

Marxism And The Uganda Peoples' Congress By Yoga Adhola

Chairman Mao taught that struggles take place in phases. In Uganda, we have gone through one phase, that of the anti-colonial struggle which ended with the attainment of independence in 1962. We are now going through another, that of national-democratic liberation which began after the attainment of independence. Marxists view national-democratic liberation as the equivalent of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions that took place in Europe in the times when European countries were moving from the feudal era into the bourgeois one. The bourgeoisie had to remove feudal institutions and instituted bourgeois ones. In the same manner the situation in the post-colonial countries such as Uganda is calling for revolutionary changes. It is calling for a national-democratic revolution. By national-democratic revolution we mean revolutions which seek to end national and colonial oppression as a means of laying a basis of further struggles. They also seek to eliminate feudal and pre-feudal relations as well as establish new nations. As defined this far, these revolutions seem similar to those of formerly colonial countries like the United States of America which achieved independence in the earlier epoch (before monopoly capitalism); but there is a difference. While the independence of the US was led by the bourgeoisie and gave rise to bourgeois democratic revolution, that of countries like Uganda is not led by the bourgeoisie, is taking place in a different epoch and gives rise to national-democratic liberation instead. (Brutents, K.N.1977:148-154) So far the Uganda Peoples' Congress has, with remarkable consistency, waged struggles to this effect. Ironically, despite these achievements, Marxists in (and working on) Uganda have waged relentless struggles against UPC. This is totally out of character: Marxists by their very nature should have been at the forefront of these revolutionary struggles. It is the object of this essay to examine this anomaly.

The source of the anomaly is the paradigm the Marxists have adopted to guide their analysis of Uganda. They view Uganda from the point of view of social classes. Mamdani spells this out in his magnum opus, "Political and Class Formation in Uganda." "The object of this book is to explain the politics of Uganda in the period between independence and the Asian expulsion of 1972. To do so we have found it necessary to trace the formation of all those social forces-classes or fractions of classes- which achieved a measure of independent political organization during the decade? What follows is thus not a comprehensive study of class formation in Uganda, but only concerns those classes (or fractions thereof) that acted on the national stage up until 1972." (Mamdani, M 1976:3) What this quote says is that the principal actors in Uganda politics are social classes. Nothing could be further from reality. In adapting a paradigm based on social classes or better still economic interests, the Ugandan Marxists are following a tradition which is theoretically incomplete, undeveloped and sometimes even misguided. According to this tradition, the motives for rebellion, protest and even resistance stem from economic inequalities and nothing else. "The history of hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," thunders The Communist Manifesto. This statement was made in the very early period of the theoretical development of Marx and Engel, and can be classified as theoretically undeveloped. Out of a totally different cause, the same outlook emanates/radiates from his analysis of capitalism. In his studies of capital, Marx "...let the laws of motion of conflict between different classes be fixed -- in accordance with his new basic concepts -- by the

antagonism between economic interests."(Honneth, A. 1995: 149) From this point on, for Marx, class struggles are conceptualized simply as struggles for economic self-assertion.

There are some exceptions. These are in peripheral capitalist countries where the economic base has not developed sufficiently to give rise to class consciousness as well as class struggles. As Professor Galia argued:

"National liberation movements presumably in some way reflected the societies in which they developed and whose struggle they sought to represent or conduct. In turn, these societies were, in Marxist terms, determined by the historical stage reached in their production base. Herein lay the major difference between classical (nineteenth-century) national movements and those of the Third World; for, given the relatively early developmental stage of the Third World societies (which, as we have seen, in some cases lacked the prerequisites even for "nationhood"), their economies had not developed sufficiently to have led to the formation of classes or class relations. If not actually pre-class societies, they were at best societies with only "embryonic divisions frequently still governed by "family and tribal ties, caste preconception into social groups and classes."! As Ulianovskii put it, their liberation struggle was waged "in a pre-capitalist and largely pre-feudal social structure thinly veiled in bourgeois relations developed mostly in the fields of commodity production and money circulation,"(Rostislav Ul'ianovskii 1978: 113) As a result, these societies were still under the tribal system; or, as Brutents explained, they were frequently still governed by "family and tribal ties, caste preconceptions, [and] religious attachments" which obscured class relations.(Brutents Vol 1 1978 : 72) (Galia Golan 1988: 48)

Also in parts of Marx's mature work devoted not to the development of economic theory but historical and political analysis (Eighteenth Brumaire; and Civil War in France) (Honneth, A. 1995: 150), he departs from these utilitarian tendencies and takes his guidance from a theory of social conflict totally different from the one found in his writings on the theory of capital. The paradigm he adapts takes into account 'the culturally inherited forms of life of various social groups', and brings out situations in which groups or classes confront each other in attempt to defend and assert the values that guarantee their identities. Unfortunately, this departure from the utilitarian approach is a minor de tour and Marx in the main utilizes classes and class struggle in the economic sense as the main paradigm to guide his analysis. A sizeable portion of his followers, including the Marxists working on Uganda, also followed/follow his footsteps.

It was not until the English historian, E.P Thomson that analysis informed or guided by a non-economic paradigm began in the 1970s. The work begun by Thomson was eventually completed by Barrington Moore. Moore's studies of Germany between 1848 and 1920 led him to the thesis that social confrontations can in principle be understood in terms of moral patterns of struggles for recognition (Honneth, A. 167). From this point on (that is in the last few decades), it has become clear that political struggles are not just about a fair distribution of resources or, better still, struggles are not limited to class struggles only. Struggles are also about social domination or the domination of certain identities by others. The experiences these identities have gone through will have brought them social shame, "...a moral emotion that expresses diminished self-respect typically accompanying the passive endurance struggles waged by identities that have

experienced humiliation and degradation." Identities with this kind of experience, when circumstances are favourable, launch struggles to recover their self-worth. (1)

The UPC is a political party which began with the aim of seeking to redress the minority nationalities of Uganda from the historic dominance and humiliation of the Baganda. To appreciate this character of UPC, we need to briefly outline the dominance and humiliation at the hands of the Baganda the other nationalities endured. It all began around 1600.

(Kiwanuka, M.S.M. 1975) That is the time the Kingdom of Buganda eclipsed that of Bunyoro as the dominant power in the region. From that time Buganda was the dominant military power in the region. It conquered and dominated the region. Eventually Bunyoro under the able leadership of Kabalega began to challenge this dominance. This was the point in time when the British were beginning to colonise the region. The British found the Baganda a convenient ally to help in subjugating the rest of the peoples that eventually constituted the territory of Uganda. The use of the Baganda had serious effects in attitudes. It emboldened the feeling among the Baganda that they were superior, and at the same time made the other peoples feel humiliated by them. After the subjugation, the Baganda were again used as the initial administrators. Thereafter, colonial development tended to begin from Buganda and radiate to the rest of the colony. This gave the Baganda a head start. The over all effect of all this was to make the Baganda feel superior to the rest of the identities in the country.

For the duration the social dominance of the Baganda lasted, there was no clear vision by the dominated nationalities/identities about the dominance. The nationalities/identities did not visualize any redress either. However, with the imminence of independence, the dominated nationalities/identities woke up to some possibilities of redress. This came about because usually the experience of a particular form of recognition or a struggle for that recognition is bound up with the disclosing of new possibilities with regard to other identities. And the disclosures of such possibilities necessarily result in struggles for the recognition of those other identities. In the case of Uganda, the struggle for national liberation from colonialism, itself a struggle for the recognition of Uganda as a nation, did trigger the secondary struggles for recognition by other identities. Among these other identities was/is the struggle of the minority nationalities. The problem is that mere waking up to the necessity of waging struggle for recognition alone is not enough. There is further need for the various nationalities/identities who have viewed their experiences of disrespect or domination as being isolated to realize that others too have gone through the same experiences. It is this realization which brings about collective demands for expanded relations of recognition. In Uganda this collective demand for expanded relations of recognition as far as minority nationalities/identities were concerned, got materialized in Uganda People's Congress.

Notwithstanding this fact, Ugandan Marxists have a problem with the very inception of UPC. There is a sense in which they don't believe the formation of UPC was historically necessary. UPC was born out of the ruins of the Uganda National Congress (UNC), the first political party to be formed in Uganda. UNC had been formed in 1952. Its first leader was Ignatius Musazi. Ganda neo-traditionalist in outlook, Musazi had first desired that the Kabaka of Buganda should be the leader of UNC. The leadership of Kabaka would have spelt disaster for what was doled

out as a national movement encompassing all Ugandans. It is only when the Kabaka declined that Musazi assumed the leadership himself. Under his leadership the UNC suffered a number of short comings that eventually led to a major split. The top leadership of the UNC was not only numerically dominated by the Baganda, something which sent the wrong symbolical message to the rest of the country, but the UNC also tended not to cater for the country as a whole. A good example is a resolution passed at a public rally of the Baganda UNC in September 1953 and curiously enough quoted in Mamdani's book. The meeting, Mamdani tells us in his book, was reported to have had "a colossal and unprecedented attendance". Non-Bagandas were not invited despite customary practice to the contrary, and two elected Lukiko members were in attendance. The resolution passed at this meeting says:

"We disagree with being united with those territories which have different customs, ways of living and agreement which are entirely different from us. For that reason we the members of UNC, Buganda branch, have met and decided that Buagnda as a separate kingdom should be removed from the Colonial Office to the Foreign Office...In this determination to move from the Colonial Office to the Foreign we know that all our brothers who are in the areas surrounding us, such as Toro, Ankole, Lango and other areas Of Uganda approve, of this move and have the same determination. They are ready to hand in the same resolutions. The reason why..." (Mamdani, M 1976: 211; also quoted in Bowles, B.D. 1971)

It was attitudes such as the one underlying this resolution that eventually led some non-Baganda members of the UNC to break away from it and form the Uganda Peoples' Union (UPU) in 1958. In forming the UPU, the non- Ganda members of UNC who broke away, were making a statement to the effect that they were not going to stomach the social dominance of the Baganda any longer. That they were going to resist it. And the Baganda themselves got this message. An editorial in a Luganda paper, Uganda Eyogera of 19th December 1958 observed: "It is generally felt that non-Ganda formed themselves into a party in an attempt to raise a force against the Baganda." (Lowenkopf, M. 1961: 65) Rather than recognize this reality, Mamdani seeks to explain it away. (Mawazo 46-48) According to Mamdani, following the 1949 riots whose organization he credits to what he calls militant "nationalists", the colonial authorities moved in with reforms intended to sever the link between "militant nationalism and the popular masses." (Mamdani, M 1983: 46) It was these reforms, Mamdani argues, that removed nationalism from being the main issue of the day and replaced it with the nationality question. "The political shift that took place from 1949 to 1955 was critical. It was not only that the national movement, which was a raging political storm in the 40s, lost steam by close of the 50s. There was a deeper shift. The national movement of 1949, organised in the framework of functional groups like cooperative societies and trade unions, was a popular movement which had mobilized the people from the bottom up. In 1955, however, the political parties-UPC, DP , KY-split the people along nationality lines as they organised them from top down." (Mamdani, M. 1983: 48-49)

The 1958 split in UNC did not occur because of Mamdani's imaginary reforms that the colonial government set in motion. It split because independence was imminent and the various peoples who felt oppressed saw independence as an opportunity to rid themselves of the oppression; and those groups that had been dominant, saw it as a trigger to defend the privileges they felt were

coming under threat. It is this fact and not the so-called reforms Mamdani talks about which brought about an arousal of consciousness amongst the various groups. Professor Wallerstein has captured the arousal of this kind of consciousness very well:

"By ethnic (read nationality/identity) I mean the sentiment shared by a group of people who define their boundary in cultural terms (a common language, religion, color history, style of life rights in the political arena in order to defend the possibilities of their material conditions. Whether such a group prefers to call itself a nation, a nationality, or an ethnic group, a tribe, a people or any of the other sundry terms that are used is not very material to the fact that Ethnic consciousness is latent everywhere but it is only realized when groups feel either threatened with loss of previously acquired privilege or conversely feel it is opportune moment politically to overcome long-standing denial of privilege." (Wallerstein, I. 1960: 184; 1973: 168)

This was the situation immediately preceding independence in Uganda. Both those who felt time was opportune to overcome long-standing marginalisation, and those who felt threatened with loss of status began to organize themselves. For the Baganda the threat became rather acute when in 1959, following another crisis within the UNC, Obote was elected President of UNC. With Obote's election as President of UNC, both, the leadership of the UNC, the most significant political organization in the country, and the unofficial members of the Legico (Legislative Council) had dovetailed into one person. Furthermore, for the first time in about three centuries, the initiative was in the hands of the non-Baganda. The Baganda had not only lost the leadership of the forces then moving history at the time, but their opponents had the upper hand in the Wild Committee which was setting up the ground rules for independence. It was clear that the attempt to stem the tide by refusing to participate in the Committee had not affected anything. The rest of the country had warmly received the Committee, according it public meetings and submitting memoranda. Something had to be done to maintain the 'old glory' (ekitibwa kya Buganda). The Baganda elites of disparate political persuasion desperately closed ranks behind an all-Baganda protest movement, the Uganda National Movement (UNM). (Ghai, D.P. 1970: 755-770; Kiwanuka, M.S.M. 1976:) Ostensibly to protest the British insistence upon minority safeguards, the UNM was essentially to forge unity among the Baganda who were then scattered in numerous small and insignificant parties, so that they could preserve their dominance over other identities and protect what they viewed as their vital interests.

The UNM leadership ingeniously chose the dominance by non-Africans of trade and business as the issue to rally around. Because of the widespread dislike of Asian traders throughout Uganda, a trade boycott was bound to enlist popular support; indeed, the boycott they called for was an immediate and total success in Buganda. However, largely because of the deep mistrust of the Baganda by other nationalities, and also the opposition to the boycott from the influential non-Baganda leaders of the rest of the country in the Legico, the UNM failed to gain ground in areas outside Buganda. In any case the essence of UNM was a resistance to the Wild Committee which, as has already been indicated, was warmly received by the rest of the country. The UNM also lost a lot of support by hurling insults and attacks at the Legico, a body which the rest of the country recognized and was represented in. Finally, because some of the principal concerns of UNM were with the prestige and status of the Kabaka, the rest of the country was totally aloof, if

not hostile in some cases. Contrary to all this, Mamdani wrote: "Every single political force in the country was compelled to voice support for the boycott. Whether Baganda or non-Bganda, kulak or respectable professional citizen, or chief, every political organisation fell in line." (Mamdani, M. 1976: 215)

Further, as though to deliberately rub in the alienation of the Baganda from the rest of the country, the UNM organized large meetings in Kampala. These meetings always culminated in the singing of the Buganda national anthem as the crowd faced towards the Kabaka's palace at Mengo. As a Ganda movement intended to rally all the Baganda, UNM was undoubtedly a tremendous success. It declared war on all political parties, and nearly all the Ganda political leaders were drawn into it, with Mulira and Musazi playing the most prominent roles. The unintended effect of all this success, however, was for the non-Baganda to realize the necessity of unified political effort, so that on March 9, 1960, the Obote wing of UNC and UPU amalgamated to form the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC). Professor Low, making a contemporary observation, wrote that: the "UPC whose prime function - the opposition to the pretensions of the Baganda - fitted precisely the widespread anti-Baganda feeling in the rest of the country." (Low, D.A. 1971: 209)

Notwithstanding all this, Mamdani says the UPC was a "watered-down" version of the UNC. "The Uganda Peoples' Congress on the other hand, was a watered-down version of the militant UNC, a half-way house between militant nationalism and a nationality based comprising tendency." (Mamdani, M. 1983:48) To determine whether UPC compared to UNC as led by Musazi was watered down, we need to look at the tasks that had come to the fore. It is those tasks that form the backdrop against which we can usefully evaluate the UPC. The principal contradiction that was to eventually characterize the politics of Uganda was to hinge on the question of social identity. Ever since around 1600 when Buganda eclipsed Bunyoro as the dominant power in the region, the Baganda have been socially dominant in the region. British colonialism, much as it contained the wild aspects of this dominance, did not end it. In fact in a number of ways it conserved and promoted it. This social dominance of the Baganda has not gone on well with the other nationalities and they have sought to resist it. That being the case, the leadership of the then national- democratic movement, had to reflect the social base of the movement. This is one factor that necessitated that Musazi had to be replaced. Following the replacement of Musazi, the non-Ganda joined UNC in large numbers; formerly under Ganda leadership, it made little headway. (La Fontaine 1969; La Fontaine in Low, D.A. 1971: 254 footnote 64)

The Marxists also fail to appreciate that Musazi had serious ideological shortcomings that made him totally unsuitable to lead the national movement at the time. In terms of ideology Musazi was Ganda neo-traditionalist. This contrasts sharply with the ideology of the eventual leadership of UPC that was/is clearly modern and nationalist. And the movement as well as the struggles that Musazi led in the late forties, and which Mamdani uses as evidence for arguing that Musazi was "militant nationalist" or, better still, more ideologically advanced than the UPC leadership, were more of either primary or secondary resistance movement. In fact it was this ideological position of Musazi that led to a crisis in UNC in 1959. The crisis arose out of a need for the UNC

to transform itself from a 'primary' or 'secondary' resistance movement (Ranger, T.O.1968: ; Stokes, E. 1970:100-106)which both the Bataka Party and Uganda Farmers Union respectively had been, into a modern anti-colonial movement which would not only be anti- imperialist but would also champion the aspirations of minorities in Uganda. At one time this need caused a number of the younger members of the UNC to break-off and form the abortive United Congress Party. (Apter, D.E. 1961: 333) The issue that came to be symptomatic of the crisis was the UNC office in Cairo. John Kale or Kalekezi (or Kalisa), after his expulsion from Makerere University, had gone to Cairo and opened an office for UNC. This office did propaganda work with Radio Cairo, and acted as a link between the anti- colonial movement in Uganda and the democratic forces in the anti- imperialist world. (Apter, D.E. 1961: 333) The merits of this office were disputed, and the UNC was to get seriously split over this disagreement. A section of the membership of UNC led by Musazi felt that the Cairo office was not only a means of trading "the imperialism of one country for that of another, especially a country (meaning Egypt) that had for 2500 years controlled the whole Nile Valley, but also communism." (Apter, D.E. 1961: 334 footnote 59) The other section of UNC, consisting of elements younger than Musazi, and with greater exposure to the anti-colonial and anti- imperialist struggle elsewhere, not only believed in maintaining contacts with the anti-imperialist world, but desired a more radical nationalist movement of the mobilization type, striking firmly for a united Uganda while attacking the parochialism of the Lukiko and Baganda.

The contention between these two political lines came to a head on January 12, 1959. The previous month three senior members of the UNC (Abu Mayanja, Jolly Joe Kiwanuka, and Dr. Kununka) had attended the Pan- African Congress in Accra, Ghana. They had participated in passing resolutions which among other things, recommended that "those African traditional institutions whether political, social or economic which clearly have shown their reactionary character and the sordid support of colonialism be condemned."(Apter, D.E. 1961:334) Returning from Accra via Cairo, where they called at the controversial office, Kiwanuka defended the Cairo office and identified the real issue at stake: "Uganda cannot remain an island in a sea of Pan-African and universal nationalism. Our establishment of a national office in Cairo has marked a great era in our struggle. It has broken the chains of isolation, and focused world attention on the seriousness of our unshakable upsurge for freedom." (Apter, D.E. 1961:334) To Musazi, that was sacrilege that could not be tolerated in Congress. He proceeded to expel six (6) members [these were J.W. Kiwanuka (Chairman), B. Kununka (Secretary-General), E. Otema Alimadi, Abu Mayanja, John Kale, and Paul Sengendo (President of Youth Organization)] of the UNC who supported the Cairo office. Incidentally these six were very significant members. (Apter, D.E. 1961:334) The response of the six and their political line did not take long to come: at the Annual Delegates Conference held on January 12, 1959, Ignatius Musazi, President of UNC, was expelled from the Congress and Apollo Milton Obote elected to replace him. The conference also went on to endorse all the resolutions taken at the Accra Conference. The significance of these events was contemporaneously succinctly captured by David Apter's observation: "the old Congress ended... Congress had now entered the Pan- African phase of nationalism." (Apter, D. E. 1961: 334)

The Marxists have also had problems characterizing UPC. According to Mamdani the UPC, was a mere traders' party: "... the traders, after a short life as Uganda Peoples Union, donned the cloak of Uganda Peoples' Congress, both with their allied intellectuals. The only significant change was that the UPC gradually brought within its fold a section of the latest emerging fraction of the petty bourgeoisie, the state bureaucrats. What was in appearance a regional and tribal split - between Buganda and non-Buganda - was in essence a split between the two fractions of the petty bourgeoisie, the kulaks and the traders. And it was the traders, the national group per excellence, with the sole national grievance - the dominance of the non-national petty bourgeoisie - who now proceeded to occupy the national stage." (Mamdani, M. 1976: 212) As this was written in 1976, when Mamdani was considerably young, one might have dismissed what he wrote as the analysis of an intellectual still growing and researching. However, Mamdani, probably playing to the prevailing sentiments at the time, was to say the same thing and with even a more diminishing qualifier in 1986 in a public lecture at Makerere University. "Historically, the UPC originated from the northern petty bourgeoisie..." he said. (Mamdani, M.1986: 7 also in 1995: 14) Later, in 1988 he was to treat UPC as nothing more than a geographical phenomenon "...where the Nile represents not only a geographical but also a political divide: to the east according to the political pundits, lies the nilotic north and to the west the Bantu south. Like most generalizations, that of the Nilotic north stretches reality, for the population east of the Nile is not exclusively nilotic; the term was really a catch-word for the areas that were the stronghold of Milton Obote's Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC)." (Mamdani, M. 1988: 1155-1156 also in 1995: 33) Nobody who knows the political history of Uganda or who has read what we have written so far would arrive at this view. He was later to write: "... And since this center stage tended to exclude the political party that was the backbone of the Obote regime -- the UPC -- it appeared that the nationalities which this party claimed to represent had also been marginalized in the NRA organized political life of the country." (Mamdani, M. 1988: 1969 also in 1995: 48) The key word here is claim. The UPC did or does not claim to represent the aspirations of minority nationalities in northern Uganda, as Mamdani seems to think; UPC represented the interests of minority identities all over the country.

The Marxist also failed to grasp the full significance of independence. Ever, viewing things from their 'class struggle' paradigm, Mamdani wrote: "It is necessary to appreciate that, from the point of view of the popular classes, independence hardly ushered in any significant institutional change." (Mamdani, M. 1988:1160) Obviously this characterization of independence is limited and narrow. No less an authority than Fredrick Engels had this to say: "So long as a viable nation is fettered by an alien conqueror it necessarily directs all its efforts, all its aspirations and all its energy against the external enemy; so long as its internal life is paralyzed in this way, it is incapable of fighting for social emancipation." (Engels, F. 1869; also quoted in Brutents, K.N 1977:168) In other words independence is just a threshold for struggles for social emancipation. The struggles that follow the attainment of independence are categorized as national-democratic liberation. These struggles are similar to those which Marxists normally call bourgeois-democratic liberation i.e. struggles which accompanied bourgeois revolutions in Europe. They cleansed society of feudalism and instituted bourgeois institutions. In a similar manner national-democratic liberation serves to rid society of moribund pre-capitalist institutions and practices. It seeks to eradicate forms of oppression that was carried over from the pre- colonial times as well

as those which got instituted during colonialism. From our perspective, therefore, the principal contradiction after independence was not as characterized by Mamdani: "Independence thus brought forward two contradictions among the propertied classes in Uganda: one within the petty bourgeois coalition, and one between bourgeoisies as bourgeoisie. Of these the principal - the one that informed the politics of the period under consideration was the former." (Mamdani, M.1976: 229). This is totally wrong. The principal contradiction was between national-democratic liberation and the resistance to it.

Having failed to grasp the true significance of independence, Mamdani was bound to totally mischaracterize the contradictions in Uganda on the morrow of independence. As we have already indicated earlier, the principal contradiction immediately after independence was between national-democratic liberation, on the one side, and the resistance to it on the other. In all newly independent countries there obtained two perspectives to independence on the morrow of independence. There were those who saw it as the means and others as the end. The Uganda Peoples Congress as led by Obote saw independence as a threshold for further struggles:

"7. Republicanism in Uganda, just like the political independence of Uganda is now a reality, but the demand for the struggle for Uhuru has no end. This is part of life and part of the inalienable right of man. It is also the cornerstone of progress and of liberty of individuals, the basis of his prosperity and the hallmark of his full and effective participation in the affairs of his country. October 9th 1962, therefore, was the beginning of a much greater struggle of many dimensions along the road to the goal of full Uhuru. During the last seven years the UPC, by action and exhortation, has shown the people of Uganda that it was wrong and deceitful to treat and regard 9th October, 1962, as an end of the road; or the day on which the people of Uganda as a whole reached a stage in their development when all that remained was to divide the spoils on the principal of survival of the fittest; or that the well-to do, the educated and feudal lords must and should be allowed to keep what they have, and get more if they can, without let or hindrance. 8. The party has always made it clear to the people that the only acceptable and practical meaning of October 9th, 1962 is that the people of Uganda must move away from the ways and mental attitudes of the colonial past, move away from the hold of tribal and other forms of factionalism and power of vested interests, and accept that the problems of poverty, developments and nation-building can and must be tackled on the basis of one Country and one People..." (Obote, A.M. 1969)

The first major national-democratic issue that the UPC dealt with was the "lost counties". The lost counties were the territories of the kingdom of Bunyoro which were allocated to Buganda as a reward for the assistance Baganda had lent the British in conquering Bunyoro in... Bunyoro never accepted this and kept petitioning the British authorities over this through out the colonial period. At the Constitutional conference in 1962, it was resolved that two years after independence a referendum would be held in the territories so that the residents could decide from where, whether Buganda or Bunyoro, they would like to be administered. In line with this Constitutional provision, in 1964 the UPC dominated parliament passed a bill directing that a referendum should be held in the "lost counties" as provided for in the Independence Constitution. "The passage of the bill," Mamdani was to write: "was a prelude to an open

struggle between the Baganda and non- Baganda petty bourgeoisie over control of the economic surplus in Baganda." (Mamdani, M. 1976: 243) The struggle was never over control of the surplus as Mamdani's totally skewed analysis would like us believe; rather, it stemmed from the fact that continued exercise of authority over the area by the kingdom of Buganda constituted nationality oppression of the Banyoro by Baganda. The Banyoro resident in the "lost counties" were being administered by Baganda chiefs and forced to speak Luganda instead of Lunyoro, their language.

To understand this oppression it is necessary for us to go back to the beginning of the "lost counties" issue. Since around 1600 when Buganda eclipsed Bunyoro as the dominant power in the region, the kingdom had not been challenged. Eventually, an empire, however powerful, gets to be challenged. This happened to Buganda in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Bunyoro, under the able leadership of Kabalega, not only got reorganized but also acquired muskets from the Arabs. On account of these two factors, Bunyoro succeeded in driving the Baganda back, only to find that their final victory was frustrated by the arrival of the British who protected the Baganda with rifles and Maxim guns. (Danbur, A.R.1965: 39) The Baganda, who were being seriously pressurized by the Banyoro, had gone into alliance with the British who had come to colonies the Nile valley and were looking for an ally. In any colony, outside control by a few thousand colonizers is impossible without winning allies from among the colonized peoples. A number of factors made the Baganda and not any other nationality the choice for this alliance: they had a fairly developed social and administrative system, a standing arm of a sort, and a history of conquest and expansion stretching for three centuries. While the British consciously used the Baganda, to the Baganda their being used was mistaken for the continuation of their dominance and expansion. On the other hand, to the British, once they were "...established in Buganda, their preferred method of consolidating themselves on the Upper Nile was simply to enlarge Buganda." (Roberts, A.D. 1962: 435) The two forces thus made perfect common cause in imposing colonial rule in the rest of Uganda.

The first operation the Anglo-Ganda alliance mounted was against their most serious threat, the Kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara. (Danbur, A.R. 1965: 84-87) This was in December 1893 when colonel Colville led a full military campaign against Kabalega and the Bunyoro. After suffering a series of defeats, Kabalega was driven from his kingdom and forced to take refuge in Lango in 1894. As a reward for assistance against the Banyoro, Colonel Colville in the early part of 1894 promised the Baganda chiefs that all Bunyoro territory south of River Kafu would be incorporated into Buganda. This was roughly the area comprising Buyaga and Bugangazi (or Bugangaizi as Banyoro call it) northern Singo, Buruli and the formerly semi- independent area of northern Bugerere, which had been part of Bunyoro territory. (Danbar, A.R. 1965: Roberts, A.D. 1962: 194) Colonel Colville was forced by illness to leave Uganda before implementing this promise. However, when E.J.L. Berkely who succeeded Colville was in 1896 appointing a Munyoro to be chief of this area, the Ganda chiefs present reminded him that his predecessor had pledged the area to be part of Buganda. Berkely consulted the foreign office who instructed him to implement the promise. The incorporation into the Kingdom of Buganda of this territory, which was clearly part of Bunyoro with Banyoro inhabiting, was so blatantly unjust that two British officers then serving in Bunyoro, Pulteney and Foster, resigned their posts in protest

against the decision. Banyoro never accepted this situation and this loss of territory was to become the festering "lost counties" issue that was a subject of many deputations by the kingdom of Bunyoro to the British throughout the colonial period.

While wrong in arguing that the struggle over the "lost counties" was a struggle for control of the economic surplus, he was right in saying that the passage of the bill was a prelude to an open struggle between Buganda and the rest of the country. For well over three hundred years Buganda had been a dominant power in the region. Colonization, which brought all the nationalities in the area under British rule, controlled their excesses but still left them holding a higher social status than the rest of the nationalities. As independence approached they first thought they had been an understudy of the British and would take over after independence. When it became clear that this was not to be, they tried their hand at secession; in other words, if they were not going to be dominant in Uganda, then they should leave it. The UPC worked out a strategy that enabled them to stay. This was being in alliance with UPC, with assurance of Uganda had been preserved. They also thought the "lost counties" issue would never be revisited. "At independence the government (Buganda government) believed Dr. Obote would not hold the referendum. Rightly or wrongly it was assumed Obote had his binding assurance on the matter. The alliance was meant to be one guarantee; the other was Buganda's special and superior position within Uganda." (Hancock, I. 1970: 118) (1) This illusion was to get reinforced when the Kabaka of Buganda was elected ceremonial President of Uganda. As the Baganda had desired, nobody was above the Kabaka. However, things changed dramatically when parliament in the middle of 1964 passed a bill directing that a referendum should be held in "lost counties". At first they thought they could carry the referendum; however, when the results came and it was overwhelming in favor of Bunyoro, they began to ally with forces against Obote to change the leadership of UPC and therefore the country. This was the beginning in earnest of the struggles for the national-democratic revolution.

This struggle first came into the open at the UPC Annual Delegates Conference held in Gulu in 1964. While Mamdani recognizes the significance of this date, and probably that of the conference as well, he has a totally skewed understanding of the struggle that followed. "Since 1964 all major political struggles in Uganda have mainly reflected internal conflicts within a very small group: actual and aspiring compradors." (Mamdani, M 1983: 48) This sentence clearly shows how the momentous struggles that occurred during this period totally escaped Mamdani. The struggles that began in 1964 and ended in 1966 pitted the forces of national-democratic liberation on the one side and the resistance to it on the other. At the UPC Annual Delegates Conference held in Gulu in 1964, Grace Ibingira who was later to emerge as the leader of the resistance to national-democratic liberation wrested the position of Secretary General of UPC from John Kakonge. Having bagged the second most powerful position in the party, Grace Ibingira then took off in December 1964 on a tour of the United States to gather resources in readiness for the serious struggle that lay ahead. He returned with monies estimated by Obote to be one million dollars. (Obote, A.M. 1968: 35) "By 1965 there was a sudden manifestation of opulence among a section of the UPC leadership generally associated with Ibingira, including branch Chairmen. There was talk about Ibingira and the dollars at all levels of the party." (Nabudere, D.W. 1980: 259)

With this money, the resistance to national-democratic liberation embarked on a protracted struggle to remove Obote from the leadership of UPC. The plot for this involved the enlargement of the National Council of UPC in such a manner that the resistance would be in the majority. (Obote, A.M. 1968: 20) For this, a scheme which Professor Mazrui appropriately named the 'Trojan horse' was contrived. As many Baganda as possible were to be 'herded' into UPC. To effect this, in July 1965 Edward Mutesa, the Kabaka of Buganda and President of Uganda convened and chaired a meeting of KY at which it was decided that KY members should join UPC in large numbers. Once in the party they were to use their numerical strength to change its leadership. To spur the Baganda into joining UPC, members of the cabinet who were part of the plot deliberately leaked to the press cabinet resolutions on plans to call surprise elections. In the leakage it was pointed out that the impending elections could affect the election of Mutesa as president of Uganda, unless the Baganda were in a commanding position within the UPC. As expected the leakage alarmed the Baganda, and they enlisted as members of the UPC in large numbers. These manouvres completely escaped Mamdani. His account of what was happening just shows he had absolutely no clue as to the nature of the forces in the struggle nor the manouvres that were going on. Here is Mamdani's account:

"Once the KY had disbanded and its members had joined the ranks of the UPC, the struggle between 'center' and 'right'--between the representatives of the governing bureaucracy at the center and the petty bourgeoisies proper (the small property-owning traders and kulaks, henceforth referred to as the petty bourgeoisie) came to the fore. The 'right' in control both the post of Secretary General and the Buganda branch of the party, was at the pinnacle of its power and prestige. With a majority in parliament it sought to control state power through a parliamentary coup. The issue it chose was the behind the scenes government support in men and material to the Gibenye (Lumumbist) forces in the Congo. The charges were those of corruption, the confiscation of monies captured during the Congo turmoil for personal use. The plan was to appoint a parliamentary commission of inquiry and compel the government to resign. But when the cabinet met formally to appoint the proposed commission, five of its members were arrested, including Grace Ibingira. The backbone of the right, it seemed, was crashed.

These events served to intensify the struggle between Buganda and the state at the center. The substance of the conflict, as it had always been, was over who would control the economic surplus in Buganda. The issue was now formulated in terms of the right of taxation in Buganda. What has become known as the 1966 crisis began when the central government reduced its annual grant to the Buganda government by the amount of non-African tax collected by the later. The Lukiiko took the case to the Privy Council in London, which decided in its favour, underlining the privileged position of the Buganda petty bourgeoisie in the existing constitutional framework.

In the aftermath of the arrest of the leadership of the right faction, Obote government introduced a 'unitary' constitution that abrogated all of Buganda's federal powers -- at one stroke ending the financial and political autonomy of the Buganda petty bourgeoisie. The Lukiiko refused to pass the new constitution and demanded the withdrawal of the central government from Buganda soil by May 30, 1966. In other words it revived its old demand for total independence. The

'revolutionary' constitution of 1967 outlawed all kingdoms in Uganda and declared the state supreme. The 1966-67 crisis, began over the issue of taxation and ended in the elimination of the Buganda state." (Mamdani, M 1976: 244-46)

To any serious Marxist what happened in 1966 should amount to nothing but a national-democratic revolution. The revolution had two significant results which should appeal to Marxists. First and foremost it abolished the monarchy in Buganda and other kingdoms. In Marxist terms this meant the elimination of a sizeable chunk of the pre-capitalist superstructure. This was purging the country of retrogressive features. It meant the liberation of the people from feudal and pre-feudal forms of exploitation and oppression. There also occurred what Professor Colin Leys has called a status reversal. Ali Mazrui also had this to say: "In 1966 Buganda was humbled." (Mazrui, A.A. 1970: 1087) Notwithstanding all this achievement, commenting on the national-democratic revolution of 1966, Professor Oloka-Onyango, generally considered the number two guy in the Mamdani political line had this to say: "A reconsideration of the events of 1966 illustrated that the abolition of kingdoms provided only part of the grand design to secure autocratic government in Uganda. The process had in fact commenced in 1964, initially with the crushing of internal opposition within Milton Obote's own party, the Uganda Peoples Congress." (Oloka-Onyango, J. 1977:175) It is rather intriguing that a Marxist could misconstrue the revolutionary character of the abolition of kingdoms this way. In the first place a Marxist worthy of the label should know that the monarchy is an aspect of the superstructure of the feudal mode of production. The same Marxist should know that the main object of colonialism was to impose the capitalist mode of production in the area that eventually became what we call Uganda today. As a Marxist, the professor should know that in the situation like that which existed in Uganda at the initial period of colonialization, capitalism did not have the wherewithal to run a capitalist system nor could it immediately get rid of the modes of production it found in the area. In those circumstances, it resorts to articulating the then existing modes of production itself. This serves the purpose of both running some sort of capitalism as well as acquiring some sort of legitimacy. As colonialism did this, it also sought to replace the pre-capitalist superstructure by the capitalist ones. However, the pre-capitalist superstructures did not leave the scene peacefully -- they resisted their replacement. Take the example of...However, the 1966 revolution that abolished the monarchy and all its paraphernalia was the most decisive.

After the 1966 revolution, chronologically, the next event Mamdani analyses is the assassination attempt at President Obote in 1969. To this effect he writes: "The Uganda economy was an underdeveloped economy, integrated into the world market as a dependent economy. The crisis of underdevelopment manifested itself as the crisis of accumulation." (Mamdani, M. 1976: 264) This crisis of accumulation, Mamdani goes on, was reflected in the net inflow of capital which deteriorated from a net inflow of Shs. 73.6 million in 1966 to an outflow of Shs. 19.6 million in 1969 and Shs. 294.6 million in 1970. The net official capital inflow which could have ameliorated the situation also declined from Shs. 183.9 million in 1966 to Shs. 133.4 million in 1969. Basing himself on an erroneous interpretation of these figures, Mamdani jumps to the conclusion that there was a serious economic crisis in 1969. "The 1969 crisis," he writes, "manifested itself at the level of the economy and polity, as a result of factors that were national as well as international...The internal economic crisis, however, could only be averted by a

political solution. At the same time, the opposition of the petty bourgeoisie transcended the market place, where cooperatives had organized peasant discontent: at the conclusion of the 1969 UPC conference there was an assassination attempt on Obote." (Mamdani, M. 1976: 265)

This talk about an economic crisis which is reflected at the level of polity and which leads to an assassination attempt is nonsense. The fact of the matter is that the assassination attempt was engineered by two external powers, Israel and Britain. The evidence of British involvement in the assassination attempt is well-laid out in the book, "British Intelligence and Covert Action". The book names Beverly Barnard as the man "responsible for the coordinating 1969 assassination attempt on Dr Obote." (P160)

In his book, "Ghosts of Kampala," Ivan Smith also lays out evidence of Israeli involvement. It is circumstantial evidence Obote gave to Ivan Smith when he heard the latter was writing a book on Uganda. "When I was shot on 19th December 1969, Col Bar Lev, the head of the Israeli military mission in Kampala, was in Nairobi allegedly to catch en route to Israel. The next day, Bar Lev was in Kampala. The odd thing about Bar Lev being in Nairobi, allegedly to catch a plane to Israel, was that there were frequent Ugandan military flights to Israel direct from Entebbe. If Bar Lee was required urgently in Israel and there was no Ugandan flight to Israel, it is reasonable to assume that he went to Nairobi to catch El Al. I was shot on Tuesday evening. I do not know what day of the week El Al used to be in Nairobi. ...Was Bar Lev in Israel or merely wanted to be out of the country but near enough to return? Was there an Israeli civilian aircraft that Tuesday night in Nairobi or was one due the next day? Why should Bar Lev have wanted to be away instead of supervising operations if he had a hand in my assassination? These are some of the questions I keep asking myself and do not have answers." (Smith, I. 1980: 79-80)

Details of the internal (Ugandan) aspect of the assassination attempt were given by Charles Onyango-Obbo of "The Monitor" in a series of interviews which were published in the paper. (The Monitor, Oct. 11 2001) One of the assassins, Sebaduka makes very clear to Onyango-Obbo what motivated him:

"On the evening of October 9, 1962, Mohamed Sebaduka stood with his wife among the crowd at Kololo Airstrip to watch Uganda gain independence from British rule. The Union Jack was lowered slowly, and up went the new Ugandan flag at an equal pace. The instruments of power from the British to Ugandans were read and handed out. A new dawn was here.

Sebaduka was 26 years old then. He was carrying his son. Though his son was a little boy and couldn't understand what was going on, Sebaduka wanted him to witness "with his own eyes" the historic event. His wife was carrying their second child. Sebaduka looked at the new Prime Minister Milton Obote up on the dais. He didn't like the man, and thought he didn't have the experience to lead the country. Seated near Obote was Kabaka Freddie Mutesa. He was an educated king and bore himself with the aloof regality that was his trademark. Sebaduka thought perhaps the king would have done better as the country's leader.

Suddenly Sebaduka sensed that all this was going to end up badly for the country. He felt an urge to walk up the dais, grab the instruments that had been handed to Obote and were lying on a table, and tear them. He turned and asked his wife to hold the baby, telling her he had to go and

do something. She looked at him and asked what urgent matter had turned up so abruptly, and complained that she couldn't carry two children in the crowd. Sebaduka paused, changed his mind, and stayed."

The feelings that motivated Sebaduka were better articulated by his king, Sir Edward Mutesa: "My first twinge of foreboding had come at midnight on 9 October, 1962, as I watched Milton Obote raise the flag of independence. My anxiety had no precise form or cause. It was more the sensing of an unfamiliar shift of emphasis, a gap between what was fitting and what was not." (Mutesa, E. 1967: 27)

The assassination attempt, Mamdani goes on, jolted the governing bureaucracy, as he calls the national-democrats in the UPC, into realizing that "continued rule without a mass base and in the presence of opposition from the Indian commercial bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, exacerbated by the crisis of accumulation of the neo-colonial economy was proving impossible." (Mamdani, M 19...265) First of all UPC did not lack a mass base. With his fixation on class aspirations as the only basis for political struggles, Mamdani cannot visualize any other basis of politics. It is from this perspective that he cannot appreciate the real contradictions at play. He cannot appreciate the contradiction between the minority nationalities and the Baganda. In the previous paragraphs we noted the misgivings of Buganda towards minority nationalities. On the other hand to the minority nationalities, Obote's reception of the instruments of independence as well as the raising of the Ugandan flag on the night of independence was of immense symbolic value. It gave them great psychic satisfaction. While previously none of them could be near such performance, now it was one of them. The next time the UPC consolidated its social base was the resolution of 'the lost counties' issue which we have already discussed. Then there was the 1966 national-democratic revolution.

From the 1969 assassination attempt Mamdani moves on to the 1971 coup about which he wrote: "The first Obote regime was fighting on two fronts. With the coup it was sandwiched between the two: while the coup was imperialist backed, the people welcomed a change from dictatorship. When the people celebrated the coup of 1971, they were not welcoming the arrival of Amin: rather they were cheering the departure of Obote." (Mamdani, M 1986: 3; 1995: 15) We have very serious differences with Mamdani about the role of imperialism in the 1971 coup. While to him imperialism merely backed the coup, to us British imperialism and Israel masterminded it. British interest in the overthrow of the Obote government arose from a number of factors. As a former colonial master, she had the most to lose from the national-democratic liberation then raging in Uganda. To run Uganda as a colony, Britain had established an elaborate social and political structure. And as in all her former colonies, at independence Britain had striven to ensure the retention of the colonial political apparatus in Uganda. This apparatus was meant to serve her neo-colonial purposes. By the 1966 revolution Obote had upset all this, and no one quite knew when and where he would stop. Obote had also demonstrated some very "irritating" friendship with the anti-imperialist world. In Pan-African circles, Obote was a noticeable member of the radical group of Heads of State. While all these things attracted the attention of Whitehall, the bitterest pill was yet to come: this was the nationalization that affected 80 British firms. It was the straw that broke the camel's back and the British began plotting Obote's

overthrow. They worked on both an army takeover (together with the Israelis) and an assassination. For the assassination, Beverley Barnard, an MI5 agent was dispatched to Kampala and he master minded the assassination attempt on Obote outside a UPC Conference in 1969 (Bloch, J. & Fitzgerald, P. 1982: 160) Shot, Obote escaped with a bullet wound in his cheek.

This failure did not discourage the British. They next moved for an outright coup. We have details of this coup manouvres in the memoirs of Rolf Steiner, a German mercenary who was hired by the Israelis and seconded to the Anynyas of southern Sudan. (Steiner, R. 1978: 191) When Steiner reported to his bosses in Kampala, he found one of his employees, a Scotsman called Roy had been undermining him before the Anyanya leader, Taffeng. It also appeared Roy was working on something totally different from the assignment Steiner had given him. After some hard talk Steiner made a confession: "his story was that he was working for Blunden, who was in Kampala with instructions to get rid of the Ugandan president because the British did not like his policies. The training camp for the Anyanya in Sudan had been Blunden's idea: it would give him free hand to train a unit for the coup against Obote under cover of helping southern Sudanese." Following this confession, Steiner got Roy to dupe the staff of Apolo Hotel where Blunden was living to let the duo into Blunden's room. From the hotel room, Steiner "...took the secret dossier under my arm. As we sifted the papers the first thing that caught our eyes was a receipt for one hundred thousand pounds sterling, signed Bataringaya, who was Obote's own minister of interior. We also found the radio code used by Steve Blunden for transmission to London, and code for this exchange with Roy, enabling us to decipher a stack of carbon copies which left us in no doubt about the nature of operation he had in mind. These messages had been sent from the British embassy in Uganda... When I asked Roy about the receipt he denied all knowledge of it, but said Blunden claimed to have the Ugandan minister of interior in his pocket, bought and paid for. We went through the rest of the dossier, then I had it sent back to the Apolo Hotel with my card and thanks. All I had learned agreed with what Taffeng had told me. I asked Roy to write down all he knew about the plot, and when he had finished his deposition I asked one final question. Who did they have in mind to replace Obote - Bataringaya?" Roy told Steiner that Blunden had told him the British had chosen Amin "because he was easiest to manipulate."

The Israeli interest in the removal of Obote from power stemmed from the fact that Uganda bordered on southern Sudan, where black guerrillas had been waging struggles for independence from the predominantly Arab north. This conflict in the Sudan had the potential of constituting a convenient device for Israel to divert Arab forces away from Sinai. To effect this strategy, the Israelis decided to assist in strengthening the Southern Sudanese guerrillas, then called the Anynya by making weekly parachute drops of weapons and medicines, while some of their regular troops helped out on the ground with training. It is at this point that the geographic location of Uganda became a crucial factor to the interests of Israel. Bordering southern Sudan, Uganda constituted a potential base for material aid for the Anyanya. The Israeli intelligence made its first request to the authorities in Uganda for refueling facilities towards the end of 1969. (Bloch, J & Fitzgerald, P. 1982: 162) Much as they got a blunt refusal from Obote, desperately in need of the facilities, they next approached Akena Adoko, the head of Uganda intelligence. They exhorted him that secret services sometimes make arrangements independent of their

governments. When Akena too could not oblige, the Israelis next approached Amin. Amin with his close ethnic ties with the people in Southern Sudan was not difficult to convince.

With Amin's assistance, the Israeli worked out ways of supplying the Anyanyas. The evidence for this is contained in the brief Obote sent to Ivan Smith. In the brief Obote tells Smith that Rolf Steiner was arrested in November 1970 as he was entering Uganda from the Sudan. That the arrest of Steiner brought out the fact that Israel was using Uganda to supply the Anyanyas. This information was gleaned from Steiner's diary which had entries about visits by members of the Israeli military mission in Uganda to southern Sudan. A decision was made to take Steiner to the Sudan. The same evening the decision was made, Amin, who had been in the meeting discussing what to be done with Steiner called Haim, the head of the Mossad in Uganda to reveal to him the decision on Steiner. Upon his arrival in the Sudan, the authorities there announced they would put Steiner on trial. Obote concluded: "I have no doubt at all that Amin saw the trial of Steiner which the Sudanese government announced, as his own trial. ---- The Israelis were involved with Steiner and so was Amin." (Smith, I. 1980: 79) Amin was at this same time having administrative problems in the Army. An embezzlement inquiry in which Amin was a prime suspect was about to catch up with him. Then by curious coincidence, on 25th January 1970 the second highest officer Brigadier Okoya was murdered. There was suspicion Amin was involved in the murder of his deputy. Amin feeling besieged, approached the head of the Israeli military mission to Uganda, Col. Bar-Lev with the proposal of a coup as his last ditch means of defense. He is reported to have told Col. Bar-Lev that his local supporters were outside Kampala, and that Obote was in a position to "arrest and kill him" before they could rescue him. It is understood that Bar-Lev advised him to bring to Kampala soldiers from the same area or tribe as himself. It is through this ruse that 500 Anyanya guerrillas who had been trained for the purpose of supporting the coup were brought in. (Bloch, J. and Fitzgerald, P. 1982:164)

As this was happening, Obote was attending the Commonwealth Conference in Singapore. The most controversial issue at the Conference was the British sale of arms to South Africa. In 1963 the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution calling on member states "to cease forthwith the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition of all types and military vehicles to abstained South Africa." Although Britain had abstained at the time of the passage of the resolution, the Labor Party government led by Harold Wilson that came to power in 1964 undertook to implement it. However, later when Labour lost the elections to the Conservatives, the new Prime Minister, Edward Heath resumed British arms sale to South Africa. This outraged the progressive elements in Africa. Obote, for one, was vocal and soon emerged as the most outspoken African leader against this reversal of policy. When a number of very respected African heads of State threatened to pull out of the Commonwealth, Edward Heath saw this as a "test of the virility of British foreign policy in Africa." (Martin, D. 1974: 29) The occasion for this test was the Commonwealth Prime Ministers conference scheduled for January 1971. Due to the unease at home, Obote had twice declined to attend the conference. Kaunda and Nyerere pleaded with him to attend. At the conference, when Obote described Heath's policy as racist, Heath retorted: "I wonder how many of you will be allowed to return to your own countries from this conference." (Bloch, J. & Fitzgerald, P. 1982:163; also Hotton, P. & Bloch, J. 1979: 175) In the early hours of 25th January 1971, a section of the army began to move against Obote's

government. A strike force led by the Anyanya mounted an assault on Malire Mechanized Barracks, and completely overpowered an armored battalion loyal to Obote. The Israelis were at hand to provide technical back up, driving tanks and piloting jets at a celebration fly-past. Colonel Bar-Lev was even rumored to have helped Amin pick up his first Cabinet. The coup was absolutely successful, and, as Edward Heath had prophesied, Obote took nine long years to get back to Uganda

We also have a lot to disagree with Mamdani's assertion that the people welcomed the coup. Our differences emanate from our different views of what the people were at the time. The concept the "people" varies in content in different countries and in different periods of history in the same country. From this premise Chairman Mao went on to teach that: "At the present stage the period of building socialism, the classes and strata and social groups which favour, support and work for the cause of socialist construction all come within the category of the people, while other forces and groups which resist the socialist revolution and are hostile to or sabotage socialist construction are all enemies of the people."(Mao 1971: 433) In order for us to apply this definition of 'the people' to Uganda it is important for us to realize that the revolutionary process that was/is taking place in Uganda is national-democratic liberation. In line with Mao's concept of the people outlined above, all those forces, which were for national-democratic liberation, are in the camp of the pe