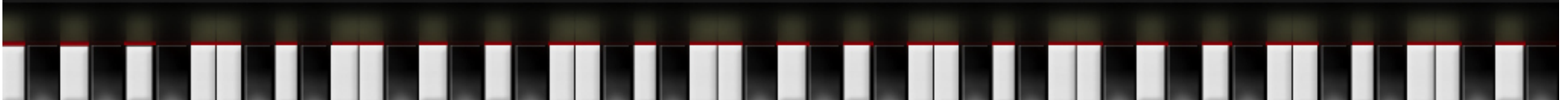


# Strikes in Malawi

Presented by:

Kawerama Sonjo



# Outline

- Social economic context
- Muzzling of workers rights 1964 to 1992
- 1992 strike activity
- Wave of strikes in 2012



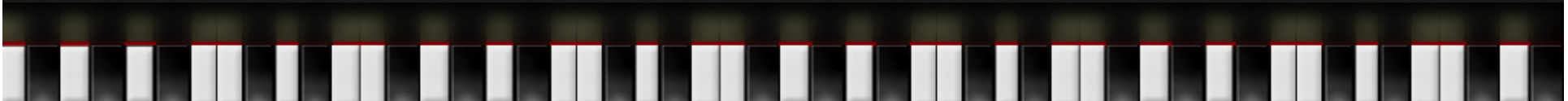
# Socio-Political & Economic context

- Malawi has relatively been the lowest wage paying country in Southern Africa (Prof. L. Dzimbiri)
- **Real wages** in Malawi have continued to decline since the 1960s (Prof. L. Dzimbiri)
- **UNDP Human Development Report of 2010 indicates that 80 percent of people employed live on less than USD 1.25 a day**

# Muzzling of Workers Rights

## 1964-1992

- By the end of 1964, 14 trade unions out of 19 had been de-registered by the MCP government.
- In 1965, the then ruling party (MCP) called for a compulsory affiliation of the federation of trade unions to the party
- Only 5 unions were allowed to exist since 1964

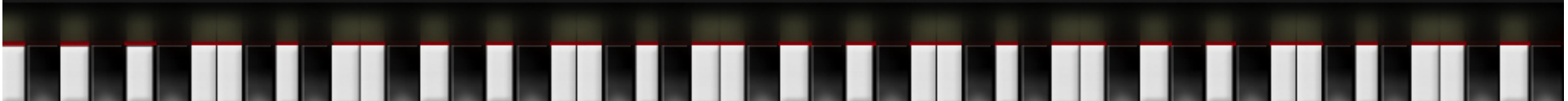


# 1992 Strikes in Malawi

- Negative socio-economic impacts of the IMF/World Bank sponsored SAPS
- Wind of change that was blowing across Southern Africa in the early 1990s, provided fertile ground for the rejuvenation of a vibrant trade unionism in Malawi from 1993.
- March 1992 Lenten Pastoral letter by the Catholic Bishops against the one party state regime
- Arrest of trade union veteran Chihana in April 1992

# 1992 Strikes in Malawi

- strike activity against poor working conditions and low wages which started with employees of David White Head & Sons on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1992
- In 1993, the civil service too experienced two huge strikes that for a while crippled the country's health, education, transport and other sectors.



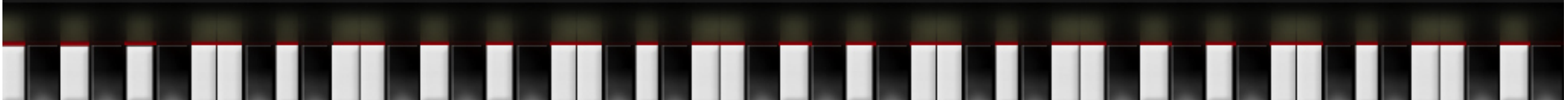
# Outcome of 1992 strikes

- Tripartite meetings to address the causes of the strike activity
- State appealed to employers to form Joint Consultative Committees (JCC) in all work places to facilitate amicable resolve of employees' grievances
- 1992 strikes contributed immensely to the transition from one party to multi-party state (1993-1994)
- 1996 Labour Relations Act which provides for mechanisms for dispute resolutions and strike activity as last resort

# 2012 Wave of strikes

**Impact of May 2012 devaluation of 49 percent following 10 percent devaluation in August 2011:**

- Incremental rising cost of living
- Further decline of real wages
- Further loss of purchasing power
- Decline of demand for goods and services
- Increasing number of strikes since May. About 20 since June 2012





End

