain at the Archbishop's house until further notice. The Police Inspector General issued a press release on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1992, declaring the Bishops' letter to be a seditious document: 'Anyone who bought, received, procured or

otherwise got hold of the said Episcopal letter, should surrender it to the nearest police station. Continued circulation of the letter or possession of it is in itself sedition and will result in criminal prosecution'. As such, using Section 50 of the Penal Code, loads of people were arrested during the first week of the letter's circulation.<sup>25</sup> The MCP's paramilitary wing (The Malawi Young Pioneers) was also dispatched to Montfort Press in Balaka, where the Pastoral Letter had been published, such that the publishing house was set on fire. What is more, one of the signatories of the letter, Monsignor John Roche, an Irishman, was deported.<sup>26</sup>

The MCP held an emergency NEC meeting in Lilongwe on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1992, to discuss the contents of the Bishops' Letter. MBC recorded the meeting, but unfortunately the tape recordings were smuggled to London. The recordings revealed plans by some MCP officials to kill the Bishops. Some of the MCP officials had this to say:

These Bishops should be killed. Whoever has gone against Kamuzu should be killed...If I could meet one of the Bishops any time, whether day or night, he would disappear. Our hearts will not rest until we hear that all seven Bishops do not exist anymore.<sup>27</sup>

If we were given guns we could have killed them ourselves. These Bishops are great sinners. They are drunkards, womanizers, thieves.<sup>28</sup>

I would say these seven people are finished. They will be killed. They should not be found anywhere in the country because they will be killed. A ghost can go to them and warn them about our agreement but still they will be killed. Today these seven people are going. They will be killed.<sup>29</sup>

Even in the National Assembly, the thought of punishing and demonizing the Catholic Bishops took center stage. The next Parliamentary meeting after the circulation of the

Pastoral Letter, which took place in April 1992, was characterized by speeches castigating the Bishops. In essence, the Bishops were regarded as traitors, for being used by foreign interests. MCP MP for Lilongwe South, Hon. Chimutu Nkhoma, had this to say:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, these seven Bishops have shown a spirit of non appreciation to all good things His Excellency, The Life President, Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda is doing for the country. ...The poor minded seven Bishops have disgraced the people of this country....People of this country are solidly behind the Ngwazi and will never listen to anyone who tries to disunite them. We shall never allow anyone to disrupt the peace and calm, law and order which has been brought to this country by Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda. So the seven dull minded so-called Bishops can not be followed by anybody....The people of this country, Mr. Speaker, Sir, do not like traitors, like those seven Bishops.<sup>30</sup>

And the nominated MP for Blantyre North, Hon. H.C. Somanje, had this to say:

The Pastoral Letter is merely an iceberg in a hidden glacier of international campaign to dent the good image of this country. I have no doubt at all, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Bishops were blindly used by sophisticated political crooks, to cause confusion in this country and eventually bring down the lawfully constituted government of this country....But while we can forgive the ignorance of the Bishops, for having been dragged into signing a document whose meaning and implications they little know about, we shall not forget the fact that they betrayed this nation to foreign interests.<sup>31</sup>

What the Bishops' letter did was to accelerate the pace of political change in Malawi, because it did not take long before opposition pressure groups could rise up and claim massive widespread support throughout the country. Other Christian denominations (such as the Presbyterians and Anglicans) also joined the struggle, such that in August 1992,

they helped to form the Public Affairs Committee (PAC), which campaigned for more government accountability and democratic reform.<sup>32</sup>

It was in the aftermath of the success of the Pastoral Letter that a number of opposition pressure groups got their courage to come in the open to challenge the MCP Government. Professional politicians began to replace the student and church activists in leadership positions. In most cases familiar faces reappeared, as former cabinet ministers and senior members of the MCP who had fallen out of official favour clambered to return to active politics. For instance, Chakufwa Chihana, Secretary General of the Southern African Trade Union Co-ordination Council (SATUCC), imprisoned for advocating multi-party democracy in Malawi during the 1970s, was the first opposition figure to openly support the Bishops' Letter. At a meeting held in Lusaka, Zambia, by exiled Malawian politicians, Chihana called on the people 'to stand up to one of the worst dictatorships in Africa, and bring in a democratic dispensation'. At the same meeting, the Interim Committee for a Democratic Alliance (ICDA) was formed, with the aim of campaigning for human rights and democracy in Malawi, and Chihana was elected its chairman. It was also the ICDA which was behind the printing and circulation of a newsletter called *The Malawi Democrat*, which was printed in Lusaka. The ICDA also asked Chihana to come to Malawi to organize a national conference on political forces within the country. But upon his arrival at Kamuzu International Airport (KIA), on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1992, he was immediately arrested, as he read a prepared statement in support of multi-party democracy. Chihana was to spend the next fourteen months in prison, first at Zomba and then at Mikuyu Prison, from 16<sup>th</sup> July 1992 to 10<sup>th</sup> June 1993. Chihana, had however

prepared his ground-work well, having announced over the BBC World Service before returning to Malawi that he intended to challenge the Malawi Government to initiate serious reforms, and as a result his dramatic arrest was covered by the international media and promptly condemned in the strongest terms possible. This arrest also provided Malawi's donors with an excellent pretext for their suspension of aid in May 1992. When a delegation of British lawyers visited him in September 1992, Chihana had this to say about his ill-treatment:

The cell is very small. It is only about the size of my body. There is a window in the cell which has been deliberately blocked-off. There is no ventilation. Their intention is that I should suffocate. I was held for one month in leg irons. My legs swelled. I can not see my family and friends.<sup>33</sup>

It was the ICDA which eventually 'gave birth' to a political grouping (later political party) called AFORD, which was aimed at holding political rallies in which the idea of political pluralism was emphasized. The political ideas of AFORD were consolidated in *The Malawi Democrat*, which was circulated fortnightly. The first leaders of AFORD were Chakufwa Chihana, Peter Kaleso, Augustine Mnthambala, Chipimpha Mughogho and Reverend Aaron Longwe, among others.

Another major pressure group that emerged within the country in late 1991 was the UDF, and it mainly comprised of former MCP top officials. The UDF also advocated multi-party democracy in the country, as opposed to a single-party system. The political ideas of the UDF were propagated in the weekly newsletter called *UDF News*.<sup>34</sup> The UDF started through the initiative of mainly four people on the ground. These included two foreigners (Europeans), namely Father Patrick O'Malley (an Irish Priest) and Dr. David

Kerr (a University Lecturer), who encouraged two Malawians (Bakili Muluzi and Brown Mpinganjira), to start an underground movement to challenge Dr. Banda's regime. Dr. Kerr (who was also an undercover member of the Amnesty International) and Father O'Malley took on the job of coordination and worked secretly to expand opposition circles. For instance, the underground movement could use computers of the two Europeans as a secret secretariat, from which they could print out numerous pamphlets and letters, the contents of which were critical of the Banda regime. But as soon as the group was firmly established, the two Europeans pulled out (withdrew), to avoid arousing suspicions that the opposition was being remote controlled from abroad.<sup>35</sup> From late 1991 to early 1992, the movement held secret meetings in people's houses, but at a meeting in March 1992, following the publication and distribution of the Roman Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter, the opposition pressure group named itself the United Democratic Party (UDP) and named Mr. Bakili Muluzi as its chairman (by acclamation).<sup>36</sup>

The majority of the activists in the UDP (later UDF) consisted of former senior MCP functionaries who had fallen into disfavour. For instance, Bakili Muluzi once served in a number of portfolios in the MCP regime including that of Party Secretary General (officially the second highest political office in Malawi, since Dr. Banda did not have a Vice President); he also served as MCP MP from 1975 to 1982; and also served in a number of Ministerial positions between 1976 and 1982 (such as Deputy Minister of Youth and Culture, Minister of Education, Minister of Transport and Communication).<sup>37</sup> The group's first vice president, Aleke Banda, was one of the founding members of the MCP, and he also served the MCP regime in a number of capacities, which included

serving as a founder and architect of the MYP; Chairman of the one-party state committee; and also as chairman of the Life Presidency Commission (such that it was Aleke Banda who, in 1971, proposed to the MCP Annual Convention that Dr. Banda should be made 'State Life President').<sup>38</sup> Other founding members such as Edward Bwanali, Justin Malewezi, Richard Sembereka, Willie Katenga Kaunda and Brown Mpinganjira, also held high positions at one time in the MCP regime.

Despite both internal and external pressure being mounted on the MCP-led Government to adopt multi-party democracy, the MCP remained adamant and insisted that the one-party system was a far much better system than multi-partyism. For instance, Honourable Lovemore Munlo, the then Deputy Minister of External Affairs, made this comment in the National Assembly:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Malawi is a one-party state, and like any other system of government, may have weaknesses as well as strengths. The way forward in trying to correct any weakness that may appear to occur in our system is not, and I repeat, is not to completely destroy the system, nor to throw away what has taken us many years to build and start all over again with something totally new and alien. Those who want us in Malawi to throw away over thirty years of peace and freedom, progress and development for something we have never had experience with can not be described as anything else but dubious and fake....They need to be reminded of the adage that it is better to face the devil you see than the one you do not.<sup>39</sup>

Other MCP officials also campaigned vehemently, telling Malawians that if the country would adopt multi-partyism it would bring chaos and/or civil wars in the country, and also insisting that multi-partyism was an alien system to African countries. For instance, Honourable H.C. Somanje, made this comment in the National Assembly:

Contemporary born free African leaders think because they are educated, they can run government. They advocate change for the sake of it without projecting ahead the repercussions of such a move. They believe that because an ideology works well elsewhere in the world, it can also work well in their countries. But Mr. Speaker, Sir, they do not realize the danger of copying political and economic systems from other countries....Mr. Speaker, Sir, those who are advocating the introduction of multi-partyism in this country are politically immature and myopic. They are only being used by foreign agencies to destabilize this country to the benefit of the enemies of Malawi and Africa as a whole....

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it does not take a genius to notice the miseries the multi-party system of government is bringing to Africa because multi-partyism is not the answer to the economic ills of Africa, ...neither is it an insurance for human rights. Look at Liberia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Zaire, ...no sooner did the countries legalize the formation of political parties, than tribes began killing each other, ...even before holding elections....Unfortunately, many people are making a mistake because they think other countries are opting for multi-partyism, then it can also work here.<sup>40</sup>

Due to the increase in both internal and external pressure for change, Dr. Banda announced that a referendum would be held to decide whether to keep the single-party system of government or to adopt a multi-party system. Thus campaigning towards a national referendum started in late 1992, and Dr. Banda was more than confident that the National Referendum would go in his favour, especially in view of the fact that his Government (and political party) maintained official control over the press and the electoral machinery, plus that he had the public funds at his disposal to finance the ruling MCP. Throughout the campaign period Dr. Banda reiterated his stand against multi-partyism in his public rallies. In some of his speeches, Dr. Banda had this to say:

Who ever takes over from me after my death will do so in the name of the one-party system.<sup>41</sup>

Anyone who is advocating for multiple parties is talking nonsense; because people do not want multi-party politics...No one wants another party, except ambitious people.<sup>42</sup>

Dr. Banda also reverted to arresting leaders of the pressure groups (from both AFORD and UDF), by directly ordering such arrests. For instance, Bakili Muluzi (the then UDF National Chairman) was accused of stealing money while he was still in the MCP (from which he had resigned slightly over a decade earlier). At a public rally in Mzuzu, Dr. Banda made this statement:

Bakili is telling people that he left the MCP because it was not good. This is a lie. Muluzi was sacked from the party because he was a thief, stealing money from the MCP and my Press Group of companies....Where was he and Edward Bwanali when there was the Federation and Colonial Government?<sup>43</sup>

Within a week of this revelation and outburst, Dr. Banda had ordered the Malawi Police Force to arrest Muluzi and some multi-party advocates, at a public rally held in Balaka:

It has been reported to me that the multi-party people are threatening people, particularly women in the Women's League. This must stop, otherwise I will order the police to do something about it....The police will know what to do under Kamuzu's order.<sup>44</sup>

Speaking earlier at the same public rally, Hon. Wadson Deleza, the then MCP Administrative Secretary, announced that UDF Chairman, Bakili Muluzi, would be taken to court and tried for theft. Hon. Deleza said: 'The Ngwazi (Dr. Banda) has directed that Muluzi be arrested and tried in a court of law'.<sup>45</sup>

Despite such threats being common in the run-up to the referendum, a national referendum was still held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1993, in which sixty-three percent of Malawian voters favoured the introduction of multi-partyism and twenty-seven percent voted for a continuation of the one-party system. Kamuzu Banda accepted the results, but he rejected calls by the opposition groups to resign on the grounds that the results reflected a vote of no confidence in him. The electoral process was, however, marred by many atrocities committed by MCP Youth Leaguers on the opposition supporters, such as beating up opposition members; and also banning two opposition newspapers, *UDF News* and *The Malawi Democrat* (which were mouthpieces of the two major pressure groups-UDF and AFORD respectively).<sup>46</sup>

In late 1993, Section Four of the country's old constitution was repealed to allow for the formation of opposition political parties. The 'Life Presidency' clause was also removed from the country's constitution. The old Section Four only recognized the presence of only one national party (and that party had to be the MCP).<sup>47</sup> The repeal of the section gave a chance for new political parties to be formed in the country. Thus both AFORD and UDF got their recognition as political parties (before that they were referred to as pressure groups). Other parties that joined the fray include Malawi National Democratic Party (MNDP), United Front for Multi-Party Democracy (UFMD), Malawi Democratic Party (MDP), Congress for the Second Republic (CSR) and Malawi Democratic Union (MDU) led by Tim Mangwazu, Harry Bwanausi, Kamlepo Kalua and Amunandife Nkumba, respectively, but their contribution to the country's political landscape has remained insignificant, as some of the parties remained in name only, made up of a leader

and a handful of followers. The formation of multiple parties in the country thus, paved way for calls to conduct a multi-party general election, which was conducted eleven months after the national referendum was held (its results will be analysed in the next chapter).

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented a discussion of some of the major forces that contributed to the second wave of multi-partyism in Malawi, which eventually led to the emergence of AFORD and UDF, as new political parties in the country. The forces that contributed to this process were both internal and external to the country. The external pressure was mainly applied by both donor countries and donor agencies (such as World Bank, IMF and the European Union), who, after the end of the Cold War (in the late 1980s) began to link their economic aid to the Malawi Government with issues of good governance and multi-party democracy. Malawi being a poor country had no choice but to yield to such demands. The internal pressure for change came from both the Clergy and disgruntled politicians who had fallen into disfavour with the MCP regime. The peak of this pressure came through the Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter which was read out in Roman Catholic Churches across the country on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1992. This letter attacked the atrocities committed by the MCP regime in all aspects of life (social, political and economical). What this Pastoral Letter did was to agitate underground political pressure groups, such as AFORD and UDF, to join the fight for change in the country's political system (from one-party to multi-partyism). Following a national referendum which was

held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1993, multi-partyism was restored in the country's political system, when sixty-three percent of the voters said 'yes' to multi-partyism. It is the fortunes and/or misfortunes of the two political parties (AFORD and UDF) that were so prominent in the struggle to re-introduce multi-partyism in the country that will be analysed in the next two chapters of this study.

## Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> M. Bratton and N. Van de Walle, "Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa" in Journal of World Politics, volume 46, No.4, July 1994, pp453-489 (pp460-461).

<sup>3</sup> See Ibid, pp462-464.

<sup>4</sup> See Ibid, pp464-466.

<sup>5</sup> See Ibid, pp466-467. And also see J. Newell, "A Moment of Truth? The Church and Political Change in Malawi, 1992", in The Journal of Modern African Studies, volume 33, No.2, 1995, pp243-262 (p.245).

<sup>6</sup> See Ibid, pp467-468.

<sup>7</sup> P.H.O. Kaya and David van Wyk, "Multi-party Democracy and the Political System in Africa: Cases from East and Southern Africa," in Colection Edicion Especial, (unpublished document). P.139.

<sup>8</sup> B. Ishongi, "Political Competition and One-Party Democracy in Africa", in Ibid, p.139.

<sup>9</sup> G. Mpangala, "The Crisis of African Democracy as an underlying factor for Multi-Party Democracy in Africa" in Multi-Party Democracy, Civil Society and Economic Transformation in Southern Africa. (Papers from the 14<sup>th</sup> SAUSSC, Windhoek, November 1991). Also see P.H.O. Kaya, "The salient Features of the Political Economy of Africa and Continental Challenges in the New Millenium". (Paper presented at the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the Africa Institute of South Africa, Pretoria, May 29-June 3, 2000). In P.H.O. Kaya and D. van Wyk, op cit, pp 140-141.

<sup>10</sup> S. Decalo, "The Process, Prospects, and Constraints of Democratization in Africa" in Journal of African Affairs, volume 91, No.362, January 1992, pp7-35 (pp13-14). Also see D.G. Anglin, "Southern Africa's Response to Eastern European Developments" in Journal of Modern African Studies, volume 28, 1990, p.448.

<sup>11</sup> S. Decalo, op cit, p.14, from "Africa: Winds of Change", in Africa Confidential, 9/03/1990, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> S. Decalo, op cit, pp14-16.

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- <sup>13</sup> J.A. Wiseman, "The Movement towards Democracy: Global, Continental and State Perspectives", in Wiseman, J.A. (ed.), Democracy and Political Change in Sub-Saharan Africa (London: Routledge, 1995), pp2-4.
- <sup>14</sup> D. Venter, "Malawi: Transition to Multi-Party Politics", in Wiseman, J.A., Ibid, pp159-160.
- <sup>15</sup> From *The Independent*, 7/06/1990, in T. Cullen, Malawi: A Turning Point (Durham: Pentland Press Limited, 1994), p.62.
- <sup>16</sup> S. Decalo, op cit, p.23, from J. Butty, "The Democracy Carrot", in Journal of West Africa, volume 22, April 1991.
- <sup>17</sup> M. Bratton and N. Van de Walle, "Popular Protest and Political Reform in Africa", in Journal of Comparative Politics, July 1992, pp 419-442 (p.435).
- <sup>18</sup> J. Newell, "A Moment of Truth? The Church and Political Change in Malawi, 1992", in The Journal of Modern African Studies, volume 33, No.2, 1995, pp243-262 (p.244).
- <sup>19</sup> B. Muluzi, Y. Juwayeyi, et al, Democracy with a Price: A History of Malawi since 1900 (Blantyre and Oxford: Jhango-Heinemann, 1999), p.160.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.154.
- <sup>21</sup> M. Bratton and N. Van de Walle, "Popular Protest and Political Reform in Africa", op cit, p.431.
- <sup>22</sup> T. Cullen, Malawi: A Turning Point, pp34-35.
- <sup>23</sup> J. Newell, op cit, p.246.
- <sup>24</sup> D.M.C. Bartlett, "Civil Society and Democracy: A Zambian Case Study", in Journal of Southern African Studies, Volume 26, No.3, September 2000, pp429-446 (pp432 and 435).
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid, pp40-41.
- <sup>26</sup> B. Muluzi, Y. Juwayeyi, et al, op cit, p.140.
- <sup>27</sup> Speech by Elia Katola Phiri, Minister of Local Government, in T. Cullen, op cit, p.44.
- <sup>28</sup> Speech by Charles Kamphulusa, MCP District Chairman for Blantyre, in T. Cullen, op cit, p.44.
- <sup>29</sup> Speech by Wadson Deleza, MCP Administrative Secretary and Chairperson of the meeting, in T. Cullen, op cit, p.44.
- <sup>30</sup> MNA, *Hansard*, 8/04/1992, p.1070: Speech by Hon. Chimutu Nkhoma, MCP MP for Lilongwe South.
- <sup>31</sup> MNA, *Hansard*, 7/04/1992, p.1031: Speech by Hon. H.C. Somanje, MCP MP for Blantyre North.
- <sup>32</sup> T. Cullen, op cit, p.88.
- <sup>33</sup> See T. Cullen, op cit, pp54-55. Also see J. Newell, op cit, pp254-255.
- <sup>34</sup> B. Muluzi, Y. Juwayeyi, et al, op cit, pp142-143.
- <sup>35</sup> Interview with E., a UDF founding member in H. Meinhardt, Free at Last! Malawi's Democratic Transition (Lilongwe: NICE, 2004), pp79-81.

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with G. and D., in H. Meinhardt, *ibid*, p.81.

<sup>37</sup> See *The Malawi Democrat*, March 19-April 1, 1993, p.2 and *UDF News*, March 27-April 2, 1997, p.7.

<sup>38</sup> See *The Malawi Democrat*, March 19-April 1, 1993, p.2.

<sup>39</sup> See *Hansard*, 1/04/1993, p.1151. (Speech by Hon. Lovemore Munlo, then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in the MCP regime).

<sup>40</sup> See *Hansard*, 7/04/1992, pp1030-1033: Speech by Hon. H.C. Somanje, nominated MCP MP for Blantyre North.

<sup>41</sup> See *The Malawi Democrat*, January 22-February 5, 1993, p.1 (Dr. Banda speaking at a poorly attended political rally, mostly by school pupils, at Chileka Airport in Blantyre).

<sup>42</sup> See *Daily Times*, 12/02/1993, p.1: Speech by Dr. Banda in Mzuzu, on a campaign trail towards the national referendum.

<sup>43</sup> See *Daily Times*, 12/02/1993, p.1: Speech by Dr. Banda in Mzuzu.

<sup>44</sup> See *Daily Times*, 15/02/1993, p.1: Speech by Dr. Banda in Balaka.

<sup>45</sup> See *Daily Times*, 15/02/1993, pp1-2: Speech by Hon. Wadson Deleza, MCP Administrative Secretary in Balaka. Hon. Deleza produced MCP cheques, which he said Muluzi used, while he was MCP Secretary General and Administrative Secretary, to buy trucks for his Atupele Transport, without the knowledge and consent of Dr. Banda. In one of the cheques, Muluzi is alleged to have paid K17,800.00 to Leyland Motors, using MCP money, yet the truck was for personal use.

<sup>46</sup> D. Cammack, "The Democratic Transition in Malawi: From Single-Party Rule to a Multi-Party State", in R. Southhall and J. Daniel, et al (eds.), Voting for Democracy: Watershed Elections in Contemporary Anglophone Africa (Great Britain: MPG Books Ltd, 1999), pp189-191.

<sup>47</sup> See D. Cammack, *ibid*, pp191-192 and *Daily Times*, 29/06/1993, p.1.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE FORTUNES OF AFORD AND UDF IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1994, 1999 AND 2004**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the fortunes of AFORD and UDF, and multi-partyism in general, in relation to what transpired during the general elections of 1994, 1999 and 2004. It traces the rise and then relative decline of the two political parties over this period of ten years and assesses the bearing this has for the consolidation of multi-party democracy in Malawi.

The focus on general elections has been dictated by several considerations. General elections are critical events in the development of a multi-party democracy. They bring to sharp focus the competitiveness of the system, and test the ability of each political party to articulate its ideologies, mobilise material and moral support, strengthen its grassroots structures and prove its worth as a government-in-waiting.

It is also evident that the way political parties approach and manage their participation in general elections reflects their strengths and weaknesses as political organizations. What

is more, their ability to remain competitive goes a long way to prove that multi-party democracy is being consolidated.

The picture presented in what follows is that both AFORD and UDF were key players in all the three general elections under review, although in the second and third rounds of the elections in question they did so at different levels and with different fortunes. The fortunes of AFORD have been declining since that party's spectacular performance in the General Elections of 1994 in which the party won thirty-six (36) Parliamentary seats or all the seats in the Northern Region. But, in the General Elections of 2004 the party was able to win six (6) Parliamentary seats only. The UDF, on the other hand, performed well in the 1994 General Elections as well as in those of 1999, in which it was able to secure a parliamentary majority. In the 2004 General Elections, however, it lost several of the seats it won in 1999, mainly because it was then weakened by internal squabbles.

#### **4.1 The 1994 General Elections**

##### **4.1.1 The Presidential Elections**

The first general elections following the re-introduction of multi-party democracy took place in May 1994, after a constitutional amendment which permitted the formation of other political parties to compete with the MCP. Apart from the known UDF and AFORD, other new parties were Malawi Democratic Party (MDP), Malawi National

Democratic Party (MNDP), United Front for Multi-Party Democracy (UFMD), Congress for the Second Republic (CSR) and Malawi Democratic Union (MDU).

There were four candidates aspiring for the country's presidency, namely; Chakufwa Chihana (AFORD), Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda (MCP), Bakili Muluzi (UDF, MNDP, CSR, UFMD and MDU) and Kamlepo Kalua (MDP). A simple majority for any candidate was sufficient for one to be declared victorious. While the other opposition political parties opted for unity in order to dislodge the MCP, AFORD was not in favour of the idea. As the first organized pressure group in the country, and with a leader who was then very popular (Chihana), the party was convinced that it would win with an outright majority and form the next government. As such, it did not even bother to field Chihana as a parliamentary candidate. On the other hand, UDF approached the elections cautiously and entered into an electoral alliance with MNDP, CSR, UFMD and MDU. The election itself was held simultaneously with the Parliamentary Elections on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1994. The table below shows how the candidates performed:

Table 4.1: The 1994 Presidential Elections Results

Candidate	Political party	Number of votes	Percentage
Bakili Muluzi	UDF	1,404.754	47.2
Kamuzu Banda	MCP	0,996.353	33.5
Chakufwa Chihana	AFORD	0,562.862	18.9
Kamlepo Kalua	MDP	0,015.624	0.5

Source: H. Meinhardt, Free at Last! Malawi's Democratic Transition (Lilongwe: NICE, 2004). P.316, from Electoral Commission, 1994.

According to the above information, Bakili Muluzi was declared victorious using the principle of simple majority. This victory brought to an end the thirty years of Dr. Banda's MCP rule. But there was more that was revealed from the voting pattern displayed by the voters, in that the voting reflected strong ethnic-regional loyalties. This was evident because all the three leading presidential candidates (Muluzi, Chihana and Banda) received more votes in their home regions (i.e. the Southern Region, Northern Region and Central Region, respectively). This trend had been previously apparent in the 1993 Referendum, where the Northern and Southern Regions voted in favour of the multi-party system, in contrast to the Central Region's vote which was for continuation of the one-party system.

The AFORD candidate (Chihana) received between 84.7 percent and 91.6 percent of the vote in all five districts of the Northern Region, although in the other regions his share

exceeded ten percent only in three districts. Dr. Banda from the MCP also performed strongly in the Central Region (his home area), with absolute majorities in six districts, and obtained a simple majority in one district (Nkhotakota), and only failed to get a majority in two of the region's districts. On average, Dr. Banda had over sixty four percent of the votes in the Central Region. Similarly, Bakili Muluzi of UDF did extremely well in his own home region, the Southern Region, where he was elected with majorities ranging between 56.8 percent and 91.2 percent in nine of the ten districts. In addition to that, he scored impressively in one district of the Central Region, Ntcheu, where he obtained 72% of the votes. He also narrowly beat Dr. Banda in Salima district with 47.7 percent of the votes. Muluzi's strong showing in Ntcheu and Salima could be attributed to Ntcheu's proximity to the Southern Region and the affinity of its people to the culture of Blantyre, Malawi's commercial and industrial city and the cultural centre of the South; and to the fact that almost half the population of Salima district is Yao, Muluzi's ethnic group. Kamlepo Kalua (MDP) was rejected utterly and received only 0.5 percent of the votes nationwide. Even in his home district of Nkhata-Bay, he received only 0.7 percent of the votes.<sup>1</sup>

From these results, one would conclude that what played a great role in determining the winner of the elections was the population density of the area (region) and ethnic group from which the presidential aspirants came from. Chihana (from the Tumbuka ethnic group) won in the sparsely populated North, Banda (from the Chewa ethnic group), won in the Central region, which has a higher population than the North, and Muluzi (from the Yao ethnic group) won in the most heavily populated South. One would thus question the

behaviour of Malawian voters, relative to whether they are at all influenced by the policy options presented by the different candidates. In this election, what mattered most were the personalities (presidential candidates), and where they came from, and not the principles or issues for which they stood, (see Map 1 showing ethnic groups in Malawi; Map 2 showing votes for Muluzi; Map 3 showing votes for Dr. Banda; and Map 4 showing votes for Chihana). One other possible explanation for this ethnic-regional voting pattern had to do with the fact that most of the political campaigns are generally without substance, and also that the parties shared a similar ideological outlook. As such, with little to distinguish the parties, the voters simply fell back on personalities (the party leaders) and their ethnic-regional identity.

#### **4.1.2 The Parliamentary Elections**

There were 177 parliamentary seats to be contested for in the General Elections of 1994, but it was only two political parties (UDF and MCP) that managed to field candidates in all constituencies (AFORD had 162 candidates, United Front for Multi-Party Democracy (UFMD) had 36 candidates, MDP had 30 candidates, Malawi National Democratic Party (MNDP) had 11 candidates, Congress for the Second Republic (CSR) had 6 candidates, and Malawi Democratic Union (MDU) had 2 candidates). The table below shows how the parties performed in that year's parliamentary race:

Table 4.2: The 1994 Parliamentary Elections Results

Political party	Number of seats	Percentage
UDF	85	48.02
MCP	56	31.64
AFORD	36	20.34

Source: M. Hussein, Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in SADC Countries: Malawi Country Report (RSA: SAIIA, 2004), P.10.

After the results of the elections were announced it was noted that the same three political parties (AFORD, UDF and MCP), that were prominent in the presidential race, also shared the parliamentary seats amongst themselves. And using the same principle of simple majority, the UDF, whose leader had also won the presidential race, was declared the ruling party. But just as in the presidential election, one thing that came out clearly was the same ethnic-regional pattern of voter-behaviour. AFORD carried all thirty three seats in the Northern Region with an absolute majority. In addition the party was successful in two Northern constituencies of the Central Region, in Kasungu district and Nkhotakota North. The UDF won convincing majorities over much of the Southern Region. In the Central Region the party won six of the seven seats in Ntcheu district where it had established a strong position in the presidential election. In Dedza East and Salima Central and South, which is home to many Yao, the UDF emerged victorious, as it did in two constituencies in Nkhotakota where Moslems (and the Yao) are in majority. It also won three of the four seats in Lilongwe City, drawing its supporters primarily from

the ranks of business people, employees and workers, as well as civil servants from the Southern Region. The MCP won overwhelmingly in the Chewa areas in the Central Region, where it managed to win 51 of the 68 seats. Out of a total of 125 incumbent MCP MPs, forty-four were re-elected, whilst only twelve out of fifty-two new candidates were successful.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, basing on this voting trend, one would not clearly pick-out the factors behind the fortunes (or misfortunes) of the two political parties under study (AFORD and UDF), but to merely speculate that because the UDF had an edge over the other parties because its top leadership came (and still comes) from the Southern Region (which is the most densely populated and commands more constituencies than the other two regions). The Southern Region had 76 constituencies, the Central Region had 68 constituencies, and the Northern Region had 33 constituencies. It also has to be noted that both AFORD and UDF continued to do well basing on the momentum which they gathered since the days of the campaign towards the June 1993 Referendum. As such, multitudes of people continued to attend their campaign rallies throughout the campaign to the General Elections. For the first time after so many years of MCP's autocratic rule, Malawians could be seen wearing party cloths, T-Shirts and Caps of other political parties (other than the MCP). As such, it was most likely that Dr. Banda's MCP would not remain in government (under normal circumstances). The two parties also made extensive use of the print media (*UDF News* and *The Democrat*) to woo voters.

## **4.2 The 1999 General Elections**

On June 15, 1999, Malawians went to the polls to vote in the second democratic elections since the re-introduction of multi-party democracy. Both AFORD and UDF participated in these elections. The UDF's campaign proved to be more unified and stable than that of AFORD. The party (UDF) maintained both the presidential candidate and his running mate from the 1994 polls. This ensured continuity in the party's appeal to the masses. Furthermore, the party was also financially stable (being the incumbent ruling party), such that it easily raised resources for its campaign. On the other hand, AFORD's approach to the 1999 General Elections was rather chaotic and unstable. By that year, the party had lost a number of its prominent members who had been fired after deciding to remain in the UDF-led Government after AFORD had decided to terminate its alliance with the UDF in June 1996. These members included the late Mapopa Chipeta, Matembo Nzunda, Rev. Pat Banda and Mayinga Mkandawire, among others, all of whom were AFORD's founding members, but they were later widely described as 'AFORD rebels'. As will be discussed in Chapter 5 (of this thesis), the axing of these 'rebels' proved to be a disastrous decision in the party's history as it deprived the party of some of its grassroots support. AFORD also approached the 1999 polls with meager financial resources, a problem which was compounded by Parliament's refusal to fund the party in early 1999 due to the party's failure to submit accounted reports to the National Assembly. Furthermore, party members could not come to a consensus on whether to endorse an electoral alliance with the MCP or not.

In preparation for the elections in question, Parliament approved the addition of seventeen new constituencies to the original 177, after initially rejecting the Electoral Commission's proposal to increase the number to 247 constituencies, which was based on a study by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), which recommended subdivisions of existing constituencies within each region. However, such a proposal led to heated controversy and debate in both the National Assembly and media that the seventy proposed additional constituencies (11 for the Northern Region, 17 for the Central Region, and 42 for the Southern Region) were designed to increase the ruling party's seats in Parliament, while overtaxing the country's meager financial resources. Thus a compromise was reached when the proposed new constituencies were reduced from seventy to seventeen, thus increasing the seats in the august house to 194. Under this reduction, the number of constituencies in the Southern Region went up from seventy-six to eighty-seven; in the Central Region from sixty-eight to seventy-four; but remained thirty-three in the Northern Region.<sup>3</sup>

Thus political commentators had already begun to question the manner in which the elections were being prepared for. It also became predictable, especially for the Parliamentary race, using the precedence set in the 1994 General Elections, that the UDF was going to win, because the Southern Region (which was UDF's stronghold) had increased the number of seats to be competed for, as opposed to the Central Region (whose representation in parliament was increased only modestly), and the Northern Region (the number of whose constituencies remained unchanged).

The UDF, as a ruling party, tried hard to use all resources at its disposal to discredit the opposition parties, and to ridicule the challenge posed by MCP and AFORD (who had entered into an electoral alliance for the 1999 General Elections). As such, the UDF resorted to restricting the opposition parties from using the state controlled radio station Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), which used to support both party (UDF) and government activities, while disregarding opposition parties' activities. The UDF (as a party) was also fond of using other Government resources, such as Government vehicles, parastatal vehicles (foremost being the yellow-painted Malawi Post and Telecommunication Corporation vehicles) during the election campaign. The UDF was also using the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) to perpetrate violence and intimidate the opposition, yet the agency's officials were on Government payroll.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the electoral period there were incidences of pro-UDF biasness from the state run broadcasters (MBC and Television Malawi). As a result, one week before the elections the High Court had to order the Electoral Commission to ensure that fair coverage was provided to all parties, but little change was subsequently observed.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, throughout the sixty-day campaign period the electoral playing field was never leveled. The Electoral Commission also showed its partisanship (bent towards the UDF) when it tried to bar Gwanda Chakuamba and Chakufwa Chihana (of the MCP/AFORD Electoral Alliance) from contesting in the presidential race (as presidential candidate and running mate), as they came from two separate parties. However, this move was quashed aside by a revelation from the Law Society, which drew attention to Section 80 (4) of the Malawi Constitution, which provides for the concurrent election of the president and vice

president on the same ballot, but does not prohibit a running mate drawn from another party.<sup>6</sup> The UDF had envisaged that the MCP/AFORD Electoral Alliance would be a threat to its chances of success, thus it enlisted the Electoral Commission to forbid Chakuamba and Chihana to run on the same ballot. The Electoral Commission apparently took the case to the High Court, only to withdraw it, alleging that the case would have delayed the elections.<sup>7</sup> The length of time it took for this case to be resolved also made many opposition supporters to be indecisive (on who to vote for) because the case was only withdrawn less than two months before the actual voting took place.

Similar incidents of trying to stop opposition candidates from contesting in general elections also took place in Equatorial Guinea and Zambia prior to the 1999 General Elections in Malawi. In Equatorial Guinea, the ruling Partido Democratico de Guinea Ecuatorial (PDGE) stipulated strict requirements for candidates in elections to prevent opposition leaders who had been arrested over political activities from contesting. Candidates were required to be of proven Equatorial Guinea descent (even though the then President, Mr. Obiang, had a doubtful descent, as his parents were believed to have come from Gabon), be married and over forty years of age, have five years' continuous residency in the country, have no criminal record, and so on. Similarly, President Chiluba's government in Zambia amended the constitution in the run-up to the 1996 general elections to restrict the presidential election to only third generation Zambians. The move was apparently aimed at preventing any contest from former President Kenneth Kaunda, who enjoyed strong support from the international community and was a formidable threat to Chiluba's continued wielding of power.<sup>8</sup>

One would thus argue that the 1999 General Election was in most cases undemocratic, because it did not quite satisfy the criterion of ‘free and fair elections’ that is the hallmark of liberal democracy. As argued by Osaghae (1999), one of the major referents of a democratic regime is that there has to be free and fair competitive politics in which opposition parties have a realistic chance of coming to power.<sup>9</sup> Beetham (1997) also argues that in a political democracy the yardstick of free and fair elections is very essential.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from the fact that the ruling UDF wanted to thwart the advances of the opposition parties, the opposition parties themselves were also to blame due the power struggles in their ranks which weakened their drive for power. In the MCP camp, Gwanda Chakuamba (party president) and his vice (John Tembo) could not agree on the need to go into an electoral alliance with AFORD (which Chakuamba favoured), because John Tembo would not stand as Chakuamba’s running mate (as he would be replaced by AFORD’s Chihana in that position). After a heated meeting of the MCP National Executive Committee (NEC), which endorsed Chihana’s nomination with a vote of 34 to 11, John Tembo publicly called on MCP politicians to ignore the electoral alliance and mobilized protest marches by his supporters in Lilongwe. In AFORD there were also minor divisions on whether to enter into an electoral alliance or go it alone. Thus, although the MCP/AFORD Electoral Alliance was officially launched on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1999, it had the effect of splitting the opposition camp. What emerged was that both parties (MCP and AFORD) put forward their own manifestos, but in most constituencies could not agree on a joint candidate.<sup>11</sup>

#### **4.2.1 The 1999 Presidential Election**

The 1999 General Elections featured five presidential candidates, namely; Bakili Muluzi (UDF), Gwanda Chakuamba (MCP/AFORD Alliance), Kamlepo Kalua (MDP), Daniel Nkhumbwe representing Congress for National Unity (CONU) and Bingu wa Mutharika representing United Party (UP). Of the three major parties that emerged after the 1994 General Elections, only AFORD failed to field its own candidate, perhaps showing signs of a party that was losing popularity and self confidence. AFORD's instability became evident as early as the year 1996, when the party leadership had walked out of two alliances with both the MCP (September 1994) and UDF (in June 1996).

Soon after the 1994 General Elections the party (AFORD) entered into an alliance with the MCP in which they agreed to work as a united opposition front, only for AFORD to walk out of the alliance to join the UDF in government later that year as a coalition partner. That marriage also ended within a short period of time as AFORD walked out of the Government, citing corruption in Government as the major reason behind the decision. Such unsettledness caused a lot of damage to the party and by the 1999 General Elections, the party had lost self confidence and its independent identity (especially due to the massive exodus of senior party members), such that it had to align itself with the MCP (a partner which AFORD had dumped in 1994). The table below shows how the candidates performed:

Table 4.3: The 1999 Presidential Election National Results

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Political party</b>	<b>Number of votes</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Bakili Muluzi	UDF	2.443 million	51.4
Gwanda Chakuamba	MCP/AFORD	2.107 million	44.3
Kalua, Mutharika and Nkhumbwe	MDP, UP and CONU, respectively	0.114 million	2.4

Source: H. Meinhardt, op cit, p.414, from Electoral Commission 1999.

Thus, perhaps owing to the foul play employed by both the UDF and the Electoral Commission, and indeed the divisions within the country's opposition parties, the UDF candidate (Bakili Muluzi) won the majority of the votes cast. But just as in the 1994 presidential race, in 1999 the ethnic-regional pattern of voting was evident. The two main rivals, Muluzi and Chakuamba, performed as follows in the country's three regions:

Table 4.4: The 1999 Presidential Election Regional Results

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>Central Region</b>	<b>Southern Region</b>
Bakili Muluzi	61, 130 (9.4%)	634, 912 (34.5%)	1. 746, 643 (77.1%)
Gwanda Chakuamba	573, 688 (87.9%)	1. 124, 359 (61.1%)	411, 743 (18.2%)
Kamlepo Kalua	5, 673 (0.9%)	27, 240 (1.5%)	34, 943 (1.5%)
Bingu wa Mutharika	1, 112 (0.2%)	6, 692 (0.4%)	14, 260 (0.6%)
Daniel Nkhumbwe	5, 806 (0.9%)	8, 006 (0.4%)	10, 537 (0.5%)

Source: H. Meinhardt, op cit, p.418, from Electoral Commission, 1999.

From the above table, Bakili Muluzi (the winner) did well in his home region (the Southern Region with 77.1 % of the votes). Chakuamba (also from the Southern Region), on the other hand, did extremely well in the Central and Northern Regions, strongholds of MCP and AFORD, respectively. In the Northern Region, Chakuamba performed well because Chihana, his running mate was from that region, while in the Central Region, Chakuamba did well because the MCP was and is still associated with the founder, Dr. H.K. Banda, who was from that region.

#### 4.2.2 The 1999 Parliamentary Elections

In the Parliamentary race of 1999, the UDF managed to win a convincing majority, just as it did in the presidential race. The MCP and AFORD, which fielded separate parliamentary candidates, trailed the UDF by far. What is more, for the first time in the country's electoral history, four 'independent candidates' managed to win parliamentary seats (although all of them went back to the UDF immediately after winning their seats). The table below shows how the parliamentary seats were distributed after the elections:

Table 4.5: The 1999 Parliamentary Elections Results

<b>Political party</b>	<b>Number of seats</b>
UDF	94
MCP	66
AFORD	29
INDEPENDENTS	4

Source: H. Meinhardt, op cit, p.414, from Electoral Commission, 1999.  
And M. Hussein, op cit, p.11.

It should be noted that at this point the four independent MPs rejoined the UDF immediately after the results were announced, thus making the UDF have ninety-eight seats in the National Assembly, which was an absolute majority. The then Speaker of the National Assembly, Sam Mpasu (a top UDF official) refused to rule that these four

‘independent’ MPs had crossed the floor, which would have triggered by-elections in their constituencies.

Just as in the presidential race, voting for MPs was along ethnic-regional lines, as the three major parties had already established regional strongholds, as already indicated by the results of the 1994 General Elections. The UDF dominated its traditional stronghold, the populous Southern Region (where the number of constituencies had been increased prior to the election), while the MCP still remained dominant in the Central Region, and AFORD won in its thinly populated Northern stronghold. In contrast to the 1994 elections, the MCP managed to win four seats in the Northern Region, presumably as a result of the MCP/AFORD Alliance. The MCP was also emerged dominant in the Lower Shire, the home of its leader, Gwanda Chakuamba. The confirmation of the UDF in power was also reflected in the election of the Speaker of Parliament and both deputies, all of which positions went to UDF candidates as a result of their majority strength in the House.<sup>12</sup>

So after the UDF emerged victorious in both the Presidential and Parliamentary elections of 1999, their AFORD counterparts were left ‘nursing the wounds of another lost battle’. This could partly be attributed to the high-handed electoral tactics employed by the UDF-led Government, and to the fact that some AFORD members had been opposed to the MCP/AFORD Electoral Alliance; as such they either switched to other parties or did not vote at all. But political analysts blamed the ruling party’s utilization of state resources to promote its own interests, since this was an unfair tactic that worked against the

opposition parties, who did not have access to such resources. In other words, the political competition was not conducted on a level playing field. As pointed out by Hameso (2002), one common feature of elections in ‘multi-party Africa’ has been the manipulation of the polity by the incumbent and the opportunists who take advantage of the loopholes in the ‘rules of the game’ for purposes of self-aggrandizement and not for the benefit of societies. This has been encouraged by the win-lose nature of multi-party competition, which acts as an important element in reducing the willingness of those in power to concede electoral victory to those in the opposition. The common terms used to describe such problematic electoral processes and outcomes are ‘sham elections’, ‘general selection’, or ‘rigged elections’.<sup>13</sup>

#### **4.3 The 2004 General Elections**

In May 2004, Malawi held its third multi-party general elections since the re-introduction of multi-party democracy. These were characterized by several unique trends. Firstly, for the first time in the country’s electoral history, an independent presidential candidate was allowed to contest, after he had fulfilled the constitutional requirements. Furthermore, the number of ‘independent’ parliamentary candidates and winners surpassed by far those of the 1999 General Elections. The other change was that contrary to its dwindling performance in the elections of 1994 and 1999, the MCP managed to bounce back to win more Parliamentary seats than any of the parties that contested. On top of that, some of the so-called ‘smaller’ political parties also managed to win Parliamentary seats. And,

unlike in the 1999 General Elections, the victorious presidential aspirant was not able to amass an absolute majority of the votes cast.

Unlike in the last two elections (of 1994 and 1999), the UDF approached the 2004 polls against a background of internal wrangling and divisions. As will be discussed in Chapter 5 (of this study), the way in which the party selected both its presidential candidate and parliamentary aspirants was unprocedural. It is widely held that the party's presidential candidate (Bingu wa Mutharika) was actually imposed on the electorate by the party chairperson (Bakili Muluzi), who also made sure that most of his preferred parliamentary aspirants should stand on the party's ticket, this, against opposition from a section of the party's supporters and members. Muluzi himself had had an unsuccessful bid to extend his stay in power (when both the Open Term and Third Term Bills were rejected in the National Assembly). As such, he decided to impose Dr. Mutharika on the party with a view to rule from behind the scenes. The people's reaction to these decisions was reflected in the party's poor performance in the polls that followed.

On the other hand, just as in 1999, AFORD did not field a presidential candidate, that year (2004) opting to align itself with the UDF, in the hope that the party could be offered the Second Vice Presidency and some cabinet positions in the aftermath of the elections. What is more, unlike in the 1999 Electoral Alliance with MCP (where the AFORD president was the running mate), in the 2004 General Elections, the AFORD president was not considered for such a position, as he only contested as parliamentary candidate (for Rumphu Central Constituency). AFORD also approached the elections in a divided

state because the party gurus could not agree on whether to enter into an electoral alliance with the UDF or not. As such, a splinter political party, Movement for Genuine Democracy (MGODE), was born out of that misunderstanding.

#### 4.3.1 The 2004 Presidential Election

There were five presidential candidates in all vying for the country's presidency in the 2004 General Elections, which took place on 20<sup>th</sup> May. Four candidates represented their political parties and/or party electoral alliances, while one candidate stood as an independent candidate. The following table shows how the candidates performed.

Table 4.6: The 2004 Presidential Election Results

Candidate	Political Party	Number of votes	Percentage
Bingu wa Mutharika	UDF	1,119,738	35
John Tembo	MCP	0,846,457	27
Gwanda Chakuamba	MGWIRIZANO COALITION	0,802,386	26
Brown Mpinganjira	NDA	286,320	8.39
Justin Malewezi	INDEPENDENT	67,812	1.99

Source: M. Hussein, Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in SADC Countries: Malawi Country Report, from Electoral Commission, 2004. See also M. Ott, et al (eds.), The Power of the Vote: Malawi's 2004 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections (Zomba: Kachere Series, 2004).

A number of observations can be noted from the outcome of the 2004 presidential race. Firstly, unlike in the 1999 General Elections, where the UDF presidential candidate won with a clear simple majority, in 2004 at 35% of the total vote, the winning score fell far short of the 50% that is considered to be the minimum mandating rate for a president in many countries. The outstanding reason for this dramatic drop in the fortunes of the UDF candidate was the manner in which he was imposed on the party's electorate. Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika, who in 1999 contested for the same post on a UP ticket, had in the early 2000s rejoined the UDF (having dumped the party in the mid-1990s), and many UDF diehard supporters did not feel that he was the right material to represent the party as presidential candidate. As will be discussed in chapter five (of this study) many of the party's bigwigs who opposed Mutharika's candidacy were forced out of the party and castigated in public rallies by former President, Bakili Muluzi. Such deposed officials quit the party with their own supporters, hence the drop in the number of votes for Mutharika.

Apart from the fact that Mutharika was imposed as presidential candidate, other leading UDF officials, such as James Makhumula (the party's long-time Treasurer General), Brown Mpinganjira (one of the party's founding members), Peter Chupa (once the party's MP and Cabinet Minister), Harry Thomson (the party's long-time Secretary General), and many others, also broke ranks with the party to form a splinter political party called the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), after being involved in disagreement with Muluzi's wish to stand for a third term as the country's president. Some of the members were fired from the Cabinet before they eventually resigned from

the UDF. Again these people went out of the party with their own followers. Justin Malewezi, former UDF Second Vice President, who stood as an independent candidate, after Muluzi sidelined him in favour of Mutharika, also took away some UDF supporters with him when he went to join the Peoples' Progressive Movement (PPM), before deciding to run as an independent presidential candidate.

On the party's dismal performance in the 2004 presidential race, one UDF official had the following to say:

In 2003 we did not practice democracy by imposing an outsider (Mutharika) on our people. Such that when we were voting in 2004, we were not voting for Bingu, but for the party (UDF). Because of that, many leaders left the UDF, such as Justin Malewezi, Harry Thomson, Aleke Banda and many others. This split the party, such that it is taking us a lot more time to pick up the pieces to strengthen it.<sup>14</sup>

The Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) on the other hand, just like in 1999, did not field a presidential candidate, this time around having been persuaded by President Muluzi to support the UDF Presidential Candidate. The party's president, Chakufwa Chihana, went public to declare this decision:

I cannot stand as presidential candidate because I am intolerant and selfish. That is why I decided to support Bingu, because unlike me, he is calm and caring just like President Bakili Muluzi.<sup>15</sup>

Again, this showed how the party's leadership had lost self confidence, such that it could not picture itself winning the presidential race. This election also showed how unsettled the party's leadership had been, this time around dumping its electoral alliance with the MCP, to join the UDF in another electoral alliance. Unlike in the 1999 General Elections,

where AFORD's president, Chakufwa Chihana, was featured as a running mate to the MCP presidential candidate, in the 2004 General Elections, the AFORD leader was totally sidelined, he merely stood on AFORD ticket as parliamentary candidate for Rumphu Central Constituency.

Prior to the elections, rumours and allegations were also rife that the AFORD Czar (Chihana) had pocketed huge amounts of money from Muluzi with which to bribe his MPs. It was alleged that Chihana had distributed K100,000.00s to his MPs to support the "Open Terms" and "Third Term" bids for the country's presidency which were championed by Muluzi and the UDF. In fact, the "Open Term Bill" was actually presented in Parliament by the then AFORD MP for Karonga Nyungwe (Hon. Khwauli Msiska) in July 2002. Since that bill was rejected in the National Assembly, AFORD members called for Chihana's resignation from his post. For instance, 19 of the party's MPs petitioned Speaker of Parliament, stating that they no longer recognized Chihana as their leader in the House, all because he had voted for the bill which the party's convention had resorted not to support. In the Northern Region, some AFORD members also understood it as if Chihana had 'sold' the party to Muluzi.<sup>16</sup>

#### **4.3.2 The 2004 Parliamentary Elections**

As already indicated the 2004 parliamentary race was one of the most unique and exciting contests in the history of elections in Malawi. In total, nine political parties managed to win parliamentary seats, while thirty-nine 'independent candidates' also

managed to find their way into the National Assembly. The table below shows how the parliamentary seats were distributed:

Table 4.7: The 2004 Parliamentary Elections Results

<b>Political Party</b>	<b>Number of seats</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
AFORD	6	3.26
MCP	56	30.43
UDF	49	26.63
CONU	1	0.54
PETRA	1	0.54
PPM	6	3.26
MGODE	3	1.63
NDA	8	4.35
RP	15	8.19
INDEPENDENTS	39	21.19
Total	184	99.98%

Source: M. Hussein, op cit, from Electoral Commission, 2004. Note that the nine seats were not contested for due to impeding factors which the Electoral Commission had determined.

From the above table (Table 4.3.2.1), one would note that both AFORD and UDF suffered the heaviest losses since their formation, and that the MCP, a party whose fortunes had been dwindling since 1993, emerged as the strongest parliamentary force.

For the UDF, the loss could be partly attributed to the fact that the party's primary elections were marred by a lot of irregularities, as most party candidates were actually imposed on the electorate. As a result, most of the 'independent candidates' who won the contest were actually former UDF parliamentary aspirants. In actual fact, twenty-eight (28) of the thirty-nine (39) 'independent parliamentarians' came from the Southern Region, the UDF's stronghold. As such, the voting pattern could be interpreted as a negative reaction (or a protest vote) by the party's voters who ended up rejecting candidates that had been imposed on them. Furthermore, the UDF also lost seats in the constituencies that went to a splinter political party (NDA), which won most of its seats in constituencies that were formerly held by the UDF. For instance, the party's Deputy Secretary General, Hophmally Makande, lamented the fact that the party had been weakened by the behaviour of the many parliamentary aspirants who decided to stand as independent candidates after they had been sidelined in the primaries. In other constituencies, those who stood as independents ended up splitting the party's votes and thereby paved the way for candidates from other parties to win the seats. Makande gave an example of Ndirande Malabada Constituency, when he said:

...For example, in Ndirande Malabada Constituency, the winner, Hon. Sangala of the Republican Party (RP), had slightly over 4,000 votes, while the two candidates who trailed him: M. Mbilizi from UDF got 4,000 votes and the independent candidate, Mr. Banda, also had close to 4,000 votes. Which means that if we were to combine Mbilizi's and Banda's votes, we could have had around

8,000 votes, and Sangala could not have won. Fortunately, most of these independent MPs came back to UDF.<sup>17</sup>

For AFORD, the party's Publicity Secretary, Johnston Langa, attributed the party's heavy defeat to the ill-conceived alliances which the party had been entering into with either the MCP and/or UDF. Such alliances were signed even when most party members were not interested in such moves. This then made those uninterested party members to defect to other political parties, such as a splinter party called Movement for Genuine Democracy (MGODE).<sup>18</sup> AFORD's current Secretary General, Khwauli Msiska, also cited the fact that by the year 2004, the party had lost touch with its grassroots supporters, which is why it had been experiencing a decline in terms of support. Such a trend led to the subsequent loss of Parliamentary seats, from thirty-six seats in 1994 to a mere six seats in the 2004 General Elections.<sup>19</sup>

Some of these movements by AFORD's leadership could partly be explained in terms of lack of reliable sources of funding for the party, which forced it to resort to 'political prostitution' for it to survive on the political scene. For instance, when AFORD rejoined the UDF-led Government in 2002, the party's president made the following comment:

Opposition parties anywhere have the wish of becoming the next government, but if they fail for two consecutive elections they just have to work with government. An opposition party can not last twenty years outside government.<sup>20</sup>

It was such desperation for money (funding) that drove Chihana into a political alliance that had no blessing from most of the party's members. As will be discussed in Chapter 5 (of this study), over the years, AFORD had seen a decline in its levels of funding, both in

terms of well-wishers and the constitutional parliamentary funding which the party relied upon since its inception and throughout the 1990s.

As in the general elections of 1994 and 1999, the regionalistic pattern of voting persisted in the 2004 elections, in that the dominant parties only did well in their regional strongholds. Thus AFORD won six seats in the Northern Region, MCP won fifty-six seats all in the Central Region, while the UDF won thirty-nine of its forty-nine seats in the Southern Region. The MCP might also have performed spectacularly in the Central Region because the party was now in the 'hands' of Hon. John Z.U. Tembo, who comes from the central district of Dedza (unlike during the 1999 General Elections, where Gwanda Chakuamba, from the Southern Region, was at the helm).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted and analyzed the electoral fortunes of the two political parties that are the focus of this study, AFORD and UDF. For AFORD, it has been established that since its landmark performance in the General Elections of 1994, its fortunes have been declining dramatically. The party only managed to field a presidential candidate in the 1994 General Elections, but failed to do so in the 1999 and 2004 contests. The number of MPs it could boast of has also been declining from the initial thirty-six seats of 1994, to twenty-nine seats in 1999, and a meager six seats in 2004. Among factors accounting for such a drop in performance have been lack of consultation within the party, and the hasty or erratic manner in which the party contracted and

abrogated alliances and/or coalitions with other major political parties. Such trends cost the party a lot of support, since the members who got frustrated invariably ended up switching their allegiance to other parties.

As for the UDF, its fortunes rose sharply from 1994 to 1999, and then started to decline remarkably thereafter. The deterioration was laid bare by the 2004 general election results which revealed sharp decline in the number of votes which both the party's presidential and parliamentary aspirants were able to amass. The party's presidential aspirant only scooped a meager thirty-five percent of the national vote, while only forty-nine parliamentary aspirants made it to the National Assembly on the party's ticket. Such a drop has mainly been attributed to the intra-party squabbles which ended up splitting party votes. The most prominent of these were the controversial 'Third Term Bid' by party chairperson, Bakili Muluzi (which led to the resignation and/or expulsion of party members who were against the idea), and the imposition of Bingu wa Mutharika as the party's presidential candidate during the 2004 General Elections, which was against the wishes of many of the party's supporters. The management of the party's primary elections for the 2004 polls was also questionable, as most of the candidates who lost in such primary polls managed to claw their way back to win the parliamentary seats, as 'independent' candidates.

## **Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup> H. Meinhardt, Free at Last! Malawi's Democratic Transition (Lilongwe: NICE, 2004), P.315.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pps 326 through 333.

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<sup>3</sup> Z.D. Kadzamira, "Management of the Electoral Process during the Second Multi-Party Elections," in M. Ott, K. Phiri, et al (eds.), Malawi's Second Democratic Elections: Process, Problems (Balaka: Montfort Media, 2000), pp52-55.

<sup>4</sup> See Ibid, p.58 and M. Hussein, Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in SADC Countries: Malawi Country Report (RSA: SAIIA, 2004), P. 11.

<sup>5</sup> S. Brown, "Malawi: The Trouble with Democracy" in Southern Africa Report, vol.15, No.4, October 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Z.D. Kadzamira, op cit, p.59.

<sup>7</sup> H. Meinhardt, op cit, p.411.

<sup>8</sup> E. Osaghae, "Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Faltering Prospects, New Hopes", in Journal of Contemporary African Studies, Volume 17, No.1, 1999, pp5-28 (p.12).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.9.

<sup>10</sup> D. Beetham and Democratic Audit UK, "Conducting a Democratic Audit" (UK: University of Leeds, 1997), in B. Baker, "The Quality of African Democracy: Why and How it should be measured" in Journal of Contemporary African Studies, Volume 17, No.2, 1999, pp273-286 (p.277).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.413.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.415 and 421.

<sup>13</sup> S. Hameso, "Issues and Dilemmas of Multi-Party Democracy" in West Africa Review (2002).

<sup>14</sup> O.T. Mr. Ron Msamu, UDF Shadow Councillor for Mchesi Ward, Lilongwe City, on 11/10/2007.

<sup>15</sup> See *The Nation*, 15/10/2003. (Speech by Chakufwa Chihana, then the country's Second Vice President, speaking at a political rally in Lilongwe, where he announced that AFORD would support UDF's presidential candidate).

<sup>16</sup> See *Weekend Nation*, 13-14/07/2002: "AFORD MPs want Chihana replaced", p.1. And *Malawi News*, 24-30, 2002: "AFORD loses its grip in the North", pp1 and 3.

<sup>17</sup> O.T. Mr. Hophmally Makande, UDF Deputy Secretary General, on 14/11/2007.

<sup>18</sup> O.T. Mr. Johnston K. Langa, AFORD Publicity Secretary, on 16/10/2007.

<sup>19</sup> O.T. Mr. Khwauli Msiska, AFORD Secretary General, on 18/10/2007.

<sup>20</sup> See *UDF News*, 17-22/08/2003, "Chihana not for material gain", p.2.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This concluding chapter discusses the major findings of the study in relation to the objectives that were initially set, and also in relation to the progress of the two political parties under study, namely AFORD and UDF.

The dominant theme in this study is that historical developments could be explained as by-products of both external and internal forces, and that this could also be applied to the development of multi-partyism in the country. Such an analysis could be used to analyze the developments of both the first wave of multi-partyism (which took place from the mid 1940s to the mid 1960s), and also the second wave of multi-partyism (which started in the early 1990s).

The study has established that unlike in the first wave of multi-partyism, where political parties were unsustainable due to both internal and external forces (such as being outlawed for those in the opposition), in the second wave, the major challenges to political parties have mainly been internal to the parties (i.e. of the parties own making).

The account below presents the study's major findings, and the reader will also be drawn to the study's limitations and areas that call for further research.

### **5.1 Constraints to the Development of Multi-Partyism in Malawi before 1991**

The second chapter (Chapter Two) of this study has highlighted that before the advent of the second wave of multi-partyism in the early 1990s, Malawi experienced another wave, from the mid 1940s and throughout the 1960s. As of 1964, when Malawi gained its independence, there were three main political parties, namely MCP, UFP and CDP. But by the year 1966, the country's Constitution only allowed one political party (i.e. the MCP) to carry out its operations. From that period up to the early 1990s, any form of political dissent was ruthlessly crushed by those in power. Despite a few efforts by other exiled politicians to form political parties outside the country that was however with very little success. Such developments could be explained from two main schools of thought, namely, the external centered school and the internal centered school. The former is based on the argument that the efforts of those in power to stifle those in the opposition, with among other things, the use of repressive laws and the use of paramilitary forces to attack opposition sympathizers, made it very hard to operate a multi-party political system in the country. The latter, pushes the blame to the internal developments within the political parties of that time, such as lack of reliable sources of funding; lack of proper communication channels; ethnic divisions; and the dictatorial tendencies of some party leaders. In such an environment, it was difficult to have a multi-party political system operating in the country.

## **5.2 The Second Wave of Multi-Partyism and the Emergence of AFORD and UDF**

The third chapter (Chapter Three) of this study has discussed the major forces that led to the emergence of the country's second wave of multi-partyism in the early 1990s. From the discussion, what has emerged is that the developments were not unique to Malawi, but that it was a common trend in most parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. Such developments could also be explained from two main perspectives, namely, the external centered perspective and the internal centered perspective. The external centered perspective (school) attributes the return of multi-partyism to be a by-product of pressure and influence from developments taking place outside the country. This included the end of the fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent liberal democratic changes in Eastern Europe, and also democratic changes taking place in other African countries. On the other hand, the internal centered perspective (school) attributed the change as being as a by-product of pressure exerted by Malawians themselves, who for a long time had been dissatisfied with the way the state was run. All this started with the issuing of the 'Pastoral Letter' by Roman Catholic Bishops in the country, on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1992, which in the main attacked the MCP-led Government for a number of failures in the country. It was in the aftermath of the impact of that letter that opposition pressure groups came out in the open and started calling for a referendum to be called so that Malawian could decide whether they wanted to return to multi-partyism or not. After voting in the June 1993 Referendum, sixty-three percent of Malawians voted in favor of a return to multi-partyism, and this called for a change of the country's Constitution so as to allow more political parties to exist. As such, a number of political parties were established following

that change, and this included parties such as AFORD, UDF, MDP, MNDP, UFMD, and CSR, among others.

### **5.3 The Fortunes of AFORD and UDF in the General Elections of 1994, 1999 and 2004**

In Chapter Four of this study, I have provided an analysis of the fortunes and/or misfortunes of the two parties, AFORD and UDF, in the General Elections of 1994, 1999 and 2004. From the analysis, the study has established that both parties had very few followers (voters) as of the 2004 General Elections. For AFORD, the party's performance had been dwindling since its landmark performance in the 1994 General Elections, where it swept all Seats in the Northern Region. For the UDF, the party performed tremendously in the General Elections of 1994 and 1999, but in 2004 it performed poorly. It was from such trends that one would begin to question the sustainability of these two parties and indeed of multi-partyism in the country, because the drop in performance was so dramatic and unexpected.

After analyzing both oral and written sources, what has been established is that the drop in performance for both AFORD and UDF, could be attributed to internal problems within the two political parties. Such problems include lack of proper conflict resolution mechanisms; lack of intra-party democracy; lack of reliable sources of funding; lack of adherence to party ideologies; and poor leadership qualities.

### **5.3.1 Conflict Resolution**

One major issue contributing to the weakening and imminent decline of both AFORD and UDF has been that of lack of proper conflict resolution mechanisms. A number of party officials and ordinary members have either been forced out of the parties or have had to voluntarily resign, following conflicts that arose within the parties. Most of the intra-party conflicts have ended up being exposed to the public domain through the media, and in some instances, the conflicts have had to be resolved by the courts.

For AFORD, major differences in the party started to appear as early as 1996, and continued up to the time of conducting this study. Over the years, whenever the party's long-time leader (Chakufwa Chihana) 'hammered out' a deal with either UDF or Malawi Congress Party (MCP), those who thought they would benefit from the decision rallied behind him, while others objected either because they saw no benefit in the new position for themselves as individuals or for the party as a whole. Such developments contributed to numerous breakaways from the party. A good example was the conflict that took place in June 1996, when AFORD opted to pull out of the UDF-led Government, citing corruption in government as the main cause. Chihana ordered all his cabinet ministers to resign from their positions, in which all but five ministers relinquished their ministerial posts.<sup>1</sup> Those who refused to resign were later identified as 'rebels' and were subsequently fired from the party. That marked the beginning of the party's decline as it began to lose its popularity, mainly because of its lack of tolerance (of opposing views).

In the UDF, the issue of conflict resolution has also not been properly followed over the years. Major cracks began to appear in the party since the year 2000, when Bakili Muluzi began to show signs that he would prefer to have an extension to his two terms as head of state. Those in favour of the idea spoke publicly to castigate those were against the move. On the other hand, those who were against the idea were falsely accused and forced to resign from the party. Party executive members such as Brown Mpinganjira, Jaan Sonke and Joseph Manduwa, were all sidelined for having contrary views.

Another major issue that caused internal squabbles in the UDF was the Chairman's (Muluzi's) decision to hand-pick Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika as the party's presidential candidate for the 2004 General Elections. Although some party members tried to oppose the party Chairman and then State President, Dr. Bakili Muluzi on this, their efforts fell on 'deaf ears' as Muluzi was determined to see his decision go through. A good number of party officials were either fired or forced to resign if they opposed Muluzi's decision.<sup>2</sup> These and other instances contributed to the mass exodus of party members hence the drop in the number of votes for the party's candidates in the general elections of 2004.

### **5.3.2 Intra-Party Democracy**

In this section, effort is made to assess how democratic the two political parties, AFORD and UDF have been in their day to day operations since their formation in the early 1990s. Although it is difficult to find an ideal democratic state or institution, there are some elements that are so central to democracy and which need to be evident in any

democratic dispensation. Beetham (1997) focuses on four crucial variables. Firstly, there must be free and fair elections, so as to provide the platform for popular control over government, electoral choice between candidates and programmes, open access to political office, and equality between electors. Secondly, there must be an open and accountable government, guaranteeing the continuous public accountability of officials, both elected and non-elected, the rule of law upheld by independent courts, and decision-making that is responsive to public opinion. Furthermore, people must be accorded their civil and political rights and freedoms, which would among other things, enable citizens to associate freely with others, to express divergent or unpopular views, to create an informed public opinion, and to find their own solutions to collective problems. Lastly, there has to be agreement on the political nation; characterized by a flourishing of independent and accountable associational life; social inclusion; and a democratic culture of tolerance, non-violence, participation and trust.<sup>3</sup> Taken together these constitute 'essential democratic principles' which this study employed in evaluating the experiences of the two political parties, both of which claim to be democratic (if their names are anything to go by).

For AFORD, it was discovered that the party's officials have on a number of occasions acted contrary to liberal democratic principles. One case already highlighted in the previous section is that of the firing of top party officials who were against moving out of the UDF-led Government in 1996. The self contradiction by AFORD leaders could partly be explained by the fact that the party officials were greedy for both power and money.

As such, when the chance to get into Government availed itself, ‘they threw democracy to the wind’ to obey the wishes of their hearts.

For the UDF, despite claims by the party’s leadership, over the years the party has failed to nurture the culture of democracy within its ranks. One major issue attesting to how undemocratic the party has been was the desire by Bakili Muluzi to extend his term of office (as State President) to three terms, by attempting to amend Section 83 (3) of the country’s Constitution. As early as 2000, those who appeared to stand in Muluzi’s way on this were either fired from the party or were forced to leave it. Clearly, this affected the party’s votes in the 2004 General Elections, since some of the fired members went on to establish their own political parties.

### **5.3.3 Party Funding**

Another issue that was considered in assessing the fortunes of the two political parties is that of funding. It is an issue which has been a major setback to most political parties not only in Malawi but also elsewhere in Africa. While other studies have attributed the funding problems to the high poverty levels prevalent in most African countries, others have blamed the party leaders for lacking proper strategies for sourcing the funds, and also that when such scarce resources have been accessed, the same leaders lack transparency and accountability on how the funds have been utilized.

In the case of AFORD, the party has over the years depended on two major sources of funding, namely; well-wishers and Parliamentary Funding (as stipulated in the Republican Constitution). By the time of carrying out this study the party had also been enjoying some funding from the Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (IMD), an organization which funds political parties that are represented in Parliament. Although there are these sources of funding, the party has had serious funding problems. Among the reasons accounting for this is the fact that money from well-wishers is usually not reliable, as funding is done haphazardly. Secondly, Parliamentary funding, as already alluded to, is conditional, in the sense that it is determined by the number of MPs which a party is able to amass during elections. In the case of AFORD, the party only enjoyed this funding after the 1994 and 1999 General Elections (when it satisfied the requirements), but lost out following its poor performance in the Parliamentary Elections of 2004.

In the case of UDF, the party also has two major sources of funding, namely; Parliamentary funding and personal funding from its National Chairman (Bakili Muluzi). Despite this, the party has had funding problems. Firstly, the Parliamentary funding has not been reliable, because it is not always readily available and also because it can only be there depending upon the party's fulfillment of the constitutional requirement. Secondly, it has also not been healthy to rely on one main individual financier for the party, as that has created dictatorial space for the benefactor. One party official even stated that it could be regarded as a 'rebellion' if anyone else within the party started funding the party.<sup>4</sup>

One way which could have been used by both parties to source party funds could have been through the sale of party membership cards. But interviews carried out for this study, with both party officials and ordinary members, indicated that most of the people were not willing to adopt such a system. Some party officials had this to say:

It is still a general discussion on that, but as of now there has been nothing formal, including the issue of having a party register. Initially the problem was that cards were associated with coercion (during the MCP days), so it was difficult to introduce the membership cards.<sup>5</sup>

Eeeeh! That will be suicidal, that will be suicidal. Never will any party in Malawi come back to that system again, because we had a bad experience during the MCP regime, so no one can think of that. But plans are in the pipeline of finding other avenues of sourcing party funds which I cannot disclose now.<sup>6</sup>

#### **5.3.4 Party Ideology**

Adams (1995) defines the term ‘ideology’ as any kind of politics driven by theory, that is, politics based on some vision of how society ought to be and pursuing policies designed to make the vision a reality.<sup>7</sup> It is from any chosen ideology (liberal democracy, socialism, communism, or anarchism) that a party’s policies and practices are supposed to derived. As such, it becomes necessary that a party should not just have the ideology (ideologies), but should also be able to impart such ideas to its members, who would be involved in implementing such ideologies as the party decides. This also gives the party members some sense of direction on what things to do (and not to do). Such type of information is usually supposed to be incorporated in copies of the party’s constitution or manifesto.

According to information sourced from the manifestos of the two parties and from the statements made by several party officials, one gets the impression that both parties follow liberal democratic ideologies, which champion human rights and freedoms for citizens. But as already indicated in Section 5.1.1 (of this chapter), over the years both AFORD and UDF officials have not adhered to such principles. This has made both parties to have misdirected followers, who could switch to another party, even if it has similar ideologies.

### **5.3.5 Party Leadership and Organization**

The last variable on the basis of which AFORD and UDF were assessed for this study is that of party leadership and organization. This was done basing on the conception that it is usually a party that has capable and well organized leadership that could easily be sustained.

In the case of AFORD, the party's leadership was for a long time centered on an individual (a personality), in the name of its founding father, Chakufwa Chihana. It was Chihana who was behind the coalitions and/or alliances which the party signed with either the MCP or UDF between the years 1994 and 2004. Anyone who rose to oppose such moves was either suspended or summarily dismissed from the party. It seems Chihana always had the 'founder syndrome' within him: that because he was the founding father, it was imperative that he should be the one making all major party decisions.

One of the party's founding members and AFORD MP from the year 1994 to 2004, Mr. Ian Mkandawire, also blamed the party's leadership for being unsettled and autocratic in practice. Mr. Mkandawire blamed the party's leadership for being unduly obsessed with power, which made the party to lose focus on its ideals and principles. He went on to state that the period between 1998 and 2004 was the worst in the party's history because it was during this period that major cracks surfaced within the party's hierarchy, leading to the formation of splinter groups and parallel AFORD parties. It was also during this period that irreparable damage was done and the party completely lost its glory. In his opinion, the major problems in the party had mainly revolved around the struggle for power, greed, selfishness and total disregard for other people's opinion and/or advice. And that all these problems revolved around the caliber of the party's leadership.<sup>8</sup>

In the UDF, the problem has been similar-that of dependence on a personality (Dr. Bakili Muluzi). For a long-time party members have been made to think that Muluzi is irreplaceable as the party's leader, with the result that since 1999 (the beginning of Muluzi's second term of office as the country's president), the party had been virtually trapped by Muluzi's determination to remain at the helm of Malawian politics, to the disadvantage of other potential national leaders within UDF. Such that even when Muluzi decided to impose Mutharika as his successor, he was never given the respect and honor that Muluzi was accorded. It was out of such a misunderstanding that Mutharika resigned from the UDF, in February 2005 to form his own party, known as the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), taking away many UDF followers with him.

## 5.4 Epilogue

This study makes a contribution to Malawi's contemporary history, with a special focus on the debate concerning the development and prospects of the second wave of multi-partyism in Malawi (and indeed in other African countries). This has been achieved by analyzing the fortunes of AFORD and UDF, two of the parties that emerged in the country's second-wave of multi-partyism (which began in the early 1990s). The major theory of analysis was the 'Modernization Theory', whereby the two parties were regarded as an extension of the political system that was first established in the West in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and only began to appear in most African countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

So far, Malawi has undergone two waves of multi-party political systems. During the first wave (from the early 1940s to mid 1960s), the parties were established with an aim of winning political independence for the African majority from the colonial government. But that wave was choked as soon as political independence was achieved, owing to problems that were both internal and external to these parties. After a period of about three decades (in the case of Malawi), a second-wave of multi-partyism emerged following the results of a national referendum that was held in 1993. This time around the parties formed were interested in bringing about wider human rights to the African majority. The two parties under study, AFORD and UDF, emerged during this second wave.

With reference to the Modernization Theory (school of thought), the study has established that the multi-party political system is far from being entrenched in the country, especially because of the problems that have been discovered in the two political parties. Such problems include lack of proper conflict resolution mechanisms; lack of intra-party democracy; lack of reliable sources of funding; lack of and/or non-adherence to party ideologies; and poor quality of party leadership, among other factors. In view of these problems, one would conclude that the process of political modernization has yet to fully materialize in the country.

At this juncture, it is worth pointing out that the study has some limitations. One major limitation was that the study was not able to incorporate as many views from ordinary party members, more especially because a lot of them could not explain fully the developments in their political parties. It has to be noted that most party members are loosely attached to the parties (i.e. they only show their allegiance during elections). In other instances, ordinary party members were less enthusiastic to give out information, clearly stating that they had developed a negative attitude towards politics owing to the squabbles within and amongst the political parties in the country.

Furthermore, due to time constraints, the study could not cover all the areas to do with the development of multi-partyism in the country. As such, it is recommended that further studies could be conducted to establish, for instance, the role that 'Religion' has played in determining people's choice of political parties in the country.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> R. Brown, “Malawi: Recent History”, in Africa South of the Sahara 2001, 30<sup>th</sup> Edition (England: Europa Publications, 2000), pp709-711.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Nation*, 11/07/2003, pp1-2.

<sup>3</sup> D. Beetham and Democratic Audit UK, “Conducting a Democratic Audit” (University of Leeds, 1997) in B. Baker, “The Quality of African Democracy: Why and How it should be Measured” in Journal of Contemporary African Studies, Volume 17, No.2, 1999, p.277.

<sup>4</sup> O.T. Mr. Imedi Wilson, UDF Regional Committee Member for the Central Region, on 11/10/2007.

<sup>5</sup> O.T. Khwauli Msiska, AFORD Secretary General, on 18/10/2007.

<sup>6</sup> O.T. Mr. Hophmally Makande, UDF Deputy Secretary General, on 14/11/2007.

<sup>7</sup> I. Adams, Political Ideology Today (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p.3.

<sup>8</sup> See *The Nation*, 02/05/2007, p.14: an interview with Mr. Ian Mkandawire, former AFORD MP.

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