

**UPC AND UGANDA RELATIONS IN THE STRUGGLE TO END APARTHEID
GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA**

PAPER PRESENTED

TO

THE PARTY OF ACTION (POA) DELEGATION

MEETING WITH UPC OFFICIALS

AT

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PREPARED BY

**THE DEPARTMENT OF IDEOLOGY, RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION IN
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UPC AND UGANDA RELATIONS IN THE STRUGGLE TO END APARTHEID GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

1. On Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at the UPC Party Headquarters, we were greatly honoured when comrade Micheal Orach Osinde, National Workers Leader and Party representative at National Consultative Forum, broke the news that he has interfaced with your highly powered delegation of Party of Action (POA)
2. Through the interface, you (POA) were very much keen to know this historical and ideological relationship of Uganda and South Africa, which is not usually highlighted by Academics, Politicians and Journalists.
 - a) Most of the key documents and literature that ought to explain it better got damaged/destroyed due to our political upheavals especially the coup of Idi Amin of 25th January 1971 and his rule that went up to 11th April 1979 when he was eventually overthrown with the help of Tanzania Peoples Defense Force (TPDF) and Uganda National Liberation Force/Army (UNLF/UNLA)
 - b) During this time of Idi Amin rule, Political Parties were banned and Parliament was closed down.
 - c) Following the polls of 10th December 1980, UPC was elected to power/government again and immediately embarked on the journey of promoting Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Internationalism.
 - d) This newly acquired momentum was disturbed by a Civil War and the subsequent coup led by Generals of UNLA Okello and Okello on 27th July 1985. Similarly, the Generals Okello and Okello were over thrown by National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/NRM) on 26th January 1986.
 - e) The Political Parties were suspended and only allowed to operate at National Party Headquarters and with no new ones allowed to form. This situation lasted from 1986 – 2005 when multiparty politics was restored in the country where UPC greatly contributed.
 - f) When Parties were allowed to exist, they had to register afresh. It was not easy and both old and new Political Parties have not had it easy since the polls; 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2021. This is because the political space is not fully opened up, and politics is too much commercialized, making it pretty very expensive, when more and more electoral areas are being created day and night.
3. To go back to the title of this paper; “UPC and Uganda Relations in the struggle to end Apartheid Government in South Africa”, we shall labour to cite specific experiences and where possible we give references for further reading:
 - a) Uganda National Congress (UNC), the first modern Political Party to be founded in Uganda in 1952 to struggle for Independence, had a broader outlook to Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Internationalism. It reached out to all our brothers and sisters in the struggle

to free themselves. UNC opened an office in Cairo and managed to affiliate with Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee. This opened doors easily to India, China and Russia (USSR). Whatever assistance UNC solicited shared with all our brothers and sisters in the struggle. Indeed, a number of Africans benefited from the scholarships UNC solicited.

UNC managed to establish a shortwave radio station in Cairo and this helped to advance a greater cause for Uganda and Africa. We are indeed grateful to comrade Abud Ghamel Nasser and the people of Egypt for such true Friendship and Comradeship.

- b) UNC participated in an Accra Meeting in 1958 for the struggling sons and daughters of Africa under the Yoke of Colonialism, Imperialism and Apartheid. In this meeting, Osagyefo (Comrade Kwame Nkrumah – the Redeemer) gave a blue print on how we can speed up the decolonization and independence struggle on the continent. Unity and development on a continental scale were very much crucial.
- c) In November 1958, UNC Party President Comrade Ignatius Kangave Musazi suspended six of the Party's leading members who included the Chairman; J. W. Kiwanuka and the Secretary General Dr. Kununka. They were being accused of setting up an office in Cairo for UNC, viewed as a gateway for Communist and Egyptian imperialist intervention in Uganda's affairs. The Crisis did not settle down well and according to Kenneth Ingham in his book; *Obote, A-political biography*; chapter 4; gaining experience, page 46, "*When the annual Party Congress met in Mbale in January 1959, however, his supporters walked out alleging that the meeting was irregular because it had been called by men who had been suspended. Tactically this was a bad move. The rump which remained in the meeting expelled Musazi from the Party and elected Obote as President – General in his place. Kiwanuka and Kununka were re-elected to their former posts.*"
- d) Under his new UNC Party leadership, he (Dr. A. M. Obote) worked very closely with a small Secret Committee he appointed to secure a merger of UNC and Uganda Peoples Union which was eventually achieved on 9th March 1960 with the birth of Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) as stated in A. Milton Obote's paper titled, the UPC Birthday. The role of UPC in Uganda's Independence (No. 59).
The UPC inherited most of the Core Values of UNC with a Militant Motto, "One Man One Vote, We Want Self-Government Now." This is a motto that led Osagyefo and CPP to victory in Ghana, 1957.

The forces of Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Internationalism, were given greater attention. "*The external policy of the Party shall be based on the principles of internationalism. The Party shall seek to establish fraternal relations with, and offer support to all nationalist movements on the continent of Africa.*

The Party shall specifically seek to maintain understanding with Nationalist Governments in Africa. The Party wishes to make it clear that it does not recognize the Government of South Africa nor the Federal Government of Central Africa. The Party shall watch with close interest to the development of events throughout Africa and shall maintain every sympathy with the struggles of every part of Africa which lacks internal peace, freedom

and due place in the comity of Nations,” Policy Statement (Unity, Justice, Independence) of Uganda Peoples Congress revised March 1962 (page 6).

In early 1961 polls, UPC was voted second to Democratic Party (DP) on technical grounds as UPC got more popular votes but less seats in Parliament, making it the main leading opposition Political Party.

e) In the subsequent 1962 polls, UPC took a lead and formed a government, leading up to Independence on 9th October 1962.

4. Below is a summary of the experience of UPC and Uganda, to end Apartheid in South Africa;

a) UPC Party President Dr. Apolo Milton Obote with Comrade Pumla Kissonkole (a South African who got married to a Ugandan) brokered a meeting in London with ANC delegation led by Comrade “Madiba” Nelson Mandela.

The request for Uganda Passports was made and Comrade Dr. Apolo Milton Obote as soon as he took over Government worked on this request, that enabled South Africans to travel far and wide to wage the anti-Apartheid struggle. *“It began when I was in London in 1962. Uganda was not yet independent Mrs. Pumla Kissonkole was also in London on a mission unconnected with my being in London. Pumla came to my hotel without appointment one afternoon and told me of the presence in London, of certain people from South Africa whom she knew and thought I should meet.*

What she said was to my heart and an article of faith to UPC. Pumla and I decided to go and meet those “certain people” very much in the same way as she had come to my hotel i.e without appointment that was when I met Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and four other leaders of African National Congress (ANC).

The ANC leaders asked for Uganda passport for their cadres and for the passport to be endorsed for travel to ‘all countries’. At that time, before independence, Uganda passport were endorsed for all countries except communist ruled countries. Readily agreed to the ANC request and after independence redeemed my promise, hope, to their satisfaction,” Notes on Concealment of Genocide in Uganda by Dr. A. Milton Obote April 1990, Lusaka Zambia (Part two Footsteps to genocide, Number 75-78)

b) All UPC Constitutions put the fight against Apartheid South Africa as an act of faith this is the Core Value that was handed down by UNC as primary Aims and Objectives. Source UPC Constitutions. *“To fight relentlessly against poverty, ignorance, disease, colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism and apartheid,”* Uganda Peoples Congress Constitution amended and adapted by delegates conference of August 1970 (Page 3)

c) At the birth of OAU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 22nd – 25th May 1963 Dr. Apolo Milton Obote on behalf of UPC led Government of Uganda, offered training ground and facilities to all Africans seeking to free themselves from Imperial, Colonial and Apartheid Yoke/clutches. This offer was not taken up as such, but we are delighted to report that our members in The Mulungushi Club; Tanzania, Zambia went on to offer such facilities, training and suffered reprisals from the Apartheid forces and her allies. We shall come to the Mulungushi Club members at a later stage. *“Many of these decisions were to have a profound influence upon events in Uganda in the 1970s, but at the time Obote chiefly*

impressed and delighted by the unanimous agreement to pursue a policy aimed at putting an end to colonialism in every part of Africa.

As Uganda's contribution to the undertaking, he offered to provide a training ground for forces seeking to combat White Supremacy in South Africa, but his offer was not taken up. Uganda did, however, become one of the nine members of a coordinating group, later known as the African Liberation Committee with the responsibility for controlling a fund to which all members of the OAU contributed with the aim of assisting people involved in the liberation struggle. Obote noted, without much sympathy, the intensity of Nkrumah's disappointment at the failure of the Conference to support his aims. Concerned essentially with practical issues, Obote was too involved in trying to make a success of an independent Uganda and in helping others struggling to achieve Independence to think in the grander terms of a Pan-African Political Union. Nkrumah recognized the strength of Obote's powers of advocacy. Wishing to enlist his sympathy, if not his active cooperation, he returned with him to Entebbe when the conference ended and took the opportunity to praise the Prime Minister's role in an interview with the Ugandan Press", Obote; A political biography (Chapter 6, page 86 - 87) by Kenneth Ingham.

d) The Mulungushi Club members;

- i. Tanzania came up with Arusha Declaration, Ujaama philosophy in 1967
- ii. Zambia came up with Zambia Humanism philosophy with other policy documents; Matero and Mulungushi reforms in 1968
- iii. Finally, Uganda came up with a move to left document, Common Man's Charter in 1969. *"After the Annual Delegates conference of UPC in Kampala the Move to the Left programme was Known as the common Man's charter. The UPC conference committed the country to socialist development, endorsed the republican constitution, rejected feudalism and capitalism, converted UPC into a mass party, and declared intrusion of nationalizing the major areas of production and distribution. This was a very popular programme with the UPC youth league,"* Obote: second liberation (Page 67) by Vijay Gupta

All these Political Philosophies were a great source of Inspiration. When the ANC Deputy Secretary General Comrade Aziz Pahad was paying tribute to Dr. Apolo Milton Obote, he cited the Common Man's Charter, October 2005.

All these Political Philosophies stood for grand nationalization, self-reliance and getting as much resources as possible to transform the lives of our citizenry. Our brothers and sisters in South Africa are also having debate on how the journey towards nationalization of mines, industries/factories can be handled.

Unfortunately, Africa was boxed down and forced to go for structural adjustment program (SAP) in early 1980s – 1990s. the economy has been liberalized from a mixed economy and it is now private sector driven.

Already this situation has created problems for Africa as most of her citizenry are unemployed and in object poverty. The Governments parastatals, Public

Corporations or public enterprises, have been either sold off or closed down. UPC is still following a mixed economy as stipulated in article 2.5 of the Party Constitution, *“To plan Uganda’s economic development in such a way that the public sector, private sector, workers, peasants and farmers, through the cooperative movement, commerce and industry will effectively contribute to increased production and wealth thus raising people’s welfare and the standard of living in the country.”*

- e) The Mulungushi Club members Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia with ANC Delegation converged in Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania in late 1970 to discuss the British Policy of illegal arms sales to South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). All countries presented papers and from this meeting Dr. Apolo Milton Obote was chosen to voice the Mulungushi Club voice and Africa voice at the Commonwealth Summit in Singapore, January 1971. This is the time imperialism decided to act faster and indeed acted Dr. Apolo Milton Obote was overthrown in a Military Coup, that had the face of Idi Amin underneath and it was an imperial arrangement. *“British Arms and South Africa. There was a second conflict with the British capitalist’s military and industrialists. It was their policy to sell arms to the racist regime in South Africa. When that policy was announced the Mulungushi Club which consisted of Zambia, Tanzania and Uganda held a Summit meeting at Uganda’s Initiative in Dar-es-salaam and the three Presidents Obote, Kaunda and Nyerere decided at that meeting to oppose the sale of arms to South Africa. They also agreed that the Presidents of Tanzania and Zambia would personally go to Britain to persuade the British Prime Minister, Heath to rescind his policy. They went to London but their meetings with the British Prime Minister were not fruitful. Obote records, “it was then agreed between the three of us that we take our case to the Commonwealth Conference. Uganda was elected to be one of the main spearheads in opposing the sale of arms by Britain to South Africa. Britain was threatened with the withdrawal of their countries from the Commonwealth, should the South African arms decision come through.*

With this determination and decision, Obote went to Singapore to represent Uganda and put forward Ugandan as well as Mulungushi Club’s point of view and also to represent Africa in opposing the sale of arms to a racist used against neighbouring countries; the freedom fighters of South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, which made the liberation of Southern Africa impossible,” OBOTE: Second Liberation (chapter 5, page 93) by Vijay Gupta.

- f) The Mulungushi Club members always offered observer status to all struggling forces from Southern Africa and the starting point was Kongwa in Central Tanzania, then Zambia came in as well. The aims/objectives of Mulungushi Club really helped to advance the cause of Africa’s Independence and decolonization struggle. *“commitment and total sacrifice for the total freedom of Africa, commitment and sacrifice for the total freedom of African people, commitment and sacrifice for economic and social progress of African people, commitment and sacrifice for international understanding and peaceful co-existence, commitment and sacrifice to provide a platform where sister political parties may develop greater understanding, solidarity, fraternity and closer relations,”* Statement by Dr. A.

Milton Obote, President of the Uganda Peoples Congress, to the 9th General Conference of the United National Independent Party (UNIP) 23rd August 1983 at Mulungushi Rock of Authority, Kabwe, Central Province, Zambia.

- g) When African leadership was trying to adopt PAC, Pan-African Congress at the expense of African National Congress (ANC), The Mulungushi Club leaders (Comrades Dr. Apolo Milton Obote, Dr. Julius K. Nyerere and Dr. Kenneth Kaunda) worked very hard to convince African leadership to embrace everyone. This helped very much to guide properly the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa.
- h) UPC Delegates Conference, November 1980, passed a special resolution in total support of all liberation movements across Africa and South Africa, Namibia were particularly highlighted.

On all international platforms, UPC led Government spoke and voted in favour of the struggling masses of blacks in South Africa. *“Aware of the aggressive and arrogant pockets of oppression, fascism, imperialism and neo-colonialism around the world, conscious of the continuous struggle waged by the UPC against such forces of human degradation and enslavement both at home and elsewhere, and APPRECIATE of the resistance to such evils offered by indigenous movements in various parts of the world and the aspirations and hopes that inspires them.*

WE, the delegates, at the 1980 UPC Annual Delegates Conference assembled this 6th day of November, 1980, at International Conference in Kampala hereby RESOLVE to:

- a) *EXPRESS solidarity with such liberation movements especially SWAPO, PLO, Polisario and the gallant and long-suffering people of South Africa, and*
- b) *PLEDGE support to their just and fair cause,” Uganda Peoples Congress Manifesto 1980. The Pearl of Africa shall rise and shine again (page 45).*

- 5. While in his second exile in Lusaka, Zambia, UPC Party President Dr. Apolo Milton Obote maintained very close ties with the progressive forces waging the anti-Apartheid struggle. Indeed, one moment touched Dr. Obote very much, when comrade Dr. Olive Tambo, the President of ANC went to him to break the unfortunate news and development, forcing ANC to relocate very far from Southern Africa to either East Africa or West Africa and start the process of constructive engagements/dialogue.

It was a disturbing development that weighed heavily on the shoulders of comrade Olive Tambo, which partly may have contributed to his failing health. He saw it “as being very near to getting back home, and then all over sudden you are sent very far.” Of course, South Africa Apartheid Government and her allies were taking stock of the impact of 1976 Soweto uprising and the heavy defeat their forces suffered at the hands of revolutionary forces assisted by Cuba in Cuito Cuanavale War in Angola. This momentum had to be killed before it manufactured complete military victory.

On the South African soil or at least for South Africa talks to commence minus a full Military arsenal of Umkhonto Wesizwe (MK) nearby. Uganda received very well the South Africans that were relocated from Southern Africa. Only to return when South Africa had started opening up to the process that ushered in black rule.

6. In conclusion, three aspects of UPC and Uganda relationship with South Africa come out clearly;

a) When Comrade “Madiba” Nelson Mandela was released from 27 years of prison, the whole world was very happy.

The Headmaster of my School Holy Cross Girls Secondary School Mongu, Western Province - Zambia, Mr. Eugene Moraes requested me to give a public lecture before the entire school, which was a great honour for UPC, Uganda, Zambia and Africa. Then Zambia was immediately visited by Comrade “Madiba” Nelson Mandela.

b) When the “Rainbow” nation held its elections in 1994 and ANC was victorious, it was a great moment to witness it across Africa and the world. The Political Head/Secretary General of ANC in Lusaka, Zambia, Comrade Alfred Nzo came to bid formal farewell to our UPC Party President Dr. A. M. Obote. It was a great visit, farewell of true comradeship that witnessed the watershed victory of a protracted struggle.

c) When ANC was celebrating 100 years of existence, the Government of South Africa invited Uganda Government as well as the family of late UPC Party President Dr. A. M. Obote. This was a clear message that we have walked together in this long journey and we shall continue working closely.

By your Party delegation visiting Uganda and UPC Party Headquarters, 6th floor, Uganda House, Plot 8 – 10, Kampala Road, Kampala, is a clear testimony that the core values of UPC of Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Internationalism are still holding us together.

Thank you very much.

Presented by,

LWANGA CHRISTOPHER

**Party Head of Ideology, Research and Documentation Dept.,
Party Head of Ideology School, and
Patron of The Mulungushi Club**

Date: 23rd March 2023

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The UPC birthday: The Role of UPC in Uganda's Independence by A. Milton Obote

ADDENDUM

IDI AMIN'S MISLEADING PAN-AFRICAN CREDENTIALS TOWARDS THE DECOLONISATION AND INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLES.

1. It is not a long time ago, when Ex-President of South Africa and ANC, Comrade Thabo Mbeki brought afresh, Idi Amin's contribution towards the decolonization and Independence struggles especially in Southern Africa. It seems Comrade Thabo Mbeki fell in the trap to appreciate Idi – Amin to such extent.

Areas to give consideration:

- a) The 25th January 1971 coup, was an imperial or externally planned and funded coup. The immediate aim was to scare of Mulungushi Club leaders; Dr. Nyerere, Dr. Kaunda and Dr. Obote from proceeding to attack the illegal British arms sales to racist/apartheid South Africa, which arms sales had the potential of reversing all the gains made so far on the decolonization and independence struggle. The Mulungushi Club leaders had even intensions of pulling out completely from the Commonwealth Club as a way of protest.
 - b) In any case, Idi Amin was purely a British stooge and immediately he grabbed power, the British Government were the first to recognize his Military government and went further to lobby other African nations to do the same.
 - c) Similarly, the British Government within the next 6 months after the coup, Idi Amin was hosted in London on an official visit that led him even to meet Queen Elizabeth II (R.I.P)
 - d) As usual, Idi Amin had plenty of words/actions that portrayed him as a fire brand Pan-Africanist, when indeed he was using them as lies to market his unpopular Government. For instance, Ggaba on the shores of Lake Victoria was used as “mock battle” focusing on the capture of Cape Town by his forces allied to anti-apartheid forces. From that time, Ggaba changed its name mainly to Cape Town since there are Islands nearby the Airforce Jet Fighters (MIGs) bombed.
2. OAU Summit Meeting was supposed to be held in Uganda, 1971 as a way of appreciating Dr. A. M. Obote and Uganda as founding members. This was not possible because of the coup of Idi Amin, later in 1975, OAU accepted to host the Summit Meeting in Kampala, Uganda. Idi Amin exploited this Summit further by grandstanding as a firebrand Pan-Africanist. This is the event ex-President Comrade Thabo Mbeki was alluding to. It was a common practice and part of protocol for OAU Summit to give platform to all those liberation forces waging the decolonization and independence struggles.
 3. Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey in their book, WAR IN UGANDA; The legacy of Idi Amin on page 12, expose his hypocrisy when it comes to decolonization and independence struggles, “*The Soviet Union justified its support for Amin in part because of what it claimed was his progressive Foreign Policy. As radio Moscow told the World, ‘Uganda’s Foreign Policy bears a distinctly anti-imperialist character. The country has been taking a firm stand against imperialist neo-colonialism and racism in Africa at every International Forum.*” But in reality, Amin was providing financial support and training facilities to the most reactionary and discredited of the African Liberation Movements.

These included; Zimbabwe, Bishop Abel Muzorewa's African National Congress and Ndabaningi Sithole's faction of ZANU, from South Africa, Potlako Leballo's Pan-Africanist Congress, and from Angola, Holden Roberto's FNLA. All had close ties to the Americans, and not one was supported by the Soviet. In addition Amin courted the support of reactionary American black nationalists such as CORE leader Roy Innis. Only the PLO, which Amin befriended in order to get Libyan aid, was a respected Liberation Movement and received backing from the Soviet Union.

So, Idi Amin's support could not be handled by OAU's Liberation Committee based in Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania.

Reference Book

WAR IN UGANDA; The legacy of Idi Amin by Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey (Chapter 1: How Amin stayed in power, page 12)