

the protestant churches in Kenya supported changes. It is imperative to point out that some of protestant churches renounced their membership of the NCCCK over its confrontation with the government and joined the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK) which has been largely pro-establishment. Even within the Anglican episcopacy in Kenya, which provided some of the outspoken protagonists of the multi-party system, still there were some senior bishops who did not support what they considered to be a confrontation with the government.

The book makes a thorough analysis of the opposition movement and the later formation of political parties and the split of the main opposition party, Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), into FORD-Kenya and FORD-Asili, which weakened the opposition. The author also makes a meticulous analysis based on very detailed empirical data of the parliament, presidential and local government elections in 1992, the first after the re-introduction of the multi-party system. In an election which was marred by ethnic clashes mainly in the Rift Valley Province and based on a skew constitutional regulation that an elected president must get at least 25% of the respective votes in at least five out of Kenya's eight provinces Moi was able to win the presidency with a simple majority.

The last chapter of this book entitled "Overview: Transition, Consolidation or Regression?" gives a bleak picture of the future of the democratisation process, and the author emphatically concludes that: "Moi's election victory means a harsh setback for the democratisation process in Kenya. Instead of further progress towards the consolidation of the multi-party system, stagnation or retrogression must be expected. Moi tries and will try to draw back the wheel centimetre by centimetre." That is exactly what has been happening of recent in Kenya as documented by Amnesty International and Africa Watch in their recent reports on Kenya and by statements of Western diplomats based in Nairobi about the repression and restrictions on the opposition leaders and their political parties by the government.

Indeed, this thought provoking book serves as a good precursor to the other SWP studies that are to follow on the democratisation process in Africa.

Palamagamba John Kabudi

Heiko Meinhardt

Die Rolle des Parlaments im autoritären Malawi

Institut für Afrika-Kunde, Hamburg, 1993, 174 S., DM 20,--

Malawi like all other former British colonies was hastily bequeathed at independence, in July 1964, with a constitution based on the Westminster Model. This consisted of a parliament with all its attendant British traditions and trappings based on a multi-party system. However, it did not last long before this institution, which was supposed to control the executive, lost its majesty and power and was subordinated under the execu-

tive in a one-party state. In Malawi, however, this went to the extreme, in the sense that not only the executive powers were concentrated on the President, but also the Constitution declared Ngwazi Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda to be Life President of the Republic of Malawi and of the then only ruling political party, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). It is from this background that the author of this book has done his research on the role of the parliament in an authoritarian one-party system.

In the meantime, Malawi has also been swept with the democratic changes ushered in by the dramatic events which occurred in the Eastern Bloc in 1989. It now has a new parliament elected and constituted under a multi-party system. The re-introduction of the multi-party system has been preceded by a referendum conducted in June 1993 to get the opinion of Malawians on whether they wanted the retention of a one-party system or the re-introduction of a multi-party system. The result of the referendum was a resounding support for the re-establishment of a multi-party system.

The book is divided in four parts and eight chapters covering such items as the methodology in the research of African parliaments, the political history and the political system of Malawi and the National Assembly of Malawi which, together with the President, constitutes the Parliament.

Parliaments in one-party systems have been generally criticised as being rubber stamps of executive fiats. However, the author argues to the contrary by stating that the Malawi parliament under the rule of Banda played more than just the function of rubber stamping the President's decisions by having some influence on regional and especially local affairs. Furthermore, that the members of parliament acted as brokers between the central government and their constituencies, and also as mediums of communication and integration link between the central government and the rural population. Such examples given by the author do not exonerate the Malawi parliament from being characterised as a rubber stamp. What is at the crux of the matter in the evaluation of the efficacy of a parliament is not how many new schools, new bridges or bus connections members of parliament have been able to solicit from the central government for their constituencies, but rather on how bold and how effective they have exercised their powers to control the executive and to ensure the respect of the rule of law by not condoning arbitrariness and repression. Also on how they have been able to question and scrutinise government actions and expenditure. Indeed, the member of parliament who was able to lobby effectively for more schools and more bridges for his constituency during the rule of Banda invites more doubts that not only he or she was a timorous soul, but also a compliant collaborator of the authoritarian regime which, among other factors, also thrives through patronage.

Chapter four deals briefly with the opposition to Banda's repressive regime, which was mainly organised from outside, i.e. *inter alia* by Malawian exiles in Tanzania and Zambia, and with its political relevancy in Malawi. It also deals with opposition groups and political parties formed starting 1990 as a result of the new wave of democratic changes such as the United Front for Multi-party Democracy (UFMD) founded in Lusaka, the Malawi

Socialist Labour Party founded in Dar es Salaam, the Malawi Democratic Party (MDP) founded in South Africa, the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) founded in Blantyre in 1992 and the United Democratic Front (UDF) founded by former members of the Malawi Congress Party who had fallen from the grace of Banda. The UDF was founded by the former Secretary-General of the MCP, Mr. Bakili Muluzi, who is now the President of Malawi, after defeating the indomitable Banda in March 1994 in the first free election held in the country since independence in 1964. The book also addresses itself in four pages to the question of human rights under the Banda regime. A number of cabinet ministers and members of parliament have died in dubious car accidents or in mysterious circumstances after they had criticised the government. Exile opposition leaders were abducted and tried in hushed kangaroo courts applying the so-called African customary law, and some died in prison. Critical intellectuals were incarcerated in prison without trial and the MCP Youth League went rampant countrywide harassing and terrorising the general populace with impunity. Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, who is now under house arrest, is charged, together with his once all-powerful mistress Cecillia Kadzamira and the former most powerful cabinet minister Mr. John Tembo, before the High Court of Malawi for the deaths of three of his former ministers and a member of parliament killed in a "car accident" believed to have been assassinated by people who were carrying out their orders.

The re-introduction of the multi-party system in Malawi as well as in other African countries does not relegate at all the importance of this book in the study of African parliaments and their function in an authoritarian one-party political system. The book offers some insights which may be relevant in the consolidation of a democratic tradition in an emerging pluralistic parliament after a spell of three decades of a repressive authoritarian rule.

Palamagamba John Kabudi