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The Evolution and Development of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy in Zambia

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POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEMS IN AFRICA PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

The liberal democratic wave that swept through Africa after the collapse of the USSR and communist regimes in eastern Europe spelled an end to several one-party states and military governments on the continent. Among other things it prompted the formation of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) in Zambia.

It began in 1990 as a civil society movement to fight for the re-introduction of multiparty politics after 18 years of one-party rule by the United National Independence Party (UNIP) and became a political party following the repeal in 1990 of Article 4 of the Republic Constitution to allow for the formation of parties other than UNIP. Starting with its defeat of UNIP in the first multiparty election of 1991 the MMD has carried four consecutive general elections, winning again in 1996, 2001 and 2006.

This paper traces the evolution of the MMD from its formation and examines the issues associated with Zambia's political and governance climate that have helped to shape the MMD. The discussion essentially centres on six of these questions. The first is the genesis of the MMD from its formation as a pressure group to campaign for the re-introduction of a multiparty system. It specifically looks at such aspects as the groupings that constituted the nascent MMD, and the factors that made the new party sufficiently attractive to the electorate for it to win a large majority in the 1991 presidential and parliamentary elections. The second part examines the MMD's internal structure and the third, its sources of funding. Fourth is an attempt to assess how far the MMD has been able to fulfil the promises it made in the 1991 elections. Sections six and seven examine the reasons for the party's very poor performance in the 2001 elections, and the loss of its national base. Lastly comes an evaluation of the lessons to be learned from the MMD's transformation, given its original *raison d'être* of opposition to a one-party system, into to a party that has held power for 15 years; and a discussion of the socio-political factors that have shaped this process.

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ORIGINS OF THE MMD

According to one of its founding members, the MMD was conceived on 20 July 1990 at a meeting at the Garden Hotel in Lusaka. The gathering included various groups, principally representatives of academia and the trade union movement, and individuals who had held posts under the UNIP government. It was registered as a political party in Lusaka on 4 January 1991.

Prior to the repeal of Article 4 of the constitution the MMD operated as a loose alliance of several civil society organisations formed specifically to campaign for the re-introduction of a multiparty system. Among the organisations and movements it represented were the labour movement, under the umbrella of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU); professional associations, notably the Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) and the Press Association of Zambia (PAZA); the Economic Association of Zambia and the University of Zambia Students Union.¹

According to one of the initiators of the Garden Hotel meeting, each of these organisations played a critical role in realising the MMD coalition.² ZCTU's countrywide structure provided the organisational base and the mass appeal factor (ZCTU chairman-general Frederick Chiluba was appointed the MMD's vice-chairman for mobilisation and subsequently became president of the new party. He went on to lead the MMD to its 1991 election victory). The Economic Association of Zambia provided the secretariat while the Zambia Research Foundation (ZRF), comprising mainly people from the University of Zambia and other graduates, was the intellectual driving force behind the MMD manifesto. The ZRF initiated and organised the Garden Hotel meeting under Derrick Mbita Chitala and Akashambatwa Mbikusita-Lewanika, two MMD founders who later held government office as minister and deputy minister respectively. Several other ZRF members contested the 1991 elections on the MMD ticket, while some were appointed to the civil service as permanent secretaries and in other senior positions. (Mbikusita-Lewanika left the government within a year, however, and founded the National Party (NP); while Chitala left in 1995 to form the Zambia Democratic Congress, which he served as general secretary; he rejoined the MMD in 2001 and was a deputy minister until 2006.)

LAZ provided legal services to individuals allegedly victimised by the UNIP government because of their role in, or support for, the MMD when it was an umbrella civic organisation. PAZA also supported the MMD's cause: it successfully petitioned the High Court to remove the heads of the three public media institutions (the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation, the *Times of Zambia* and the *Zambia Daily Mail*)³ which were seen as UNIP mouthpieces. In addition, although the Zambia Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other business organisations did not formally join the MMD, individual members and business in general provided financial support.

As the campaign for the re-introduction of a multiparty system gained ground the church joined in criticising the UNIP government on a number of issues. In its pastoral letter of 1990 the Zambian Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Secretariat accused the government of a lack of accountability. Although the Roman Catholic bishops fell short of supporting the MMD, their open opposition to a one-party state gave a significant boost to the campaign for plural politics and to MMD leaders in particular. As the MMD gained momentum, a number of prominent individuals declared their support, among them the chairman of the Africa Bar Association and Dr Ludwig Sondashi, who quit his post on the

UNIP central committee to campaign for the re-introduction of a multiparty system. His was the first major defection from UNIP.⁴ Other prominent individuals such as Humphrey Mulemba, a member of parliament and former secretary general of UNIP, and Robinson Nabulyato, the former speaker of the National Assembly, also declared their support for the MMD.

While external events, particularly the collapse of socialism in eastern Europe, also helped to push forward the multiparty movement in Zambia, the domestic origins of the MMD go back somewhat further. Dissatisfaction with the one-party system in general and President Kenneth Kaunda's UNIP government in particular had been growing since the late 1970s. At that time a number of businessmen, some of whom had previously operated within the political system, began to voice criticism of government policies and the one-party system, while several members of parliament representing business interests articulated their sentiments in the National Assembly.⁵ In 1980 a group of prominent citizens, including a leading Lusaka lawyer and a former secretary to the cabinet, were arrested for plotting to overthrow the government. Organised labour leaders were also increasingly critical of government policies, although until 1989 they avoided direct reference to the one-party system. Serious food riots in 1987 and 1990 and an attempted military coup that immediately followed the 1990 unrest undermined both the legitimacy of the UNIP government and Kaunda's hold on the Zambian population.

UNIP itself was gradually losing its traditional working-class and peasant support bases. Zambia's increasing economic problems, and austerity measures introduced following intervention by international financial institutions, brought about a rapid increase in the cost of living. The immediate effect of the devaluation of the Zambian kwacha, for example, was a steep and rapid rise in the price of most essential commodities, leading to the 1987 and 1990 riots, which weakened the UNIP government. Furthermore, the standard of living of peasants and other rural dwellers was in gradual decline. According to the Prices and Incomes Commission, real producer prices of maize, the staple crop, between 1980 and 1990 were falling 4% annually and between 1986 and 1990 the rate of decrease was 11%, yet during the same period inflation was very high.⁶ For essential commodities in the countryside it was even higher: the Prices and Incomes Commission indicated that the benchmark food basket cost more in rural areas than in urban.⁷ By 1989, when the Soviet Union collapsed and political change was sweeping eastern Europe, all these factors had coalesced around the MMD's demand for the reintroduction of a multiparty system.

The sudden changes in Europe seem to have been the immediate trigger for the founding of the MMD. Although discontentment with the UNIP government had been simmering for a decade or more, events in eastern Europe were widely cited by the MMD's founders to discredit one-party systems in general, and UNIP in particular, given that it was closely associated with socialism and the one-party system. Until then there had been no serious challenge to the ruling party and as late as the 1987 elections, all the groups that came to constitute the leadership of the MMD had been content to participate within the one-party system. Indeed in previous one-party elections, business leaders had taken part in the campaign for Kaunda's re-election⁸ and several members of the business community had sought election to the National Assembly,⁹ while the chairman of the labour movement was quoted as having demanded preferential treatment for labour leaders in the 1983 elections. As events in eastern Europe unfolded, however, the possibility of a re-introduction of multiparty politics began to be discussed openly.

The labour leadership was the first to exploit the opening. In late 1989 Chiluba called on African countries to emulate the changes in eastern Europe and abandon the one-party system.¹⁰ The UNIP party leadership itself began to discuss the possibility of re-introducing a multiparty system and called a national convention, which duly took place on 14–16 March 1990¹¹ with a review of the one-party system on the agenda. At the convention several former party officials, former senior civil servants and parastatal chiefs appeared together with party and government leaders. Several delegates called for the re-introduction of a multiparty system and by the end of the convention it was clear that most delegates favoured this course. Among those who spoke in support were ZCTU,¹² a former member of the central committee of UNIP¹³ and two former cabinet ministers.¹⁴ On 8 July 1990 Kaunda appointed a parliamentary select committee that released its report on 9 August 1990. The committee called for increased democratisation within UNIP and more importantly, conceded the possibility of a re-introduction of a multiparty system.

With this open or tacit support, the MMD overwhelmingly won the 1991 election. A number of factors can be advanced to explain the ease of its victory. According to Mbikusita-Lewanika, UNIP was defeated because everybody associated the one-party system with Kaunda and his ruling party.¹⁵ The vice-national secretary of the MMD suggests that the MMD won so easily because ‘people were fed up with one-party dictatorship’¹⁶ and Chitala attributed the MMD victory to donor support as well as the shift in public opinion against UNIP.¹⁷ A former vice-president of ZCTU, who at the time of the 1991 elections was secretary-general of the Civil Service Union of Zambia (CSUZ), said that MMD won the support of the ZCTU and workers in general because given that Chiluba was both president of the MMD and chairman-general of ZCTU, the MMD was regarded as the better guardian of their interests. Under Chiluba’s leadership the MMD promised to spearhead the introduction of a poverty datum line and placed the issue of a living wage for workers among its top priorities.¹⁸ ZCTU president Leonard Hikaumba says that the labour movement supported Chiluba and the MMD because it saw the MMD as a party that once in power would improve conditions of service.¹⁹

More simply, however, it might seem that most people wanted a change after 27 years of UNIP government, and MMD leaders won public support by exploiting both this ‘voter fatigue’ and the global shift away from one-party systems. According to the vice-president of PAZA ‘even the international community, especially western embassies, were [sic] involved in the process of forming the MMD. [They] wanted a shift from communism to a liberalised system of government.’²⁰

At this early stage the leadership of the MMD was drawn from members of the labour movement and the business community. The interim chairman of the MMD, one of its vice-chairmen, and two other members of the seven-member interim committee were all past chairmen of the Zambia Industrial and Commercial Association, the forerunner to the Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Chiluba, as chairman-general of ZCTU (and subsequently president of Zambia as well as of the MMD), served as one of the interim vice-chairmen. Five other ZCTU leaders including its secretary-general contested the 1991 elections: a former secretary-general was appointed to the powerful position of minister of home affairs and two others became deputy ministers. Other business people, some of whom had previously served in the UNIP government, dominated the cabinet. Although LAZ was not directly involved after the MMD became a political party, a number of individuals from the association played a very important part. Fourteen lawyers were

among the newly elected members of parliament in 1991; three of them, including the vice-president and the attorney general, were appointed to the first cabinet while several were made deputy ministers.

MMD INTERNAL ORGANISATION

At the national level, a congress meets every five years. The congress's main tasks are to elect a national executive committee (NEC) and to debate and approve party policies.²¹ Each of Zambia's nine provinces has a provincial executive committee (PEC) and there are 73 district executive committees and 151 constituency executive committees, with many branches throughout the country. (Although there are only 72 districts and 150 constituencies, the MMD structure provides for one extra district and constituency. Chambeshi, an urban centre on the Copperbelt, is treated as a district and a constituency.) Women's and youth wings exist at all levels. The main function of the PEC and other committees at lower levels is to supervise subordinate executive committees; eg the provincial executive oversees the district executive, which in turn supervises its equivalents at constituency level.

All leaders in the party, from branch executive committees through to the NEC, are elected. All card-carrying party members in the branch elect their branch leaders. A national convention elects the party president and other members of the NEC by secret ballot. Membership of the national congress comprises all MMD members of parliament, all NEC members, and all PEC members. There are five representatives from each of the 72 districts and five from each of the 150 constituencies. Delegates from districts and constituencies are selected by the respective districts. Of the MMD party leaders only the national secretary and deputy national secretary are paid.

At national level there is a disciplinary committee that decides all cases involving members of the NEC and other national party leaders. Disciplinary processes can be initiated by the national secretary's laying a charge against a party official, which is then referred to the disciplinary committee. At lower levels, executive committees can themselves constitute disciplinary committees. Procedure at national level is replicated lower down in the structure: the accused person may appear with a lawyer and if found guilty can be suspended or expelled from the party by the NEC. The decision of the NEC is subject to review by the national convention.²²

According to its elections committee chairman, the MMD has established procedures for nomination of members contesting presidential, parliamentary and local government elections. The person the national congress chooses as party president is normally also the national presidential candidate. The NEC can, however, opt for an alternative, as it did in 2001 when Chiluba, although party president, did not qualify because he had already served a maximum two terms as president of Zambia. Advertisements are placed in national newspapers inviting MMD members to apply to contest parliamentary elections on the party ticket. Constituency committee members then interview prospective candidates and having completed their appraisal of the applicants, pass their recommendations to the district committee; after reviewing the applications, that committee in turn submits its own nominations to the PEC. From the PEC this recommendation goes to the NEC, which makes the final decision on the party's election candidates.

For applicants in local government elections the process starts at ward level, moves

on to the constituency committee, which also interviews the candidates, and ends at the district committee for final determination. Under certain circumstances, higher committees may have to make the decision.²³ The elections committee chairman considers the nomination system for parliamentary and local government election candidates to have served the party well. The interview process is transparent, with committees of 24 people interviewing candidates at each level. Any applicant who objects to the party's decision has the right of appeal.

PARTY FUNDING

Since Zambia has no provision for state funding of political parties, in principle all parties including the MMD must raise their own campaign funds. Funds for party organisation and campaign purposes are raised through dinner dances, luncheons (including a 'meet the president' luncheon) and similar activities. Local party committees are also expected to raise money for campaign purposes, as long as they can account for the donations.²⁴ Funds for the party organisation can also come from individual donations provided the donor does not attach conditions.²⁵ During elections MMD candidates must contribute K100,000²⁶ to the party, once they have been adopted as an official candidate.

The 2001 elections, however, revealed the MMD's extensive use of state resources for electoral purposes. During the petition to the Supreme Court against the election of President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, the minister of information testified that former President Chiluba distributed title deeds to miners who had bought houses under the 'presidential housing initiative'. He did this in the presence of the incumbent President Mwanawasa at a campaign rally in Copperbelt Province.²⁷ In his evidence Michael Sata (MMD national secretary until September 2001) told the Supreme Court that although the party had no money at the time of the 2001 elections, it had managed to get 150 vehicles for its 150 constituencies. It also purchased 3 000 cycles and was given a further K54,000,000 to buy bicycles suitable for the Western Province. The presidential candidate was given K150,000,000 a week and the vice-president K250,000 a week, while parliamentary candidates received K30,000,000 each for the duration of the campaign. Maize and mealie meal were made available to each of the MMD parliamentary candidates through Chani Fisheries, a company with close government ties, and a businessman named Paul Steele. Sata also claimed that some of the money used to buy the vehicles was channelled from the government through the office of the president (an intelligence unit commonly referred to as the 'special division').²⁸

It was also revealed in the Supreme Court that Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation Limited released a total of more than K123,000,000 to a company named New Horizon Printers as payment for 'services rendered'.²⁹ In subsequent allegations and counter-allegations between the former president's associates and those of his successor it was alleged that during the 2001 presidential elections Mwanawasa had ordered the Zambia intelligence director, then still serving under the Chiluba administration, to withdraw about \$76,000 from a government overseas account for Chiluba's presidential campaign. Of this amount, \$11,940 was diverted to print colour portraits of Mwanawasa.³⁰ In subsequent by-elections, monitoring groups and opposition political parties have also alleged that the MMD used state resources for campaign efforts. State funds and

facilities, in particular the provision of government vehicles, have been mentioned as a major resource for the MMD in its election campaigns and for organisational purposes.

The MMD has also managed to raise funds from private companies, in some cases possibly through arm-twisting. In 2003 it was alleged that the party vice-president secretly received, on behalf of MMD, a donation of K510,000,000 from Trans Sahara Trading, a subsidiary of the Vancouver-based company Diamond Works Ltd.³¹ In his letter relieving the vice-president of his duties, President Mwanawasa cited this matter, particularly since the owner of the company was ‘threatening to reveal the transaction to private newspapers’.³² In these exchanges the vice-president also revealed that Paul Steele had donated K100,000,000 to the MMD in order to promote sales of maize to Zambia.³³ During an attempt to impeach Mwanawasa it was alleged in parliament that the president had in addition authorised the ministry of finance to pay K10 billion to a company belonging to Lendor & Burton Construction Ltd of Lusaka to pay a government debt; from which amount the company then donated money to the MMD.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Several central features of the MMD manifesto seem to have remained consistent since 1991. This section examines the policy developments of the MMD as outlined in its respective election manifestoes in 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006, with special reference to issues of privatisation, the provision of social services such as education and health, and democratic governance and human rights. For example the 2001 manifesto stated that beyond 2001 an MMD government ‘would maintain a liberal economic environment’,³⁴ a position that remained unchanged for the 2006 elections, the 2006 manifesto stating that the ‘MMD New Deal Government will continue to maintain to maintain a liberal economic environment’.³⁵

The economic policies of the MMD as laid out in the 1991 manifesto included a commitment to the principle of a market economy, which it saw as the only way to bring about ‘a new era of opportunity of economic realism which rewards and motivates individual initiative.’³⁶ In order to facilitate an increased role by the private sector in the economy, the party committed itself to legislation that would provide ‘appropriate incentives to investors’.³⁷ For the agricultural sector, in 1991 the MMD was ‘committed to expanding agricultural production and ensuring food is available to all’. There was a stress on ‘prompt payment to farmers, restructuring the marketing system and realistic floor prices, indexed if necessary to side-step inflation.’³⁸ The party also committed itself to ‘a modern, coherent, simplified and relevant land law code intended to ensure the fundamental right to private property and ownership of land as well as to be an integral part of a more efficient land delivery system’.³⁹ In the event a privatisation programme was implemented: the Zambia Privatisation Agency was created to spearhead the programme.

Several central economic features of the 1991 manifesto continued into the 1996 version. Notably, the MMD pledged to continue pursuing ‘private sector-led, rational, market-oriented [sic] policies in production, trade and investment within the context of managed liberalisation and sensitive social policy.’ It was also committed to ‘the creation of a stable employment market in which all Zambians are afforded the opportunity to realise their potential as productive members of society with dignity, confidence and a

sense of fulfilment and personal well-being'. Productive self-employment, supported by appropriate credit policies, was to be encouraged.⁴⁰ The MMD also pledged to build a land data bank which would form 'the basis of decisions on demarcation of land for human habitation, industrial sites, agriculture, wildlife parks and forests and natural reserves'.⁴¹ In practice the MMD government managed to cut the inflation rate to below 20% by 2001 (it had hovered around 200% a decade earlier) while it also liberalised agricultural markets and through the Land Act, established a land tribunal.⁴²

In 2001, the central theme of the MMD manifesto was to continue liberalisation of an economy in which the private sector would continue to play a key part in the provision of goods and services. Its focus would be on 'job creation, poverty alleviation and sustainable economic growth'.⁴³ The party pledged to 'increase support to [agricultural] smallholders through promoting out-grower and contract farming using the registered cooperatives'. It promised to continue building the land data bank.⁴⁴ As regards social services the party pledged among other things to:

- restructure the education system to suit the basic needs of learners, parents and society at large;
- expand universal pre-school education to allow every child the opportunity to develop the mind at an early stage;
- provide universal education up to grade nine to alleviate the problem of grade seven drop-outs too young and unskilled to find employment; and
- decentralise higher education to the regional level, to curb the brain drain of youths from rural to urban areas.⁴⁵

The manifesto set out the MMD's aim to rehabilitate the physical health infrastructure and set up new facilities where none existed; to eliminate smuggling in essential drugs and improve their legal supply; and to provide better conditions of service in order to attract and retain medical personnel, reversing an existing 'brain drain'. The earlier, 1991 manifesto had held that trade unions must be democratic, independent and free, with the right to negotiate, participate and influence events that affected them.⁴⁶

In terms of policy performance as opposed to manifesto promises, there was some rehabilitation of education and health infrastructure in the first five years of MMD rule, largely through the efforts of donor programmes such as the Micro-project Unit (a government financing agency funded by the European Development Fund). There were no significant departures from established policies in 1996, 2001 or 2006, except for the housing segment. The pledge in this sector initially was to 'create a sustainable housing delivery system capable of providing quality housing to all income groups in urban and rural parts of Zambia'.⁴⁷ A key element in the programme was the sale to sitting tenants of government, council and parastatal housing stocks.⁴⁸ The MMD's commitment to it was reiterated, albeit with some campaign overtones, in the 1996 and 2001 elections and it became one of the central issues in petitions opposing the election of Presidents Chiluba in 1996 and Mwanawasa in 2001.

Separation of powers has been the central theme of the MMD's approach to governance and the democratisation process, beginning with its 1991 manifesto. In 1996 the MMD committed itself to realign and strengthen the institutional application of the separation of powers and between the 1996 and 2001 elections there was some movement towards

realisation of this promise, through the establishment of constitutional mechanisms that strengthened the legislative body. Two institutional reforms have also been made in this area. The first was to give the legislature power to ratify a number of constitutional appointments, including those of the chief justice and the attorney general, and also to strengthen the oversight role of the national assembly by introducing ten specialist department-orientated committees, in addition to normal committees such as those on public accounts and delegated legislation. The new committees cover all government ministries. These are, respectively: agriculture and lands; economic affairs and labour; communications, transport, works and supply; energy, environment and tourism; health, community development and social welfare; information and broadcasting services; national security and foreign affairs; education, science and technology; local government, housing and chiefs' affairs; legal, governance, human rights and gender matters; and finally, sport, youth and children's affairs. The committees have been relatively active and although their introduction has not substantially increased the scrutiny power of the national assembly, it is at least in line with manifesto objectives.

Various groups have, however, voiced dissatisfaction. In the social sector the MMD promised to increase the provision of health and education facilities, but in this more than any other area it has failed to fulfil most of its promises. For its part the labour movement felt that the MMD has been unable to meet its manifesto and campaign obligations, a point underlined by the president of ZCTU who believes that 'the aspirations of the workers have not been met. For instance, the conditions of service [remain] bad and jobs have been lost ... increasing the levels of unemployment and poverty.' He also supports PAZA's view that the government has not undertaken media reforms. In his opinion, 'there is still no good governance in Zambia. Even the media system is not yet free.'⁴⁹

FROM UNITED MOVEMENT TO FRAGMENTED ORGANISATION: THE LOSS OF THE NATIONAL SUPPORT BASE

The MMD has suffered a number of schisms since its formation. The first came in March 1991 when the losers at the MMD convention founded the National Democratic Party (NDP). This came to nothing because the leaders who had prompted its formation eventually opted not to join the new party but to remain in the MMD.

The second breach began early in 1992 when some MMD members formed a pressure group called the 'caucus for national unity'. This was the prelude to a major split in the party, which started in July that year with the resignation of two cabinet ministers who cited corruption and abuse of office as their reason for leaving. On 15 August 1993 these two, together with seven other members of parliament, left the MMD to form the NDP. The nine included a past minister of finance, a minister of mines and two former deputy ministers.⁵⁰ Arthur Wina, another former minister who had been the interim chairman of the MMD before he lost the party presidency at the 1991 convention, subsequently joined them. In-fighting in the party continued during 1994, when conflicts over alleged corruption and drug trafficking led to the sacking of a deputy minister and the resignation of two cabinet ministers and the deputy speaker of the National Assembly, following accusations of involvement in drug trafficking by their government colleagues.⁵¹ In 1994

Vice-President Mwanawasa (who was also MMD vice-president) resigned his position and later alleged rampant corruption in government.

The third split was in 1996 when the dismissal of the MMD's deputy national secretary and deputy treasurer led to the formation of the Zambia Democratic Congress (ZDC). The two members had been at the forefront of the accusations that had led to the ministerial resignations of 1994. In the light of a UNIP boycott of the 1996 elections ZDC president Dean Mung'omba became the main challenger to the MMD's Chiluba, while the 1996 election also featured a large number of independent candidates. Far from being rebels from UNIP defying the party's decision not to contest the election, most of those independents were in fact MMD members who had failed to gain adoption as parliamentary candidates. In consequence a number of them, together with their supporters, were expelled, or threatened with expulsion, from the party.

The National Lima Party (NLP) and the Zambia Liberal Party, both formed by former ministers, were two other relatively important MMD splinter political parties. The NLP was formed by Guy Scott, chairman of the farmers' union and a former minister of agriculture; it participated in the 1996 parliamentary, but not the presidential, election. Also emerging out of the MMD was the United Party for National Development (UPND), established in 1998. Although it included members not closely associated with the MMD its founder, the late Anderson Mazoka, had been an MMD treasurer at constituency level.

The most significant split in the MMD came about in 2001 when Chiluba and his close supporters attempted to change the constitution to permit him to contest the presidency for a third time. During this period a total of 22 MMD parliamentarians, including Zambia's vice-president Christon Tembo and five cabinet ministers, openly took issue with Chiluba and were subsequently expelled from the party. They together formed the Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD), which came third in the 2001 elections. It is widely believed that the attempt by Chiluba to manipulate the constitution in the interests of seeking a third term is one of the most important of the issues that weakened the MMD to the point where it almost lost the 2001 elections.

A number of factors contributed to the tensions that led to these splits. Ethnic or tribal conflict, however, seem to have been most important in reducing the MMD's geographical base. In the 1991 presidential election the party had enjoyed countrywide support with 75% of the popular vote; this plummeted to 29% in the 2001 presidential elections and although rising to 43.3% in 2006, it remained far below pre-2001 levels. The problem of ethnicity was not a factor when the MMD was formed, but it began to surface immediately after the party first took office. Leaders from a number of ethnic groups complained that all key positions in the Chiluba government were held by members of the president's own group. Within a week of the formation of the MMD government the Lusaka newspaper *The Weekly Post* reported that newly elected MPs from Southern Province had complained that Chiluba's cabinet appointments were designed to concentrate power in the hands of Bemba-speakers.⁵² Similar sentiments from several ethnic groups emerged even more strongly during public submissions to a 1995 constitutional review commission, which received a large number of petitions from provinces that felt themselves marginalised and called for some kind of federal arrangement. A district council chairman from North-western Province, for example, suggested a federal system in order 'to avoid imbalance and political oppression by big tribes'.⁵³ In its report the commission acknowledged

the widespread nature of such sentiments and noted that ‘it was also argued that the domination of the political scene by certain provincial or tribal groups could be effectively checked, if not eliminated, by a federal government’.⁵⁴

A number of writers have alluded to this factor. Bertha Osei-Hwedie and Chisepo JJ Mphaisha are among those to discuss the issue of ethnicity within the MMD under Chiluba’s presidency. Osei-Hwedie stated that Chiluba failed ‘adequately [to] balance the demands of the other ethnic groups with his own, particularly in terms of government and party positions, to dilute Bemba domination’ and she attributed this behaviour to the fact that Chiluba found it ‘easy to garner the sympathy of his [own] ethnic group’ whenever faced with opposition or criticism.⁵⁵ Mphaisha remarked on the fact that under Chiluba key government positions such as the ministries of defence, home affairs and finance, together with other strategic positions in government or parastatal organisations, have been the preserve of people from his ethnic group.⁵⁶

Dissatisfied leaders of other groups attempted with some success to mobilise their constituencies in opposition to Chiluba. Over time their demands have become more frequent, as Osei-Hwedie explains. Several splinter parties broke from the MMD as a result of these grievances. Prominent among them was the NP, which arose out of dissatisfaction among southern and western ethnic groups; its short-lived support was concentrated in the Western, North-western and Southern provinces. The UPND was seen as an ethnically motivated reaction to perceived domination by Bemba-speaking people under the Chiluba presidency while Chitala holds that the rise of the UPND, which he regards as a Tonga party, also resulted from tribal factors. The outcome of ethnic conflict within the MMD has been a severe reduction in its geographical support base, as indicated by a comparison of the results of the 2001 presidential elections with previous years (see table 1).

Table 1: Percentage vote of MMD proportion in presidential elections

Province	1991	1996	2001	2006
Central	72.06	69.62	31.26	60.00
Copperbelt	88.42	81.94	38.00	38.30
Eastern	24.69	60.28	16.19	44.30
Luapula	86.79	82.44	53.37	33.30
Lusaka	74.47	69.95	15.56	27.77
Northern	81.76	77.38	42.90	49.90
North-Western	68.35	50.19	32.25	69.90
Southern	82.69	63.60	14.85	20.10
Western	78.73	40.50	26.90	77.30
Total	75.8	72.59	29.15	43.30

Source: Electoral Commission of Zambia. See also http://africanelections.tripod.com/zm_detail.html

Table 2 shows that in the Southern, Western and North-western provinces in 2001, the MMD lost support to the UPND, which had a Tonga-speaking leader. The UPND success in these provinces was clearly seen as a protest vote by a coalition of ethnic groups which, as implied by Oise-Hwedie, felt marginalised by the Chiluba government. The Eastern Province vote, on the other hand, was simply a continuation of the election trend of 1991.

Table 2: Percentage vote of MMD against major presidential candidates, 2001 election

Province	MMD	UPND	FDD	UNIP	HP	ZRP	PF	NCC
Central	31.26	28.31	9.04	8.72	11.17	4.35	1.40	1.65
Copperbelt	38.00	11.95	8.45	4.29	19.34	6.00	7.18	2.66
Eastern	16.19	4.21	28.27	35.80	6.72	2.82	0.73	0.97
Luapula	53.37	4.23	8.33	7.83	2.34	15.67	3.61	2.25
Lusaka	15.56	30.72	23.57	6.49	8.52	2.74	3.67	5.32
Northern	42.90	4.57	12.58	13.16	4.26	9.34	8.00	2.24
North-western	32.25	48.22	5.74	3.87	4.39	1.42	0.24	0.64
Southern	14.85	70.93	4.41	1.89	2.18	1.15	0.23	0.92
Western	26.90	62.90	9.07	6.33	2.19	1.96	0.65	1.18
National	28.69	26.76	12.96	9.96	7.96	4.84	3.35	2.20

Source: Electoral Commission of Zambia. See also http://africanelections.tripod.com/zm_detail.html

Ethnic conflicts within the MMD continue. Since the 2001 election there seems to have been something of a Bemba revolt against party leader Mwanawasa who though not himself a Bemba, won the election largely on the Bemba vote. This situation has arisen out of a series of conflicts between the president and his predecessor. Upon coming to power Mwanawasa, ostensibly under pressure to investigate corruption under the Chiluba regime, had Chiluba's immunity from prosecution waived by act of parliament. Chiluba was subsequently charged with theft of public funds and his case has been before the courts several times in Zambia and in the UK. A number of his close associates have also been implicated in theft of public funds, among them his intelligence chief, who subsequently fled the country. The chairman of the Chiluba-initiated presidential housing initiative, who had also served as his press manager, also was convicted for stealing public money.

Nevertheless those charged with corruption, particularly Chiluba himself, retained the support of many sympathisers within the MMD who felt that the party had betrayed Chiluba and others accused of corruption, who distanced themselves from the incumbent president, and for the most part joined the Patriotic Front (PF). After the trials of Chiluba and his close associates began, some voices of dissent began to emerge in Luapula and Northern provinces, which had given Mwanawasa massive support in the 2001 election. In the run-up to the 2006 election several MMD leaders from Northern Province defected to the PF and in August 2006 a further seven former MMD members of parliament from Northern and Luapula provinces left the MMD for the PF, alleging that the MMD leadership was 'divisive, tribal, regional, [and] nepotistic in its approach to national and developmental issues'.⁵⁷ A week before the 2006 election the paramount chief of the Lunda (a sub-group of the Bemba) in Luapula Province was reported to have flogged some MMD members who had been shouting party slogans outside his guesthouse. He told reporters he was 'very upset at the way the former president Chiluba was being treated'.⁵⁸

Ethnic factors played a key role during the 2001 elections, not only in the loss of the MMD's support base in Western, Southern and North-western provinces, but also in some parts of Central Province. Similar factors may account for the relatively poor performance of the MMD in Luapula and Northern provinces when compared with its improved performance overall. In Luapula province Mwanawasa scored only 33.26% of the vote

against the 63.68% of his main contender, Michael Sata (in the 2001 election Mwanawasa had scored 53.37%). Although he improved his vote in Northern Province from 42.9% in 2001 to 49.74% in 2006, Mwanawasa lost ten out of the province's 21 constituencies, all of which he had won in 2001.⁵⁹

Yet another difficulty for the MMD, with implications for potential succession battles, is the uneasy relationship between Chiluba and Mwanawasa and their respective vice-presidents, who ordinarily would have been natural successors to the MMD vice-presidency and presidency. During Chiluba's ten years in power he had four vice-presidents, while Mwanawasa had four since 2001, including the current President Rupiah Banda, appointed after the 2006 elections. Mwanawasa was Chiluba's first vice-president in the original MMD government but resigned after differences with the president over governance issues. He was followed by Brigadier-General Godfrey Miyanda, who after less than a year was succeeded by Lieutenant-General Christon Tembo. He in turn left the post over differences relating to Chiluba's third term bid. After then, Mwanawasa's poor relationships with his deputies degenerated into open quarrels. There was an acrimonious exchange in the press between him and his then vice-president Enoch Kavindele, following Mwanawasa's decision to dismiss the latter. Kavindele was succeeded by Nevers Mumba, who, until a few days before his appointment, was leader of an opposition party called the National Citizens Coalition (NCC), for which he had contested the 2001 presidential election. Mumba was sacked within a year,

Underlining the problem of the second most important position within the MMD, the party decided to suspend the results of the election for party vice-president at its 2005 convention, in which Mwanawasa and several people loyal to him were elected. A number of MMD leaders consider that these splits caused the party to lose support in the lead-up to the 2001 election, when the MMD was able to retain control of only four, in particular the Bemba-based, provinces.

SHRINKAGE OF THE MMD SOCIAL SUPPORT BASE

Such factors as internal conflicts, some with an ethnic dimension; a perception that the MMD has failed to live up to its promises; high unemployment; and an increase in poverty, have all contributed to a reduction in the MMD's social and geographical support base.

As noted earlier the civil society formations that supported the party in 1991, including the trade unions, also began to fragment in the early years of MMD government. Differences between organised labour and government emerged over legislative measures that greatly disadvantaged the unions. The labour movement's clear position was that it was prepared to support other political parties if the MMD government failed to address workers' issues. Significantly, the situation of the working class worsened after the MMD took office. Privatised former parastatals retrenched a number of employees, a circumstance the labour movement blamed on the privatisation programme. At a May 1992 workshop organised by the technical committee of the privatisation agency the ZCTU voiced its strong criticism of the programme and described the MMD's privatisation policy as 'too narrow to be meaningful' because it simplistically equated privatisation with the sale of parastatal bodies. Labour leaders warned of serious social ramifications if government attempted to implement privatisation with an 'iron fist'.

Immediately after the MMD took office there was a sharp decline in real wages, particularly in the private sector. Between 1991 and 1992 real wages in the manufacturing sector fell in some cases by as much as 75%. Further falls were recorded in 1993 (see table 3). This came after earlier, steady increases in salaries and wages in the sector.

The government seemingly did nothing to intervene to alleviate the economic position of the working class. The current ZCTU president has indicated that the labour movement is no longer giving the MMD the level of support it offered in 1991 because workers' aspirations have not been met and their living conditions have worsened. As far back as September 1994, an article in the Canadian magazine *Profit* gave a gloomy picture of Zambia's manufacturing sector. It reported that several companies had retrenched employees, among them Colgate Palmolive, which had laid off 120 workers, Rickett and Colman (80 of its 150 employees) and Crown Cork, which had been forced to lay off an undisclosed number.⁶⁰ The former ZCTU vice-president quoted above agrees that the general view among workers in the MMD government's early years was that the party had failed to meet its promises, which reinforced an impression that Chiluba had used the workers merely to attain power, after which he turned against them. The MMD government's failure to tackle the situation has increased Zambia's 'brain drain'; nor is enough being done to attract home Zambians working as 'economic refugees' in other countries in the region. The ZCTU leader claimed that on several occasions he raised the plight of the working class at government level, which on one occasion led to his being asked to leave State House.

Table 3: Real per capita salaries and wages in Zambian Kwacha: Manufacturing sector 1990–1993

Sector	1990	1991	1992	1993
Food, beverages and tobacco	1,983.50	2,300.20	574.45	737.80
Textiles and clothing	9,448.00	2,233.60	415.70	274.40
Wood and wood products	1,998.00	1,397.50	419.80	341.40
Paper and paper products	2,156.40	1,605.90	465.70	353.17
Non-metallic mineral products	2,527.60	3,670.30	672.60	732.10
Chemicals, rubber and plastics	3,290.70	3,705.80	1,010.60	1,144.50
Base metal	2,274.70	1,356.50	461.80	679.43
Metal and machinery	2,366.00	3,273.70	1,389.00	626.27
Other machinery	3,215.30	2,979.70	607.60	390.50

Source: Ministry of Finance: Economic Analysis and Reports Unit, Microeconomic indicators. Lusaka, August 1994.

NB: In 1990 the exchange rate in 1990 ranged from K35/\$ to K60/\$ (black market).

PAZA, which had supported the MMD in 1990 and 1991, felt that the party in government has been unable to fulfil a number of its promises. According to its vice-president, PAZA's main bone of contention is the government's failure to reform laws affecting the media, despite election promises by the MMD leadership in 1991 and 1996. LAZ declared its non-partisan stance and its commitment to human rights immediately after the 1991 elections.

In November 1991, at a dinner to honour 14 LAZ members who had been elected to parliament, the association's chairman reiterated its position:

The Association will continue to operate independently as before, and will not be affiliated to any political party. It will not compromise on matters to do with the advancement of the rule of law and the rights and liberties of the individual ... While the Association will maintain its independence and take independent decisions, it will not be neutral where human rights are violated or the advancement of the rule of law is endangered.⁶¹

The association has continued to speak out against abuses of human rights. Prior to the 1996 general election it condemned several clauses in the constitution as discriminatory⁶² and during the election advocated the establishment of a more democratic environment for the process.

Immediately after the 1991 election the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) re-stated its independence in speaking out on matters of governance in Zambia, reminding Zambians that while it welcomed the change from a one-party to a multiparty system the latter was not necessarily synonymous with democracy, because 'vital democracy requires active and responsible participation of citizens in all civic affairs irrespective of their political affiliation'.⁶³ Since then the CCJP has been highly critical of the MMD on issues ranging from what it sees as the government's inability to deal with increasing poverty, to questions of governance. The churches in general have also been critical of alleged cases of government corruption. In 1992 representatives from three church organisations called on the government to probe allegations of financial irregularities levelled against political leaders and in 1995 the Christian Council of Churches demanded the resignation of all political leaders accused of corruption and other acts of impropriety, urging such leaders to step down on 'moral grounds'.⁶⁴

Significantly the labour movement, LAZ and church organisations have been central to the formation and activities of the EU and US-funded Oasis Forum (OF). A non-governmental organisation (NGO) comprising LAZ, the three main Christian churches (the Zambia Episcopal Conference, the United Church of Zambia and the Zambia Evangelical Fellowship), the NGO co-ordinating committee and other civil society organisations, the OF has been very critical of the government over a number of constitutional issues. Using the forum as a platform the churches have locked horns with government over various issues, including those relating to the constitution. Other organisations subsequently began to distance themselves from the MMD in order to establish their non-partisan credentials.

The official of the PAZ cited earlier felt that as long as the MMD government failed to address issues such as effective media reform it could not claim to be fully democratic and reported that his association had taken the government to court over this issue. The individuals who established the ZRF also became increasingly disillusioned by the MMD. ZRF founder Mbikusita-Lewanika, explaining the shortcomings of the MMD in power, believes that while the common factor in the MMD's support in 1991 was the removal of UNIP there was no deep commitment to a multiparty system on its own merits. As a result, an MMD victory with its concomitant introduction of a multiparty system was seen as an end in itself. On this view the 1991 position was simply that the Kaunda

presidency had become too powerful and too many had been excluded from the system. It was those marginalised people who constituted the MMD leadership; once in power, the political intolerance that had marked the one-party system became discernible among the MMD leadership. For this reason, according to Mbikusita-Lewanika, once in power the MMD lost its commitment to democratic governance. Similarly, the LAZ president asserted that:

the social and geographical support base of the MMD has been reduced because most people are disillusioned by its performance. Firstly, there has not been much economic development and the resources of the nation have not been equitably distributed. Secondly, it has failed to provide basic education and free health services to all Zambians. Thirdly, it has failed to put in place policies to ensure that foreign investors re-invest part of their profits in Zambia. Fourthly, the MMD has failed to provide adequate formal employment.⁶⁵

MMD'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLITICAL PARTIES AND ORGANISATIONS

The MMD does not seem to have any formal links with other parties in Zambia. Its chairman for elections flatly states that 'MMD has no alliance with other political parties in the country because, on its own, it is a strong party', adding that 'parties that feel they are not strong are the ones that go into alliances'.⁶⁶ During the 2001 to 2006 parliament, however, the party briefly liaised with UNIP; although the latter's leadership denied that any such arrangement existed.

The MMD differs from UNIP and UPND in seemingly having no visible alliances with external organisations, although in the past party leaders have claimed that they had connections with the same political parties that had historical links with UNIP.

CONCLUSION

A number of conclusions may be drawn from a study of the MMD's evolution. Although internal factions are a common feature of all political parties anywhere, the MMD's internal conflicts have proved very serious. Tensions are likely to continue. The MMD's experience teaches that political parties formed without any clear philosophy or common objective, beyond removing a sitting government, are likely to experience the kind of internal problems that have marked the MMD's 15-year history. The party has lacked internal cohesion because it had no common set of policies or common perceptions on how Zambia should be governed. Its make-up included business interests which championed rapid privatisation as well as the ZCTU, which wanted improved living standards and had serious misgivings about the extent of privatisation. It also contained individuals who had lost leadership positions in UNIP's one-party structure and were seeking retribution against Kaunda and his regime. These varied interests shared only one aim: to remove Kaunda. Without the common enemy there was little to hold them together save a desire

to retain power; hence the tension over issues of governance and the struggle for power and government positions.

Another significant conclusion is that despite the MMD's coming to power on a multiparty ticket, once in government the party was extremely reluctant to create a political environment conducive to effective competitive politics. Against the background of a global shift from one-party systems, the multiparty platform proved merely a means of defeating UNIP and was devoid of any serious philosophical commitment to plural politics *per se*. A case in point occurred in 1996, when the MMD amended the constitution to debar Kaunda from that year's elections. The party has done very little to remove the impediments to fair and competitive elections about which its founders complained so vocally in 1991; it has, for example, retained a firm grip on the state-owned and (largely) state-controlled print and electronic media, and has done nothing to restrain its membership's unfair access to state resources for campaign purposes.

It is nevertheless true that the MMD is among few political parties in the Third World able to defend their country's constitutional integrity by preventing a sitting president manipulating the constitution. It should not be overlooked that several cabinet ministers, including the vice-president, were able and willing to stand up against their own president, and in the process were prepared to lose their government position and the considerable benefits that attend such office.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Momba JC, 'Civil Society and the Struggle for Human Rights and Democracy in Zambia' in Zeleza PT & JP McConaughy, *Human Rights, The Rule of Law and Development in Africa*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, p. 218.
- 2 Interview with Mbita Chitala, deputy minister of commerce and leader of the Zambian Research Foundation of 1991, 15 June 2006.
- 3 Interview with Amos Chanda, vice-chairman of the Press Association of Zambia, 15 June 2006.
- 4 *Times of Zambia*, 4 October 1990.
- 5 See, for example, Arthur Wina's comments in the Official Verbatim Report of the Parliamentary Debates of the Fifth Session of the Third National Assembly, 12 January–8 April 1978, Part 1, pp. 2 365–2 366 and 2 369.
- 6 Prices and Incomes Commission, *Social Economic Bulletin 1*. 1991, p. 34.
- 7 Prices and Incomes Commission, *Household expenditure and Income Survey – 1991: Preliminary Results*, Lusaka, November 1991, pp. 12–14.
- 8 For example in 1983 the chairman of the Zambia Industrial and Commercial Association expressed 'unflinching support' for the party; five years later his successor assured the MMD leadership that his organisation's stand was to work with the party (*Times of Zambia*, 25 September 1988).
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- 12 Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, written submission to the Fifth National Convention on

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- 15 Interview with Akashambatwa Mbikusita-Lewanika, former cabinet minister and member of the MMD national executive committee, 23 May 2006.
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- 18 Interview with Hon. Japhet Moonde, minister of parliament, 21 May 2006.
- 19 Interview with Leonard Hikaumba, president, Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, 23 June 2006.
- 20 Interview with Amos Chanda, vice-chairman of the Press Association of Zambia, 15 June 2006.
- 21 Interview with Vernon Mwaanga, Zambian diplomat and businessman, 14 September 2004.
- 22 Interview with Mike Mulongoti, chairman, Elections Committee, MMD, 28 June 2006.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 Interview with MMD administrative secretary 2005.
- 25 Interview with Mike Mulongoti, chairman, Elections Committee, MMD, 28 June 2006.
- 26 K3,350 = US\$1, January 2001.
- 27 *The Post*, Lusaka, 15 November 2002.
- 28 As reported by *The Post*, 13 November 2002. Other newspaper reports were less detailed.
- 29 Evidence to the Supreme Court by the minister of information as reported by *The Monitor*, Lusaka, 14–16 January 2003.
- 30 *The Monitor*, 12–15 July 2002.
- 31 *The Post*, 2 June 2003.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 *The Post*, 3 June 2003. See also 8 August 2003 'Grounds for the impeachment of President'.
- 34 MMD Manifesto, 2001, p. 5.
- 35 MMD National Campaign Committee, The MMD New Deal 'Party of Choice': MMD Manifesto 2007–2011. p. 8.
- 36 MMD Manifesto, p. 4.
- 37 MMD 'The Movement for Multiparty Democracy in Government', p. 4.
- 38 *Ibid.* p. 5.
- 39 *Ibid.* p. 7.
- 40 MMD Manifesto, 1996, p. 3.
- 41 *Ibid.* p. 12.
- 42 *Ibid.* pp. 9–14.
- 43 *Ibid.* p. 4.
- 44 *Ibid.* pp. 9–14.
- 45 MMD Manifesto, p. 9.
- 46 *Ibid.* p. 8.
- 47 *Ibid.* p. 21.
48. MMD Manifesto, 2001, pp. 21–25.
49. Interview with Amos Chanda, 15 June 2006.
- 50 *Times of Zambia*, 15 August 1992.

- 51 Vernon Mwaanga resigned as minister of foreign affairs 4 January 1994 (*Times of Zambia*, 5 January 1994). Sikota Wina resigned as deputy speaker of the National Assembly 9 January 1994 and his wife Nakatindi Wina resigned as minister of community development the same day (*Times of Zambia*, 10 January 1994).
- 52 *Weekly Post*, Lusaka, 8–14 November 1991.
- 53 *The Post*, 18 October 1994.
- 54 Government of Zambia, Report of the Constitutional Review Commission, pp. 31–32.
- 55 Bertha Osei-Hwedie, 'The Role of Ethnicity in Multiparty Politics in Malawi and Zambia' in *Journal of Contemporary Africa Studies*, 16, 2, 1998, p. 237.
- 56 Mphaisha CJJ, 'Retreat from Democracy in Post One-party State in Zambia' in *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 34, 2, 1996, p. 81.
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