

COMMON PEOPLE'S



UGANDA

**Imperial reckoning & rebooting the revolution
Uganda, Imperial conquest and resistance
The struggle for independence
Neo-colonial state**

Yash Tandon

COMMON PEOPLE'S UGANDA

YASH TANDON

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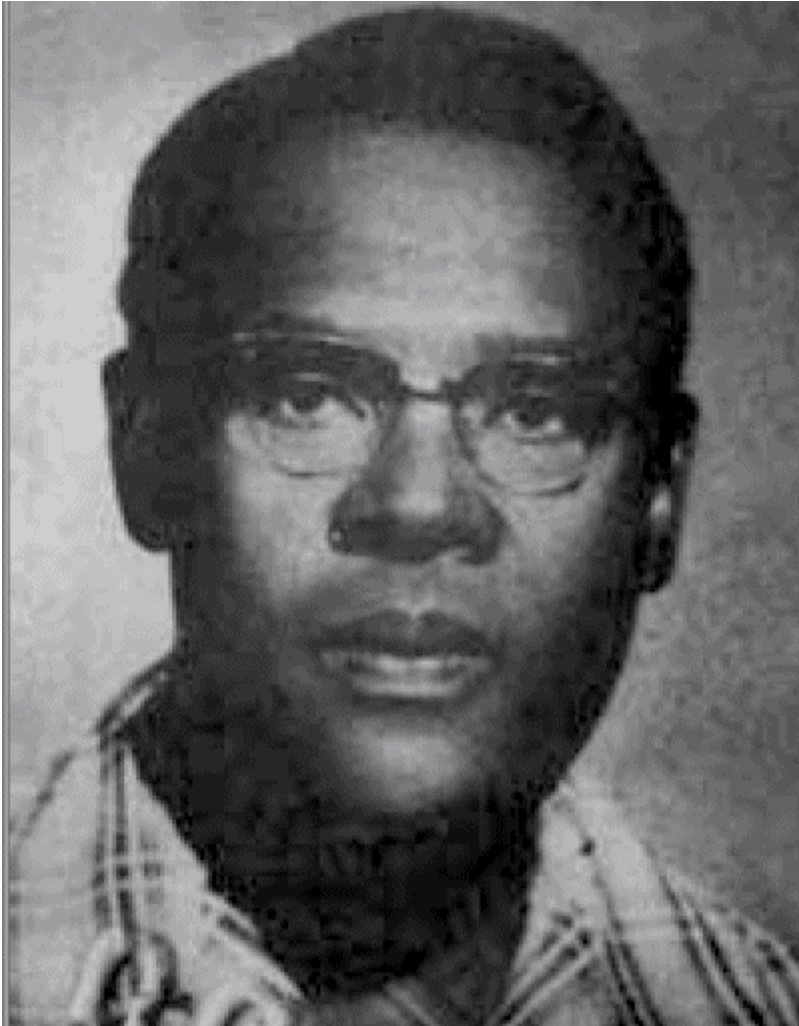
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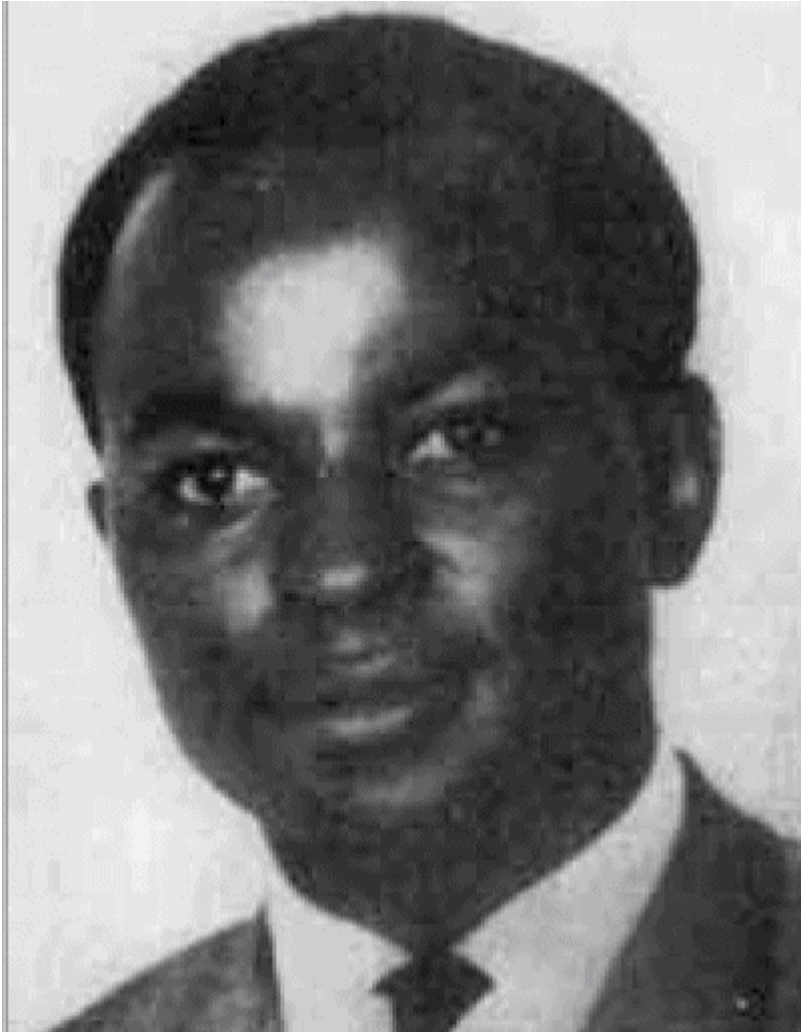
Dedication

In Memory of:

Ignatius K Musazi and Semakula Mulumba who united us all. John Kakonge and Dani Wadada Nabudere who showed us the way.



Ignatius K. Musazi



John Kakonge



Semakula Mulumba



Dani Wadada Nabudere

‘Our party ... has been the vanguard of mass struggle against colonialism and imperialism. ... The economic control of our country is not in the hands of our people and continues through the continued exploitation of our people by a handful of comprador capitalists and their agents. International monopoly capital, the father of imperialism and neo-colonialism, is the most dangerous enemy to our people.’

[From: ‘The Fundamental Basis of the Uganda Peoples’ Congress’, UPC Gulu Conference, 1964)]

Acknowledgements

I take the publication of this book as an opportunity to remember and acknowledge my (and our collective) debt to our heroes now with us only in spirit - among them, besides I K Musazi, John Kakonge and Dani Wadada

Nabudere, Kabaka Mutesa II, Milton Obote, Raiti Omogin, Peter Kinuka, John Kale, Wadada Musani, Natolo Masaba, Masumba Mukhwana, Jayant Madhvani, Picho Ali, Robert Serumaga, Sam Katabarwa, Sam Magara, Abasi Kibazo, Chango Machyo, Omwony Ojwok - and countless others who gave their life to the cause of Uganda's freedom.

I am particularly grateful to Ngugi wa Thiong'o for his Preface to the book, and my close comrade and friend, Edward Rugumayo, for his Foreword.

In 2016-17, I spent time at the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU). I want to thank Rt. Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda, Prime Minister; Hon. Kirunda Kivejinja, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of East African Affairs; and Professor Ezra Suruma, Head of the PMDU and Chancellor of Makerere University, for deep and insightful discussions with them on the present and future of Uganda.

I must add my deep appreciation of my colleagues at the Southern and Eastern African Trade, Information and Negotiations (SEATINI) for the excellent work they have done in advancing an alternative nationalist agenda to issues related to trade, investments and intellectual property since SEATINI's foundation in 1996.

To Zahid Rajan and Zarina Patel, my publishers, I cannot thank enough for their painstaking efforts in the editing, proofreading and publishing process.

Last but not least, I owe my debt to my family, among them especially, Nidhi, Vivek and Maya – Nidhi for her supplements to the original text and meticulous editing and book promotion; and Vivek and Maya for supporting my research and travels. As for my wife of over half century, Mary, words of thanks do not suffice to describe your love and infinite patience and tolerance.

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Abbreviations

ABP African Business Promoters Ltd

ACP African, Caribbean and Pacific

AGOA (US) African Growth and Opportunity Act AMISOM African Union Mission to Somalia
AU African Union
BCGA British Cotton Growing Association
BRICS Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa CMC Common Man's Charter
CMP Capitalist Mode of Production
DDR Doha Development Round
DP Democratic Party
EAC East African Community
EALA East African Legislative Assembly
ECA Economic Commission for Africa
EPA Economic Partnership Agreement
EU, EC European Union, European Commission FDC Forum for Democratic Change
FoE Friends of the Earth
FRONASA Front for National Salvation (of Uganda) GATT General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs G7 United States, Canada, Britain, France, Germany,

Italy and Japan
GSP (EU's) Generalised scheme of preferences IGG Inspector General of Government
IIDS Intransigent Imperial Denial Syndrome IISS International Institute of Strategic Studies LRA Lord's Resistance Army
LTUEA Labour Trade Union of East Africa
MDGs Millennium Development Goals
MFI Micro Finance Institution
MFN (WTO's) Most Favoured Nation (principle) NAM Non-Aligned Movement
NAMA Non-agricultural market access
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO Non-governmental organization
NIEO New International Economic Order
NRA National Resistance Army
NRM National Resistance Movement

ODA Official Development Assistance
 OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and
 Development PEAP Poverty Reduction Action Plan PPP People's
 Progressive Party
 PRSPs Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
 S & D Special and Differential treatment under GATT/WTO SAP Structural
 adjustment programme
 SDGs Sustainable Development Goals
 TRIPs Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights UAMDA Uganda African
 Motor Drivers' Association UBS Uganda Bureau of Statistics
 UCB Uganda Commercial Bank
 UCSB Uganda Credit and Savings Bank
 UDBL Uganda Development Bank Limited
 UDC Uganda Development Corporation
 UFA Uganda Federal Alliance
 UGCS Uganda Growers Cooperative Society
 ULC Uganda Labour Congress
 UN United Nations
 UNC Uganda National Congress
 UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and
 Development
 UNDP United Nations Development Programme UNFCCC UN Framework
 Convention on Climate Change UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner
 for Refugees UNLF Uganda National Liberation Front
 UPC Uganda Peoples' Congress
 USAID United States Agency for International Development VHTs Village
 Health Teams
 WTO World Trade Organization

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Preface

Towards a Common people's Africa *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*

It was a decade that was! Julius Nyerere's vision of Ujamaa, his elevation of Kiswahili into the national language of Tanzania; his translations of Shakespeare into Kiswahili; the rise of Tanzania Publishing House and Dar es Salaam University created the necessary atmosphere for thought. The Dar campus became one of the most exciting centers of intellectual inquiry and thought; and the decade of the 1970's one of the most fruitful and dramatic. For a start the campus brought together progressive intellectuals from all over the world, who took ideas seriously and who were not afraid to challenge each other even as they challenged the colonially inherited 'academic truth' about society and thought. It was the decade that gave us Walter Rodney, Mahmood Mamdani, Issa Shivji, and Dan Nabudere. Though started in SOAS, Walter Rodney's book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, was completed and first published in Tanzania. It has become a classic of Pan-African thought. It was also a decade that gave us students magazine, like *Cheche*, which also became a center of debate.

But nothing quite compares to what has come to be known as the Dar Debate, generated by the 1976 publication of Issa Shivji's book, *The Silent Class Struggle in Tanzania*. Itself a critique of Julius Nyerere's Ujamaa socialism that claimed that there were no classes in Precolonial Africa, the book generated vigorous responses and counter responses from other resident scholar at the University. Each of these responses from the likes of Dan Nabudere and Mahmood Mamdani would blossom into major monographs. More important, the debate generated other responses from all over the continent.

One of those ardent participants in that Debate and the intellectual life of that period is Professor Yash Tandon. He would go on from

xiii being a Don at Dar to donning the robes of active political struggle against the Idi Amin dictatorship. Eventually forced into exile from Uganda of his birth and where he begun his academic career, he did not give up but

became immersed in struggles for securing fair trade for Africa. And he never abandoned his pen, which made him prolific public intellectual, and author of books, including *Trade is War*.

Yash Tandon has drawn from his life long struggles in the corridors of academia and in the University of struggles in Uganda, Africa and the World to bring us the new book: *Common People's Uganda*. The question of the common people – the mass of working people – is at the center of struggles in Africa. Who controls Africa resources? Africa has been the eternal donor to the West. The total outflow of wealth from Africa is always far greater than the inflow. What are the politics, within the continent and in the world, that sustain that unequal power relationship between the continent and the West? How do we reboot the revolution to ensure the economic, political and cultural empowerment of the ordinary working man and woman in the continent?

I believe that through his new book, *Common People's Uganda*, Tandon will contribute to the current debate and the search for solutions as much as he once gave to the great Dar es Salaam Debate and to the struggles for fair trade for the continent.

*Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature,
University of California, Irvine, USA*

Foreword

Edward B Rugumayo

In 12 chapters of this book, Yash Tandon captures the major/ principal contradiction between Uganda's social and economic development and imperialism, beginning with the colonialism and taking us through struggle against British imperialism to political independence and to current neo-colonialism under multilateral imperialism and neo-liberalism of Western European and American domination of Finance Capital. He also shows us that by shying away from mentioning a disease (i.e. imperialism) it does not mean that it doesn't exist. He goes on to show imperialism exists like a fullblown boil, only waiting to be lanced by the victim – Uganda and its people. The book is correctly dedicated to Uganda's pioneer heroes of struggle against imperialism – Ignatius K Musazi, Semakula Mulumba, John Kakonge and Dani Wadada Nabudere, who led the struggle against imperialism and 'showed us the way'. Perhaps what stands out of this book as a class of its own, is the fact that the author intends it to be taught as a course in Uganda's universities and to train a new generation of students who study to transform Uganda. Questions at the end of each chapter attest to this purpose.

For easy reading the book is divided into three parts and five phases: the first part provides an overview of the geopolitics of Uganda's past, the second focuses on NRM period, i.e. 1986 to date, the third stares imperialism in the face and provides strategies for rebooting Uganda's revolution. The phases concentrate on post-independence Uganda and resistance against neo-colonialism. The author makes it abundantly clear that Uganda, right from independence in 1962 to 2018, is a typical neo-colony as exemplified in the five phases: under Obote I (1962-1971), under Amin (1971-1979), the UNLF Period (April 1979-April 1980), then Obote II (1980-1985) and finally what he describes as the current realities (1986-2018) under which period majority of Uganda's population were born.

xv The author makes no apology about writing this book using Marxist tools of analysis. So long as capitalism exists, the best critique still remains

Marxist, modern metamorphosis of capitalism notwithstanding. African universities have abandoned the teaching of African history and philosophy since the 1980s, resulting in a dearth of serious academic research and studies of the African condition. Most of the research in these universities is funded by 'development partners' whose topics are dictated by donor conditionalities. So this book fills in a gaping void in African political economy scholarship. Chapter 9 on Dar es Salaam debates focuses on this period of academic and intellectual awakening to confront neo-colonialism by showing that the principal contradiction in Uganda was not between the national merchant class or remnants of feudalism and the people, but it was imperialism. The details of this debate contained in *Debate on Class, State and Imperialism* (1982) edited by Tandon with an Introduction by A M Babu, published by Tanzania Publishing House. Events since that time have proved this analysis to be correct.

Yash Tandon is a product of Uganda's struggle against imperialism. He has employed his academic training to analyse critically issues affecting Uganda's development and to forge ahead a new path towards Uganda's second liberation. He is a member of the group consisting of Dani Nabudere, Omwony Ojwok and Edward Rugumayo. Both Nabudere and Omwony have since passed on. These were popularly known as 'The Gang of Four', a name coined by President Godfrey Binaisa in 1979. Following the collapse of the Amin regime, these four were the intellectual powerhouse that, together with other Ugandans, mobilised Uganda's rural and urban masses to participate in politics and manage their own affairs. Although all were from universities, each had their strengths and weaknesses. Although coming from a trading family, Tandon never entered his father's business. Instead, he chose an academic career. However, his background enabled him to make contacts and was the principal fund raiser for the 'Gang' in exile and UNLF (A-D). Omwony Ojwok was a typical Karamojong with a wandering spirit, endowed with a sharp eye for details of political and social landscape and a powerful retentive memory. He hardly knew rest. He was a gifted debater, speaker and conversationalist who made friends easily as well as a talented linguist and writer. Dani Nabudere was a brilliant lawyer and great academic, a teacher and mentor of many young people, a prolific writer and a Marxist who interpreted Marxism to a level which ordinary people could understand. However, his books are written in a heavy academic language

without losing the message. He was one of the best exponents of Marxism and could see farther than any of the three members of the Gang. As for me, I was a generalist and with some ability to give people space to express their views unfettered and a consensus builder. As UNLF (A-D) we started a guerilla war in Elgon and Ruwenzori mountains. Lack of cadres, unpreparedness of the masses, as well as resources prompted us to terminate the war and handed our army of about 300 fighters to NRA. The question of cadres and who will take over the mantle of propelling the revolution forward remains the biggest challenge of liberation struggles.

In the last Chapter of this book Tandon outlines the importance of a Vanguard leadership which ensures the continuity of the revolution. He then follows this with the statement that Uganda lacks a Vanguard party rooted among the people. He outlines the three major functions of a Vanguard party: to provide a clear ideology, to hold leaders to account – not only to the stated ideology but also to the party members, and to train cadres. Currently, this is the major challenge of the NRM. When the NRA entered Kampala, it was still an army of resistance. It had no Vanguard party. This was in line with Museveni's statement in Moshi (March, 1979) that he didn't want politicians to interfere with the work already done; what he needed was diplomatic and material support to execute the war. This is what happened. However, when the NRA transmuted into the NRM, it still remained a movement. Even today, it is referred to as the NRM Party – a contradiction.

Tandon quotes the classical book on *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu as one of the guidelines Uganda should adapt to struggle against an

xvii adversary of superior strength (IMF, World Bank and the European Union (EU)) which imposes the neoliberal economic ideology to control Uganda's economy, resulting in impoverishment of majority of our people. When the NRA captured power, it didn't have a party to propel the revolution forward. On transforming the NRA into a movement (NRM) resulted in the demise of any idea of forming a Vanguard party. When in 2006 multiparty politics were revived to end the monopoly of the NRM, it simply added 'party' at the end. This was a result of ideological confusion. In order to swell its ranks, the NRM party continues to bring in more members through creation of new districts, monetary, and job inducements. Numbers

increased, but without corresponding quality in ideology. In fact Museveni continues to employ guerrilla tactics in the management of Uganda's affairs. He continues to recruit more numbers, irrespective of quality. These numbers are important for winning the next battle – election. After victory, take a rest. Recruit more numbers for the next election and win. This goes on to date. Although Museveni still has some idealism and charisma left in him, the heavy burden of running the country which he has taken on, will soon take its toll. To get a closer control of the huge self-imposed responsibility, Museveni has created parallel structures in State House corresponding to different key ministries. This compounds his dilemma. He lacks party cadres to carry out the tasks of propelling the revolution forward to the next level. The dearth of civilian cadres has forced Museveni to turn to the army (UPDF) to implement government programmes. Currently UPDF personnel are implementing agriculture programmes designed by 'donors', and UPDF engineers are being trained in China for the construction of the SGR project. Moreover, there is fusion between the NRM and the state. In fact, cadre development has been put on the back burner.

Still remaining for the NRM are two major challenges – ideology and holding leaders to account to the stated ideology and party members. The stated NRM ideology is Patriotism, Pan Africanism Economic Emancipation and Democracy. Conspicuously missing from these

xviii is Socialism. This is where the the NRM stands today. Then the challenge of holding leaders to account to the stated ideology and to the party remains unaddressed. Corruption has become a way of life. The President, IGG and the courts are overwhelmed by the sheer volumes of corruption. The majority of Ugandans continue to face economic hardships mostly because of corruption at all levels of government.

The message contained in this book is that Ugandans should and must wrest control of their economy from the Empire and build a new economy and society by adapting Sun Tzu advice of: knowing the adversary and the strategy how to defeat it, resolving contradictions among the people and winning the battle without violence. The important challenge is to agree as to who is the principal enemy. In Uganda's situation, it is World Bank, IMF and the G7. Internally, the Government has tended to regard the opposition parties

as the adversary. It is important to ensure that the opposition is not regarded as an enemy but as a group representing an alternative approach to Uganda's development. One of the major challenges facing the opposition is the absence of a clear alternative programme to that of the NRM. The third approach is not to confront the Empire headon but to form trade and collaborative alliances in EAC, other AU regional bodies and with BRICKS members and other progressive countries.

Tandon states clearly that failure to build socialism with Ugandan characteristics will result in further consolidation of the Empire's stranglehold on Uganda, with dire consequences of increasing poverty and destitution for the majority of Ugandans. This is already happening because incomes disparity between the few very rich and the majority of Ugandans, especially the urban and rural poor, is widening by the day.

I recommend this book to the general reader, scholars and students alike. It is written in ordinary English without sacrificing the

ix accuracy of the substance of the message. All the relevant sources have been cited, and any person wanting to find out more will refer to the library and Internet to enrich their understanding of the book's message. Today, the idea of socialism being established in a country like Uganda sounds almost surreal. This has been occasioned by the subtle propaganda of donors, neoliberal writers and academicians. When World Bank and IMF structured Uganda's economy beginning with Obote II and later with the NRM, it focused on privatisation, destruction of cooperatives and state banks and selling off UDC industries, giving government land to private (foreign) investors and declared that the economy was private sector led. Therefore it will take quite some time to educate and sensitise our people to the idea and advantages of socialism over the current neo-colonial economy. This is the challenge facing the NRM government and Uganda as a whole. Whether it will take up the challenge, the future will tell.

Edward B Rugumayo 22, Njara Road, Fort Portal, Uganda xx

INTRODUCTION

Why this book?

Neoliberal policy makers in Uganda are in denial about two things. One is a reluctance to look at imperialism in the face, and acknowledge that the capitalist-imperialist system of production and wealth distribution is inherently and fundamentally flawed. And the second is that left to the so-called 'free market', the system not only divides people between the rich and the poor but further compounds this division over time because the market rewards the rich and penalises the poor.

Available data on Uganda, both quantitative and qualitative, suggest that inequality levels are high, and rising. Despite economic growth averaging 5.9 percent over the past decade, inequality has increased. These are national figures. If you break down the figures at the subregional level, the picture is truly distressing. In the northern regions of Uganda including West Nile and Karamoja, up to 26% of people are chronically poor; 80% of households live below poverty line compared to 20% in the rest of the country. But it is important to place Uganda within the broader global geopolitical context as well as national.

So let us begin by asking some bigger questions to encourage debate and discussion.

1. What are the policies that really matter? Specifically, what are the policies that affect the production and distribution of goods and services (like health and education), policies that affect the welfare of the common people?
2. Here is a rather provocative question: Is it true that policies which really matter are made in Washington, Brussels, London, Berlin, Geneva ... and other such centers of global governance, and also, in the boardrooms of global finance capital?
3. Uganda got its independence on 9 October 1962. Is it possible that for over half a century Uganda is still not fully independent?

4. Why is it that over half a century since independence Uganda is still an exporter of basic raw materials and importer of manufactured products?

5. Why is Uganda involved in the war in Somalia?

I have no immediate answers to these questions. However, I am clear about one thing: if things are not going as well as we had expected at independence, the responsibility lies not just with our leaders but with all of us - you and I. Let me explain. Following the 18 February 2016 elections in Uganda, Christian Amanpour (the chief international correspondent for American TV network, the CNN) interviewed President Yoweri Museveni who is reported to have said: 'The What is more important than [the] Who. I am elected by the people. The what is still not accomplished.'

I would say that the 'who' is also important - perhaps more so than is evident at first sight. The 'what', in my view, is unachievable as long as the empire has a stranglehold over our economy and policies. Challenging the empire is not the responsibility of the President or the government alone. Of course, leadership matters – a visionary leader can take the masses with him or her. This said, it is the responsibility of us all – the people. Development does not come from above; it comes from below. And (this is important) Development is Resistance – non-violent resistance against an externally imposed and internally implemented predatory system of wealth production and maldistribution.

Apart from advancing the above central theme of the book, my other reasons are:

1. To remember our heroes, pay homage to them, and acknowledge our debt to them. They made mistakes (like all of us) but they tried their best to serve Uganda... and Africa. We learn from their mistakes as well as from their achievements.
2. To learn from the American and French Revolutions; the Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions; and, above all, from Africa's struggle for liberation from the colonial Empires.
3. To turn this book into a preparatory online course on the political-economy of Uganda and Africa. As a retired professor, I am only too aware

of a dearth of material on the more difficult concepts and ideas necessary to understand and discuss the politics of our countries. Such a course could provide a knowledge-kit necessary to make a critical assessment of the decisions taken in the name of the common people, and to challenge our politicians and also the media that distort reality in this era of ‘fake news’. To this end, each chapter ends with a list of questions. These help readers in two ways:

a. They allow the readers to reflect on the questions without

necessarily agreeing with the author.

b. They raise issues related concretely to Uganda, but many of the questions are general – especially Part Three on *‘Imperial reckoning: rebooting the revolution’* and may apply to the rest of Africa and the global south.

Before I proceed further, I should give a bit of background on the title of the book. In 1964, the Uganda People’s Congress (UPC) had passed a resolution to the effect that the party’s primary purpose was to serve the interest of ‘the common man who is only given the opportunity to share common misery provided by those exercising the economic control of our country.’ Later, in 1968, the UPC under Milton Obote took on a ‘Move to the Left’ strategy, whose principal document was ‘the Common Man’s Charter.’ The book owes its title to acknowledge that ‘the common man’ is at the centre of the concern of this book. The only change I have made is to call it the ‘Common People’s Uganda’ in acknowledgement of the fact that women (mothers, wives and daughters) contribute to the welfare and development of Uganda far more than a fair share and in return get far less than their fair share, as the figures in the book will testify.

Finally, this book is written in a spirit of revolutionary optimism, but it is not just idealism. It is idealism with a critical sense of the hard reality under our feet. As the Uganda Youth Network UYONET put it out in one of its declarations: ‘Together We Can!’

PART ONE

A brief geopolitical survey of Uganda's past

CHAPTER ONE

Imperial conquest and resistance

As far as Uganda is concerned, I am fully aware of its challenges in the national arena. But I view these for what they are – internal to Uganda. They are for the people of Uganda to resolve. The tragedy of Uganda is that for far too long, there have been imperial interferences in the affairs of Uganda. This is true even today. The internal divisions are preyed upon to service imperial interests, not the national interests of the common people of Uganda.

Introduction

This book is not about Uganda's history. It is about Uganda's future. In other words, we look at the past only so that we understand the present and the future. Hence, in this Part One my objective is to draw out some of what I consider to be the more salient aspects of the history that deserve a 'highlighted' treatment. I highlight these because they are often either ignored or subsumed under a storyline that focuses only on the domestic or national arena. This focus on the domestic arena on most national narratives is understandable. The causes of why things happen on a daily or recurrent basis tend to be explained in ethnic, racial, or religious grounds that are ostensibly visible and form the bulk of media attention. This is true for most situations – whether these occur in the USA, Europe or Africa. In Europe, for example, the ethnic, racial and religious explanations tend to crowd out other possible explanations of daily events.

As far as Uganda is concerned, I am fully aware of its challenges in the national arena. But I view these for what they are – internal to Uganda. They are for the people of Uganda to resolve. The tragedy of Uganda is that for far too long, there have been imperial interferences in the affairs of Uganda. This is true even today. The internal divisions are preyed upon to service imperial interests, not the national interests of the common people of Uganda.

One of the most important messages of this book is that these internal divisions are 'secondary' contradictions. The 'primary' contradiction is with the Empire. The common people of Uganda and their political leaders must unite to face the Empire. This is the lesson we learn from the Russian, the

Chinese, and the Cuban revolutions – to mention three landmark revolutions of our time. The people of Uganda must resolve their secondary contradictions internally, and face the Empire which is the principal enemy of Uganda.

This is the lesson left by the legacy of I K Musazi, Semakula Mulumba, John Kakonge, and Dani Wadada Nabudere... and countless others who fought for Uganda's right to determine its own destiny.

It is this overarching theme that guides the rest of the book.¹

The birth of 'Uganda'

The earliest contact of Africa with Europe goes back to the 15th Century in the so-called transatlantic slave trade that went on for some 400 years. With the help of Arab traders and locals as intermediaries, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English Empires – in that order – relied on brute force to plunder human beings to be sold as slaves to the newly found lands in the Americas and the Caribbean. This was the first phase of Europe's primitive accumulation² of capital during its merchant capitalist phase. Then, in the second phase, the European imperial nations (joined this time by Germany and Belgium) encouraged the production of commodities (raw materials) in Africa – using its vast availability of land and forced labour – for export to Europe for its industrialisation.

1 For this historical part I have drawn largely from historical archives at Makerere, the Bodelian Library in Oxford, other official documents, and the writings, among others, of Holger Bernt Hansen, Phares Karugire, Kirunda-Kivenjinja, Godfrey Mwakikagile, Ramkrishna Mukherjee, Godfrey Mutibwa, Dani Wadada Nabudere, Michael Twaddle, and G N Uzoigwe. See Selected Bibliography at the end of the book.

2 Primitive accumulation is the process by which Europe used precapitalist modes of production (such as communalism, feudalism and slavery) to accumulate capital to start what we now have in our times - the capitalist mode of production



Buganda warriors in the 1920s. Riots were ignited by maids and drivers in Buganda in 1945 over exploitation and poor working conditions by colonial employers.



Karimojong Cattle herder

The following does not provide a full picture of the colonisation of Uganda - a complex process of drawing boundaries between rival imperial powers in the scramble for Africa. However, a few highlights of this period will remind us (in case we have forgotten) of how 'Uganda' was created.

1. The Arab slave traders introduced Islam along with guns, ammunition, glassware and clothes to Africa. In 1875, Kabaka Mutesa I proclaimed Buganda an 'Islamic state'.
2. Three years earlier – in 1872 – the English 'explorer', Baker, came in from the north as the Egyptian Khedive's representative to establish Anglo-Egyptian rule over Upper Nile. Bunyoro was 'annexed' to Egypt, but the Mahdist revolt in Sudan ended the 'annexation'.
3. In 1875, another English 'explorer', Stanley, reached the capital of Buganda. He called on Christian missionaries to be sent to Buganda to stop the spread of Islam. By this time, France, led by the Catholic White Fathers, had also staked claims over Buganda.
4. In 1884 Mutesa died in the middle of this scramble for 'Uganda'. His successor, Muwanga, tried to play the BaIngleza/BaFransa factions against one another, ending with hostility against both and burning alive a number of Baganda Christian converts at Namugongo. Muwanga was in turn deposed in 1888.
5. In 1885, Karl Peters, representing German imperial interests, came to Buganda. The British, alarmed by this, negotiated the Anglo-German Treaty of 1890 – Treaty of Heligoland-Zanzibar – to resolve several colonial issues between the two Empires, leaving Buganda for the British.
6. In 1886, Sir William Mackinnon, Chairman of British India Steamship Company created the British East Africa Company (later named Imperial British East Africa Company) to exploit East African resources. The elephant hunter Lugard (later, Lord Lugard) became IBEAC's administrator.
7. Sudanese armed units and the troops under the British recruited mercenary, Semei Kakungulu, swept across the rest of Uganda to the west and the north

to conquer the rest of Uganda for the British.

8. In 1894 the British declared a protectorate over Uganda.

This is my brief summary of how 'Uganda' was created during the turbulent period of the European scramble for Africa. Ramkrishna Mukherjee, the first Marxist political-economist to write a book on Uganda in 1956, called Uganda 'An Historical Accident'.³

Resistance during colonisation

Most European historiography downplays the resistance put up by the people during colonisation. This is, of course, not surprising. For us it is important that we know that the people of Uganda did not surrender without a fight.

The best known is the resistance put up by the Kingdom of Bunyoro. It was one of the most powerful kingdoms in Central and East Africa from the 13th to the 19th century. Bunyoro had high quality metallurgy that enabled it to become the strongest military and economic power in the region. At its height, it controlled the Great

3 Mukherjee. Ramkrishna, (1956, 1985) Uganda: An Historical Accident? Class, Nation, State Formation. USA: Africa World Press

Lakes region including the Kibiro saltworks on Lake Albert. In late 18th Century the Kingdom declined, and the Ivory trade led it into war with Buganda. Then came the scramble for Africa and Britain came to colonise Bunyoro. The whole dynamics changed. For eight years (1891-1899) King Kabarega fought the British. He fought a guerrilla war – in an ironic twist of history, joined by King Muwanga of Buganda. Both men were captured in April 1899 and exiled to the Seychelles. Parts of Bunyoro were ceded to Buganda and Toro. These are the 'lost counties' of Bunyoro, which still today remain a festering sore on the body politic of Uganda.

The most significant lesson to learn from this is that King Kabarega and King Muwanga knew who their 'principal' enemy was, and they put aside their historic (now 'secondary') contradictions, to face a common enemy.

Equally, there was resistance against colonisation in the rest of Uganda.

Imperial capture of state and economy

The first action of the Empire was to capture the Baganda state. Following Muwanga's deportation, the infant Daudi Chwa was appointed King under the control of a regent, also appointed by the Empire. The *Lukiiko* (the legislature) under the Katikiro (Prime Minister) became effectively a pawn of the Empire. The next task was to transform the economy to serve British interests, namely, to produce the raw materials (especially cotton at the time) for British industries. This required at least the following:

1. Change in the land tenure system to create a class of 'free' peasants.
 2. Investment of capital input into agriculture.
 3. Building an infrastructure to supply seeds, extension service, and a research outfit for the agricultural sector.
 4. An infrastructure of transport including a railway to the port of Mombasa.
- And, above all;
5. Creation of the necessary institutions of finance capital, including a monetary system, currency and banking.

Land Tenure : During the 1900 Buganda Agreement, the British Crown appropriated all 'forests, waste and uncultivated land' (estimated at 10,500 sq. miles), smaller portions allocated as church lands, and an estimated 9,600 square miles went to the Kabaka and the chiefs. In effect, all land in Buganda was divided into two: crown land, which was under the control of the colonial government, and *mailo* land. The latter was further divided into two: land for officials (including the Kabaka, the Katikiro, and ssaza chiefs), and land distributed to private individuals – called 'free' peasants. In effect all traditional rights which the peasantry (*bakopi*) enjoyed under the clan system were abolished. The new landed gentry that were created were quick to grab the land, but still continued to use the pre-existing customary tributes of *busulu* and *envujjo* and free labour called *kasanvu* – one month every year free labour service to the chief. Later, in 1927, under the Busulu and Envujjo law the power of the chiefs was reduced: *Busulu* was restricted to Shs 10 for each holding, and *envujjo* survived but was severely restricted.

Although Buganda was a bit unique, similar land tenure measures were put in place in the rest of Uganda, although not without resistance from the peasantry in Toro, Busoga and practically all other parts of the country.

Provision of capital : The colonial state provided some capital - from the Colonial Welfare and Development Fund, but most of it came from within Uganda in the form of cotton tax – both in production and in export levies. In fact, as we shall see later, there was a net capital outflow from Uganda to Britain.

Agricultural infrastructure : The state put in place a mechanism to supply seeds, extension service, and inputs to agriculture, and a research outfit. In 1902 the British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA) was formed, funded initially from subscriptions by member companies who were stakeholders in the cotton importing, spinning and textile industries. The largest contributor was the Lancashire Master Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers Association.

Transport: The Uganda Railway (called the ‘Lunatic Express’) was built from Mombasa to Kampala using indentured labour from another part of the Empire – India. 2,498 workers died during its construction. Also, feeder roads that would bring cotton from the farms to the collections depots.

Finance and Banking: This was the most important part of the Imperial edifice. It is, as it were, the heart of the system – with veins and arteries supplying blood (capital) to the entire economy. From the first colonial years the Indian Rupee was used throughout British East Africa pegged at rupee 10 to £1 until it ceased to be legal tender in 1921.

The first bank was opened in 1893 in Zanzibar – the Indian National Bank – later named Grindlays. Then came the Standard Bank of South Africa and Barclays which were parts of the British global financecapital network. They established finance houses which provided long term investment for commodity production, trade, shipping, insurance, etc.

The East African Currency Board was set up in 1920. All local notes and coins issued in the colonies were backed by sterling investments in British Government securities.

How Britain siphoned off savings from the common people The banking system was not appropriate for financing peasant production because the peasants had no ‘collateral’. However, following the 1949 peasant unrest, the colonial state allowed the setting up of cooperatives. Thus the Uganda

Credit & Savings Bank (UCSB), created in 1950, was an outcome of the common people's struggle.

But the colonial state was clever. It established Post Office Savings Banks (POSB), also in the rural areas. These provided institutions where the better-off peasants could deposit their savings. But essentially POSB had two state objectives:

1. To siphon off the savings from the peasantry to finance the 'modern' economy through the so-called 'price stabilisation scheme'. The African Loans Funds was established in 1954, administered by the UCSB. But only the rich peasants could take advantage of this. And even these were exploited by usurious finance capital channelled through the newly created cooperatives. Thus the very structures the common people fought to create became instruments of their own exploitation.

2. To siphon off capital from Uganda to the rest of the Empire. Increasingly lower prices were paid to the peasants. In 1940, 50% of the export revenue consisted of tax on peasants put aside as 'reserves to stabilise prices'. In 1942/43 it was 28% of what was now increased export revenue. Before the Second World War Robusta coffee fetched £200/ton in Mombasa, but the peasant producers were paid £65/ton. In 1949 Britain devalued the Sterling. It worked against the peasants who were paid £150/ton whereas it fetched £800-1000/ ton in the market.⁴

By 1949, the State accumulated £20million from peasant tax. We have the authority of the colonial economic historian, Walter Newlyn, to confirm this. For example, in 1958, *of the £17.5 million deposited in Uganda banks £11.6 million were used in Uganda; the rest was sent to Britain and to other British colonies.*⁵ A high volume of savings in Uganda was siphoned off to England. *Between 1945 and 1960 (on the eve of independence), the common people had paid £118.8 million to English coffers. The Uganda peasants were deprived of their own savings.*

See: Nabudere, D W 1980. *Imperialism and revolution in Uganda*, Onyx Press. p 87
Newlyn, W T (1972). *Money in an African Context*, Oxford, p 33

How Uganda supported Britain in the Second World War In 1939 Britain was fully engrossed in the war against Germany. It faced acute shortage of

foreign currency. Under 'Lend Lease' Britain borrowed \$3.75 billion from the United States. But that did not come until 1941. The first source of funds - much bigger than the US Lend Lease - came from the Empire (which included India as well as colonies in Africa). These funds:

1. Protected the value of sterling;
2. Ensured essential food supplies to the English population; and
3. Provided raw materials to British industry.

On top of all these, Uganda (like all colonies) supplied food and raw materials as well as manpower such as coolies (porters) to England for its warring armies.

Mining and Industrialisation

In the early part of the colonial period (for some forty years), Uganda had no industries. Whatever existed in the pre-colonial period was destroyed. Industries were discouraged by the Empire. The Governor of Uganda was clear about this:

'So far as Uganda is concerned [it can definitely be stated] that it [is] of great importance to preserve the agricultural population and therefore [I do] not favour the idea of Industrialisation.'⁶

However, despite lack of colonial government support, a couple of industries did begin mainly at the initiative of some Indian businessmen from colonial India – and hence still part of British finance capital. The most famous of these was Nanji Kalidas Mehta, who, at age thirteen, left India in 1900 and sailed to Eastern Africa, finally settling in Lugazi. The sugar factory was established in 1924. In 1920, the Uganda born Indian entrepreneur, Muljibhai Madhvani, bought 800 acres of land in Kakira. In 1930, he started the Kakira Sugar Works. These industries were established largely from capital brought from India which was also ruled by imperial finance capital. Within Uganda, the Asian middlemen who serviced the agriculture at various stages (mostly buying and spinning) were given a small part of the surplus value. They put these mostly into trade (as '*dukawallahs*'), not industry.

Quoted by Brett, E A (1973), *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa, 1919-1939*, London, p 274

After the Second World War, however, things began to change. The empire needed colonial resources and in the mining sector some form of 'industrialisation' (mostly extractive for export to England without much added value) was inevitable. Copper and cobalt were known to exist in Uganda since 1908. Other metals included gold, tin ore, columbite, wolfram, bismuth, mica, asbestos, kyanite, gypsum, and lithium phosphate.

The 1947 Worthington Plan for Uganda proposed the development of the energy sector and industrial activities. Here is a short list of the developments that took place between 1952 and independence:

- 1952: The creation of the Uganda Development Corporation

(UDC) from domestic sources of funds - an interest-anddividend-free peasant surplus of £5 million.

- 1952: The cement factory in Tororo by the UDC and Bukedi

Local Administration.

- 1952: Nyanza Textiles set up by the UDC with a capital of Pounds 1.5million.
- 1954: The hydroelectric power plant in Jinja by a consortium of British, Dutch & Danish companies with an investment of £16 million.
- The Kilembe Mines became online in 1957, and copper mixed with cobalt began to be exported to Britain. Kilembe was owned 70% by British monopoly Frobisher of Canada and 20% by the British Colonial Development Corporation and 10% by the UDC. Kilembe employed some 3,000 workers.

The main instrument used by the empire was the UDC largely owned and controlled by British finance capital. By 1956 UDC had 1,176 industrial & trading enterprises. And Madhvani, also with loans from mainly British finance capital, spread to sweets, soap, oils, vegetable ghee, and later textiles.

QUESTIONS

1. It is important to place Uganda within the broader global geopolitical context as well as national. Why?

2. Uganda got its independence on 9 October 1962. Is it possible that for over half a century Uganda is still not fully independent?
3. For eight years (1891-1899) King Kabarega of Bunyoro fought a guerrilla war against British occupation. In an ironic twist of history, he was joined by King Muwanga of Buganda, his erstwhile enemy - to fight the British. What lesson do we draw from this for our struggle today?
4. After colonisation what essential changes did the British make to force the people of Uganda to serve British interests?
5. Why did the British create a class of 'free' peasants? Explain the significance of *busulu*, *envujjo* and *kasavvu* in Uganda's early history.
6. Explain the process by which the colonial system siphoned off savings from the common people to Britain in the years following colonisation.
7. How did Uganda support Britain during the Second World War?

CHAPTER TWO

The struggle for independence

Although the Marxist term “proletariat” has gone out of fashion in our time, it is the most appropriate concept to describe the dispossession of land and other means of survival of the peasantry, turning them into a working class that live entirely or mainly selling their labour power for wages.

Introduction: the National Question

Nation-states were created during a certain period in history – in particular in Europe after the Thirty Years War and the Treaty of Westphalia. Europe is now seeking to move towards ‘European Union’, and indeed European nation-states have allowed considerable erosion of their sovereignty towards making the EU a reality. But it is still a dream not a reality. As I write this, this dream is now under question. Nationalism still remains a force in Europe.

Capitalism had at its origin a universalising mission. But Marx was a bit too optimistic that the powerful forces of capitalism would break down the walls of antecedent forms of production, the remaining encumbrances of all past societies, and usher in a Capitalist Mode of Production (CMP) at the national as well as at the global level. This did not happen comprehensively. Why not? It did not happen because during the evolution of capitalism, the Centres of Capital (in Western Europe) were compelled by the internal logic and contradictions within capitalism itself, to colonise the rest of the world (‘the South’) in search for cheap sources of raw materials, cheap (or free) labour, and markets.

One of the effects of this was that the ‘natural’ mutation of these ‘peripheral’ societies towards a full-grown capitalism did not happen. There were parts of these peripheral societies that were fully integrated within the global capitalist system (such as the mining, industrial, commercial agriculture, and financial sectors of the so-called ‘third world’), but the bulk of the people, though exploited by capital, were trapped in pre-capitalist *forms* of production, especially in the rural areas. The *form* was ‘pre-capitalist’, but the *substance* was capitalist. This is what is at the root of the so-called

‘peasant question’ in the periphery of the global capitalist system, and what is meant by the expression that ‘the peasant question is at the root of the national question’.⁷

The creation of the proletariat

Although the Marxist term ‘proletariat’ has gone out of fashion in our time, it is the most appropriate concept to describe the dispossession of land and other means of survival of the peasantry, turning them into a working class that live entirely or mainly selling their labour power for wages.

Earlier we saw how all land in Buganda was divided into two: crown land, which was under the control of the colonial government, and *mailo* land. The latter was further divided into two: land for officials (including the Kabaka, the Katikiro, and ssaza chiefs), and land distributed to private individuals, called ‘free’ peasants. In effect all traditional rights which the peasantry (*bakopi*) enjoyed under the clan system were abolished, and over time they became landless proletariat.

Similar processes took place in other parts of the country. The dispossession of the peasantry from their lands and turning them into wage labourers for commodity production in settler plantation estates, for government public works such as roads, railways, buildings etc., and as seasonal labourers in the cotton ginneries and as head portage or *hamali* cart pullers. In 1907 over 10,000 people in Kampala alone went into such wage-labour. Labour also came from Ruanda-Urundi people escaping from the extremely oppressive Belgian rule. In 1938 labour on non-African plantations (except sugar) was composed of

For Lenin’s analysis of the National Question, see Rob Sewell, ‘Lenin on the National Question’, 16 June 2004 <http://www.marxist.com/lenin-nationalquestion160604.htm>

62% from Ruanda-Urundi, 14% from other parts of Uganda and 24% from other British territories, such as India.

From 1950, a number of factories came into being in textiles, cement, chemical and metal industries and copper mining, thus creating an industrial proletariat. From 139,377 workers in 1948, the number had increased to 214,624 by 1953. This did not include the rural proletariat which, according

to labour ministry estimates numbered 90,000 in 1958, and another 14,000 in domestic service.⁸

I K Musaazi, Bana ba Kintu and the Bataka Movement Ignatius Kangave Musaazi was born in 1905 in a village called Timuna. He attended King's College Budo and got a scholarship to study in the UK where he was ordained as a priest, but he chose to become a teacher at Budo. He founded the Uganda African Farmers Union (UAFU) in 1947. In 1950 he came to London and lobbied the British Parliament. He got support from Fenner Brockway well known as an anti-war Labour Party activist, and many intellectuals, particularly from the London School of Economics.

Musaazi was one of the founders and chief organiser of Bana ba Kintu, created on 2 May 1938. A link was established for the first time between the peasants, workers, traders and intellectual petty bourgeoisie forming an alliance of forces of a national democratic movement against colonialism, and the first political organisation whose demands went beyond Buganda. James Kivu, the workers' leader was part of the movement. As Apter says, it 'brought together the demands of the farmers, large and small, the African traders, and the growing number of chiefs who were dissatisfied with the high handed rule of the Buganda government.'⁹ Bana ba Kintu founded an independent nationalist school named after Aggrey of Achimota of Ghana – Aggrey Memorial School – which became the centre of nationalist politics under its Headmaster Henry Kanyike, who was banished into exile after the 1949 uprisings. Founded in 1946, the Nabudere, op.cit. p 104

Apter, D E (1967), *The Political Kingdom in Uganda*, Princeton, p 113

Bataka Movement became a pivotal point of the opposition to the chiefs and the colonial state. A particular target was the Katikiro, S W Kulubya, who was a dictator (like previous Katikiros) serving British Imperialism (the infant Kabaka Daudi Chwa had no power). In 1947 the Bataka was joined by another movement called *Abaganda Abakopi* (Baganda peasants) led by Mulumba who was educated at the SOAS in London sponsored by contributions from members of the Bataka Party. Mulumba spent several weeks in Kenya with nationalist forces there before coming back to Uganda. He became the Bataka party's foreign representative. The Party's grass-roots organisation was at the *Muluka* (parish) level where, as Apter observed, antagonism against the colonial regime in Buganda 'was at its height'. Their

main grievance was against the exploitation by the Asian cotton buyers and ginners. A women's singing group became part of the political struggle. The Bataka Party also had international connections with the Marcus Garvey Movement of the United States.

Rise of the Co-operative movement

The first 'unofficial' cooperative societies emerged in Buganda in 1913 when four African farmers formed the Kina Kulya Growers Society to market their crops. In 1923 it joined with another co-op society of five farmers called Buganda Growers Association, whose objectives were broader and included channelling the grievances of the African peasants to the government. Outside Buganda the movement was also taking roots unofficially. However, their efforts to buy and market their crops failed because of lack of capital. In 1933 the Uganda Growers Cooperative Society (UGCS) was formed with Mikairi Wamala, MBE, as its chairman. By 1936 its membership had risen to 239. When the colonial state proscribed cooperative societies, the UGCS went underground under the legal cover of Business Names Ordinance. By 1938, there were 15 coop societies operating 'illegally'. By 1945 these had risen to 75. The colonial state finally recognised that it was no longer safe to proscribe them without political consequences and jeopardising the whole industry. Thus, the colonial power was obliged to recognise the movement in order to contain peasant resistance.

Unionisation by the working classes¹⁰ By 1935 the LTUEA (Labour Trade Union of East Africa) led by Makhan Singh from Kenya had established several branches in Uganda. In 1939 the first trade union was registered – the Uganda African Motor Drivers' Association. It was not a union limited to economic struggles; it was also political. Moreover, its membership was extended to small lorry and bus owners and workers in urban industries.

In January 1945 workers came out on a general strike for three weeks. It started on 11 January when workers at the East African Tobacco Co. in Jinja went on strike. On the 12th all government employees of the PWD (Public Works Department) in Kampala stopped work. The strikes then spread to many other towns – Jinja, Mbale, Iganga, at the Sugar works, Mubende, Masaka and Mbarara. The British banished the union leaders into exile and the Union leader Kivu was put in prison.

In 1946 another union was formed by I K Musazi - the Uganda Transport and General Workers' Union. Musazi linked this with the peasant movement, Bataka Party which was also formed in 1946.

When this led to another uprising in 1949, it too was banned and the leaders – including Musazi – were deported into exile. In the years after the disappearance of the two militant unions, it was only the Railway Workers' Union, first registered in Kenya in 1946 and later in Uganda in 1948, which functioned without interruption.

Consequences of the Second World War

The uprisings in Uganda were not isolated phenomena; they were part of a worldwide movement in all the colonies of the European empire – from the Dutch colony in Indonesia, to India, the Arab world, Africa and the Caribbean. The colonised peoples were used by the empire to fight their wars. The soldiers from the colonies witnessed the defeat of the British army by Hitler in the early stages of the War, and realised that the British were not as powerful as they had thought. They also tasted the spirit of liberation. Thus, the Second World War helped to unleash the colonial peoples' struggles against the European empire.

10 See: Scott, R (1966), *The Development of Trade Unions in Uganda*, Nairobi, The East African Institute of Social Research (EAISR)



East African Railway workers strike

There was another side to the Second World War, and that is the entry of the United States on the side of the allied powers. The US provided aid to its allies called the Marshall Plan, but it put a condition to it. In return for this aid, the Americans demanded that the Europeans dismantled their empire, and open the liberated countries to American trade and investments – the so-called ‘open door policy’. At the end of the War, when the victorious powers met to restructure the system of global governance, including the creation of the United Nations, the US insisted that one of the principles of the new organisation would be self-determination. This gave a strong boost to the colonies to demand independence. Within ten years, most of Asia was independent. It took another decade for independence to come to Africa, but the die was cast. The global geopolitical shift that the Europeans could not sustain the empire in its present form; they had to find other means – mainly economic and financial – to control the colonies (as neo-colonies) and, at the same time open the door to the US for American trade and investments.

1945 and 1948 Riots

These riots in Uganda centred on the workers’ agitation for increasing wages and improvement in their conditions of work. Led by the Bana ba Kintu, the

peasantry demanded democratic as well as economic rights. Musazi demanded £1.5 million from peasant reserve fund to put into agricultural credit scheme. Peasants refused to sell their cotton demanding right to gin. On 7 April, a crowd of 4,000 with food, cooking pots and camping material protested at Kabaka's palace. The colonial police made arrests which added fuel to the fire. People attacked chiefs and set their houses on fire, 1724 arrests were made. A state of emergency was declared.¹¹ The governor blamed 'communism' as the force behind it. The peoples' grievances against the Lukiiko were justified – later, the Kabaka admitted this in his autobiography.¹² The general strike also spread into Kenya under the leadership of Makhan Singh.¹³

During 1946-7 the Movement embarked on a number of new struggles. It attacked the colonial power for creating a federation in East Africa threatening the rights of the people over their lands, under the control of Kenyan settlers.

The 1949 uprisings were a continuation of the 1945 general strike, especially against the Lukiiko. The people demanded direct elections rather than appointment by the Kabaka, and an increase of elected representatives from 36 to 60. The peasants also demanded their rights to gin their own cotton; they refused to sell their cotton and kept it in their houses. The struggle against the federation of the East African territories also intensified. The Bataka party led by Musazi took this as a major challenge.

In May 1949 Semakula Mulumba wrote to the UK Secretary of state for the Colonies with copy to the UN. Among the points he made were:

- 'People of Uganda refuse one-sided Anglo-Uganda Agreements

concluded 1990 with illiterate Africans.

¹¹ See: Uganda Protectorate, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances which occurred in Uganda during January, 1945, Entebbe.

¹² Mutesa, The Deseccration of my Kingdom, London 1967, p 88

¹³ See: Patel, Zarina (2006) Unquiet: the Life & Times of Makhan Singh, Zand Graphics

- 'Uganda Protectorate Government, stealing draining African economic resources Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole, Toro, Busoga, provinces through Agreements supported petty kings [and] aristocratic quisling chiefs.

- ‘People demand democratic African government but British Government... continue stealing, cheating Africans through Indian cotton buyers, corruption rampant.
- ‘Requesting immediate commission enquiry among Bataka and people of Uganda.’¹⁴

Mulumba also wrote to Bishop Stuart (with copies to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope – among others) saying: ‘You cannot be an honourable minister in the Church of England and at the same time a so-called loyal agent of the British Government. Resign, you cannot get away from it.’

In 1952 the colonial state took major steps to contain the national resistance, and to detach it from the workers’ union and the cooperative movement.

- The leaders of the 1945-49 riots (including Musazi) were arrested and deported.

- The Bataka Party was proscribed.
- The colonial government assumed more power and the

Katikiro’s power in Buganda was increased.

- The state gave concessions to the intellectual petty bourgeoisie, the capitalist farmers, the rich peasants and traders.
- To contain workers’ organisations, work committees were established at their work places. The workers and poor peasants were thus isolated.
- The imperial government sent John Stonehouse (British) and George Shepherd (American) to help reorganise the cooperative movement in Uganda.

However, this did not stop unionisation. By 1952, 43 unions were operating. In 1955 the Uganda Trade Union Congress was formed. 1 Apter, loc. cit. p 205

From 259 workers in 1952 the number rose to 26,300 in 1960. Next door in Kenya the Mau Mau rebellion had erupted in 1952, and in Tanganyika the struggle intensified as also in the rest of Africa and Asia.

QUESTIONS

1. Marx had thought that the powerful forces of capitalism would break down the walls of antecedent forms of production, and usher in the Capitalist Mode of Production at the national as well as at the global level. This did not happen in Africa. Why not?
2. Lenin had said that ‘...the peasant question is at the root of the national question.’ Explain why?
3. How did the ‘free’ peasants lose their titles to land in Uganda? How were the bakopi transformed into an industrial ‘proletariat’?
4. What is the significance of the Bana ba Kintu and the Bataka Movement of the early struggles against colonialism for our times?
5. Describe the role the cooperatives and trade unions played in the struggles in the 1940s and 1950s.
6. What were the causes and consequences of the 1945 and 1948 riots?

CHAPTER THREE

Beginnings of the formation of a neo-colonial state

In Uganda, these “middle classes”, having benefitted from the struggles of the peasants and the workers, reversed the tide and, in contradiction to their earlier support for the democratic movement, started negotiating with the empire for “self-government”. The Baganda elite, still entrenched in the Lukiiko, began to push for Buganda’s separation from the rest of Uganda.

I shall discuss this at two levels: first at a general, theoretical level; and then its concrete application to Uganda.

What is a neo-colonial state?

It is very important to understand the phenomenon of neo-colonialism, because unless we do so it is not possible to properly analyse the so-called ‘post-colonial’ state in Africa. ‘Post-colonial’ is a temporal concept, a time-based notion that has been used for political ends not only by politicians but also by academics. Many of them argue that ‘post’ means the end of the empire: Africa is now ‘independent’; gone are the days of colonialism and imperialism. This is palpably untrue. Our understanding is that independence is an important achievement, but it manifests itself only at the political level; the economy is still not liberated from the control of the empire. Amongst all African leaders, the person who best understood and defined neo-colonialism was Kwame Nkrumah.¹⁵

More than half a century since political independence, Uganda for example is still a neo-colonial state. Its economy is still, *essentially*, under the control of the empire. We have not liberated ourselves fully. Here I describe five principal features of neo-colonialism.

1 See: Kwame Nkrumah, (1965) *Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism*. London, Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd.

1. A neo-colonial state does not negate the rule of the international financial oligarchy.

2. However, and this is important, the neo-colonial state is at a heightened level of contradiction between imperialism and the people.
3. The empire, though it may still control the economy, has no direct political control. It may manipulate the political processes, but then it has to use local agents and this makes it more cumbersome for it than it was during direct political rule.
4. Political independence is an important stage in the fight against imperialism. The common people are brought into the democratic process directly. Political parties are formed to vie for power and they have to reach out to the people for votes. Elections are regularly manipulated by political leaders and the empire. Nonetheless, people continue to demand 'free and fair' elections.
5. Above all, political independence exposes the internal class contradictions – class oppression and class struggle – more clearly. The danger is that these are then seen as the 'principal' contradictions which the empire continues to exploit and use for its own ends.

The birth of Uganda as a neo-colonial state

Following the Second World War, and with the rise of the nationalist movements, the British were facing revolts all over their global empire. Simultaneously, within the womb of the colonial state, a new breed of 'middle classes' was emerging. The British used a dual strategy – crush the nationalists with the force of arms and detentions (as against the Mau Mau in Kenya), and co-opt the middle classes in the colonies who were open to 'reforms'.

In Uganda, these 'middle classes', having benefitted from the struggles of the peasants and the workers, reversed the tide and, in contradiction to their earlier support for the democratic movement, started negotiating with the empire for 'self-government'. The Baganda elite, still entrenched in the Lukiiko, began to push for Buganda's separation from the rest of Uganda. In 1956, 85 Baganda were registered as directors of 36 limited liability companies of which 28 were connected with coffee curing, food distribution and publishing and printing.¹⁶ Another index of the rise of the middle classes was the intake of students at Makerere: in 1955-60 the bulk of these came from rich Baganda families.



Milton Obote takes over the governance of independent Uganda

It is in this new phase of the development of Uganda that new political parties came to the fore. The first major political party was the Uganda National Congress (UNC), formed in March 1952 with I K Musazi and A K Mayanja as its founders. These leaders were radical nationalists. Thus, when Kabaka Yekka (Kabaka Alone) was formed in 1960, and it boycotted the 1961 elections, this was opposed by the militant young intellectuals in Buganda, among them Abu Mayanja. As a reaction to the UNC, a third major political party to emerge was the Democratic Party (DP), founded in 1956, mainly backed by the Catholic Church. The DP accused the UNC of being 'communist inspired'. Hence, whilst the new parties were, *in general*, still nationalist and anti-imperialist, they also began to attract a large section of the middle classes.

Even more significantly, the emergence of new parties also fuelled what we call the 'secondary contradictions' among the people – mainly based on ethnicity, region, religion, and language. (The principal contradiction still remained between the empire and the people as a whole). We have already referred to the formation of the Kabaka Yekka in 1960 – thus raising the

spectre of regionalist divisions. Those Baganda nationalists such as Mayanja who opposed the formation of the KY were dubbed as traitors. In the north of Uganda, Milton Obote, in a letter to the *Uganda Herald*, challenged the UNC saying ‘we Semi – Hamites and Norsemen of Uganda who have had no educational opportunity ... feel that the Congress in aiming at “Self-Government”, is hastening and thereby leaving us behind.’¹⁷ In 1960, the UNC split. One splinter group led by Obote merged with another group of legislative council members – a party called the Uganda Peoples’ Union (UPU) – to form the Uganda Peoples’ Congress (UPC). In 1959 Augustine Kanya mounted a boycott movement against Indian small shops in the villages. Also, people who were nationalists in the earlier period assumed their proper class identity. E M K Mulira is a good example of this – a nationalist who decided to write an ‘Apologia to my British friends’ explaining why he had joined the Uganda National Movement. ‘[M]ixing with the masses’, he explained ‘was the only way for the “moderates”’.¹⁸

1 Fallers, A L (1964), *The King’s Men*, Oxford University Press

The Lancaster House Constitutional talks and independence As we saw, the Baganda middle classes, with Mutesa as its head, had taken control of the Lukiiko in the 1955 and 1960 elections. They were supported by a section of British monopolies, including the Unilever Group through its branch in Uganda - Gailey & Roberts Ltd. The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking on behalf of the Church of England, had also backed Lukiiko’s demand for separation.

The Lancaster House Constitutional talks resulted in ‘selfgovernment’ as a first step towards full independence. Since the KY had boycotted the 1960 elections, the Democratic Party (DP) led by Benedicto Kiwanuka won the poll, thus becoming the first Prime Minister of Uganda. The DP was supported by the Catholic Church with direct blessings of the Pope at the Vatican, and a section of the German monopolies. Obote was an astute politician. Taking 17 *Uganda Herald*, 24 April, 1952

18 Quoted in Low, loc. cit. p196

advantage of the religious division among the Baganda, he made alliance with the largely protestant Kabaka Yekka. In the April 1962 elections, the UPC won 37 seats, the DP 24, and the KY 21 – thus enabling Obote to

become the Prime Minister of the country with Buganda as a semi-autonomous kingdom. Like the DP, the UPC also had connections in Germany – with a section of the social-democratic wing of monopolies. Later, the UPC was to create a foundation – the Milton Obote Foundation – funded by the Social Democratic Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

Thus, Uganda's independence was won by the people, yes, but under the control of the middle classes which played up religious and regional differences which, in turn, were supported by different factions of finance capital in Europe. As for the nationalist parties, they quickly faced demise. The Uganda National Congress (UNC), the Uganda National Union (UNU), and the Bataka Party – all had fielded candidates but none of them got a single seat in the new parliament.

Such was the birth of the neo-colonial state in Uganda.

Summing up

It would be useful to recap the main points arising from the above discussion in the last three chapters.

1. The British conquered Uganda but not without resistance by

the people of Uganda. The people finally succumbed, and Uganda became a British colony whose resources and manpower were exploited to sustain the British economy.

2. The rise of the working classes – in industry and mining as well as in agriculture – led to a new phase of resistance.

3. This, in turn, gave birth to a nationalist movement, and this led to the formation of nationalist political parties (such as the UNC and the Bataka Party).

4. The 1945-49 revolts almost immediately after the Second World War were mainly a result of the leadership of these nationalist parties. These revolts brought the issue of independence to the fore.

5. However, as the struggle for independence reached its climax, different kinds of political parties began to emerge, this time led by the 'middle classes', and based largely on ethnic, regional and religious differences (such as the UPC, the DP and the Kabaka Yekka).

6. All these latter day parties were supported by factions of monopoly capital in Europe – the KY by certain British monopolies; the DP by those in Germany; and the UPC from both Britain and Germany.

7. At independence on 9 October, 1962, the UPC and KY formed an alliance to form the government, following elections in April 1962 where the nationalist parties (such as the UNC and the Bataka Party were wiped out).

8. Independence was also the moment for two phenomena to emerge simultaneously: one was the creation of Uganda as a neo-colonial state; and the second was the shift of the character of the empire from bilateral to multilateral imperialism

- the rule of the global finance capital over Uganda, with the Bretton Woods institutions as the conduits for capital and, as we shall see in the next chapter, of the so-called ‘development’ policies of the neo-colonies.

9. Nonetheless, even if Uganda was now a neo-colony, political independence was a significant shift, for now Britain and the rest of the empire could not rule directly; they could do so only through local intermediaries in Uganda (known as compradors). Also, furthermore, the people had a say in the elections, for even if these elections were manipulated by the Ugandan middle classes and the empire, the common people continued to demand a direct say in ‘free and fair’ elections. And this is important.

QUESTIONS

1. What is a neo-colonial state? Have you read Nkrumah’s book on the subject?
2. How and why did ‘secondary contradictions’ among the people surface on the eve of independence? Why did the Kabaka seek the separation of Buganda from the rest of Uganda?
3. How and why did the UPC emerge as the ruling party in the April 1962 elections?

CHAPTER FOUR

Neo-colonialism and resistance (1962-1986)

The party's absolute reliance on the common people is due to the realisation that ... the masses (the common people) are the only absolute revolutionary forces within the society... The document adopted by the Gulu Conference called for the final participation of the workers, farmers and youth in the party.

Introduction

The general context of multilateral imperialism

Earlier we discussed the consequences of the Second World War for the colonies, and the condition that the United States put on its Marshall Aid to Europe – namely, that the Europeans had to dismantle their colonies and open their doors to US trade and investments. This was the beginning of multilateral imperialism. The United States and the victorious powers at the end of the War created not only the United Nations (to which we referred earlier), but also the Bretton Woods Institutions – the World Bank (or the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development – IBRD, as it was then called), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the General Agreement of Trade and Tariff (GATT) which mutated into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in January 1995. These are the global trading and financial instruments of multilateral imperialism at the economic level.

Imperialism, thus, remains the principal enemy of the common people of Uganda. As long as Ugandans do not unite in the tradition of the Uganda National Congress and the Bataka Party, the contradictions among the people based on region, religion and race will continue to divide the people, and the empire will continue to take advantage of these divisions.

The other significant factor is the role that ideology plays in peoples' struggle for emancipation. As we have seen, nationalism is a positive ideology provided it is based on the unity of all the people, except those who choose to act as 'compradors' in service of the empire. The second is

socialism – in that it seeks to address the question of both national ownership of resources and production, as well as an equitable distribution of the fruits of production and the provision of necessary public services (health, food, education, water and sanitation, housing, and basic security).

The above provides a general context against which we shall analyse the concrete struggles of the common people of Uganda against imperialism.

Phase one: Neo-colonialism under Obote I (1962 - 1971) The Economy

In 1960, Britain had invited a World Bank Mission to draw up Uganda's development plan. The 'planners' came from five imperial countries, chaired by an American professor of economics. Thus the First Development Plan (1962-66) was done even before Uganda got its independence, and it was titled: 'This is Your Plan: Uganda's first five-year development plan'. The Second Development Plan (1966-1971) was 'home-made' and was titled 'Work for Progress: the second five year plan.'¹⁹

Here I summarise some of the main points of the plans and what they achieved or failed to achieve.

- Both plans put emphasis on land reform, the need for more investment in land, and modernisation of agriculture with 'improved seeds' and tractor hire services for the 'progressive' farmers. But whereas the first plan put emphasis on agriculture (especially cotton production), the second plan advocated ending dependence on cotton and coffee, and making the

19 It is possible to get hold of these plans online from Stanford Libraries <https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/3374694>. For an excellent discussion of the plans and their evaluation, see Nabudere, loc. cit. pp 174-249, which contain much of the data that I summarise in the following pages

industrial sector as the 'primary basis' for growth and stability. It is interesting that in relation to the second plan, the minister of industry and commerce, William Kalema put 'major emphasis' on industrialisation based on 'import substitution.'

- The finance for development came primarily from the extraction of surplus value from the peasantry, and aid and credits from the imperial countries. For example, the Second Plan envisaged 3 types of credit schemes: short-term

credit to 150,000 peasants for the purchase of simple equipment, fertilisers, and insecticides; medium-term credit to 5,000 peasants (the rich peasantry); and long-term credit for 4,500 'large-scale farmers' (the capitalist farmers) – through various credit schemes including loans from the Uganda Commercial Bank (UCB). On the industrial side, the Uganda Development Corporation (UDC) became the major source of funds (mostly corporate funds channelled through it), for example, for the African Business Promoters Ltd (ABP) the Small Industries Development Fund (SIDF).

- The Second Plan envisaged the development of 50 dairy farming ranches financed by a USAID loan of \$650,000 – which was tied to purchase of American goods. The loans were given out to the farmers (the majority of whom were ministers and district leaders). In 1968, the World Bank also loaned £2 million for the same scheme, utilised by the Uganda Livestock Industries Ltd. The loans were to be dispersed through the commercial banks, to which government lent at 4.75% through the UCB, which also lent to the other banks at 6.25% and the latter lent it to the rancher at 8% - an interesting case of what I call 'interest loading in layers'.

- In the industrial sector, a number of new factories were completed, including steel-rolling, agricultural tools and other metal working, fishing nets, fertilisers, wheat milling, soluble tea, cassava processing, *waragi*, and other spirits, bicycle tyres, matches and footwear. In all these enterprises, finance capital was introduced as a partner. The tools industry was run by a British monopoly – Chillington Tool Co. of Wolverhampton in the UK. The UDC, distillery, which manufactured *waragi* as well as 'local' brands of brandy, gin, and whisky, was in 'partnership' with the British spirits monopoly of Duncan, Gilby & Matheson Ltd. The steel corporation 'owned' by the Muljibhai Madhvani & Co. Ltd was owned in partnership with the Italian monopoly SOCIETA in *Acconandita Luigi Pomini and Societa per Azioni Fratelli Orsenigo*. In the garment industry Japanese monopolies, Yamato Shirts Ltd and Marubeni-Ida Co. Ltd. were partnered by the UDC and a local firm. In chemical and fertilisers, the British ICI (through Twiga Chemicals) controlled the industry. In 1968-69, new factories started – among them, cardboard boxes, transistor radios, batteries, plastic sheeting, floor tiles, glass, bottles, knitwear, brake lining, and second asbestos plant and craft paper. An electric bulb factory was planned for 1970 and a cotton mill at Lira was also envisaged. Copper became the most important mineral

for export and in many cases determined the growth of this sector; beryllium, wolfram and tin production also continued to rise.

Here is a more general evaluation of the two plans:

- First and foremost what they achieved was the production of agricultural commodities for export to the imperial countries on conditions and prices that, in reality, were set by the intermediaries (suppliers of loans and credits, warehousing and shipping companies, and the corporate buyers and sellers).
- For sure, there was ‘growth’ in the agricultural sector, but the benefits of that growth went mostly to large commercial farmers, the banking sector, and intermediaries such as the cotton ginners and cooperatives. In fact, the cooperatives exploited the peasants by borrowing from the banks at 6.5% and lending to peasant farmers at 12% (who, also, took the risk of erratic weather and other problems). Thus, the co-ops essentially acted as conduits of banks and finance capital for the exploitation of mostly the poor and middle peasantry. Between 1962 and 1967, co-ops increased from 104 to 228; bank loans from less than shs 1million to shs 7million, and the number of borrowers from 7,948 to 21,433.²⁰
- Like poor peasants, the workers were caught up in the exploitative chain of production to maximise the profits of the providers of capital. In the interest of protecting the interest of capital, Government banned the formation of independent workers’ unions. But its initial effort to break the Trade Union Congress (TUC) by creating a rival union – the Federation of Uganda Trade Unions (FUTU) – failed. So it created another union - the Uganda Labour Congress (ULC) as the sole organ of the workers. In 1964 the ULC president, Humphrey Luande, resigned from the UPC and declared that ‘it had become glaringly apparent that the government’s policy [was] to interfere in the liberty and freedom of organised workers’ movements and to turn them into government tools’.²¹

Politics under Obote

Earlier I had described Obote as an astute politician. He had complained about the discrimination ‘Semi – Hamites and Norsemen of Uganda’ had suffered under colonial rule. One of his political objectives was to redress this inequity against the Nilotic peoples of Uganda. In 1960, taking advantage of the religious division among the Baganda, he had made an alliance with

Kabaka Yekka, which helped him to become the first Prime Minister of Uganda following the April 1962 elections at the age of 37 – still a young man.

Another young man of equal calibre was John Kakonge. When he came back to Uganda from India (where he was studying) in 1960, Kakonge decided to join the UNC (the UPC came later). Among the reasons he joined the UNC, according to Kirunda Kivejinja, was that ‘Obote was an effective articulator of nationalism and antiimperialism’.²²

20 Nabudere, *op.cit.*, p 185-200

21 Uganda Argus, 9 October, 1964

22 Kirunda-Kivejinja 1995. Kivejinja A M, 1995, Uganda: The Crisis of Confidence, Kampala: Progressive Publishing House, p 19

John Kakonge and the 1964 UPC Gulu Conference

Kirunda Kivejinja knew Kakonge well when they were both studying in India. In his *Uganda: the Crisis of Confidence*, Kivejinja says: Kakonge had ‘a brilliant academic career and became a pet of both students and professors at the Delhi School of Economics under Dr V K V Rao, the distinguished Indian economist’. In 1958, Kakonge was elected chairman of the African Students Association in Delhi, and ‘often had free access to Nehru’²³. When Kwame Nkrumah visited India, ‘Kakonge was the chief host’. After completing his MA in economics, ‘he was given a tour of Japan by the Quakers.’ On his return to Uganda, he joined the UNC under Obote and Abu Mayanja, and was soon made its Administrative Secretary. Later, when Obote split from the UNC and formed the UPC, Kakonge became its founder Secretary General.

But soon the UPC got caught up in an ideological struggle. Kakonge led the left wing of the party with strong anti-imperialist ideas from his student days in India. He sought to link with the trade union movement in the country, and encouraged a radical youth wing of the UPC – joined by, among others, Dani Wadada Nabudere, Kintu Musoke, Jaberu Bidandi Ssali, Kirunda Kivejinja and Raiti Omongin. To challenge this left wing tendency, a right-wing faction was slowly consolidating itself under another brilliant young man, Grace Ibingira (then only 33), who criticised Kakonge for trying to bring ‘communism’ to the country. This was a bit far-fetched, but it is true that

Kakonge was advocating socialism. In fact, he was probably the first Ugandan to put socialism on the country's agenda.

The showdown between the conflicting ideologies matured at the third Congress of the UPC in Gulu in April 1964. *The Gulu conference was an historic event; it casts a shadow to this day.* I give below some quotes from Appendix VIII titled '*The Fundamental Basis of*

23 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India after India got its independence in 1947. According to Kivejinja, under him India provided scholarships to African students, who were encouraged by Nehru to organise themselves politically to fight for Africa's independence

the Uganda Peoples' Congress' produced in Kivejinja's book cited above.²⁴

Our party in other words, has been the vanguard of mass struggle against colonialism and imperialism. ... The economic control of our country is not in the hands of our people and continues through the continued exploitation of our people by a handful of comprador capitalists and their agents. International monopoly capital, the father of imperialism and neo-colonialism, is the most dangerous enemy to our people (p 346).

'Standing for outright nationalism, the UPC has [waged] a persistent and resolute struggle against tribalism, feudalism, religious bigotry and political opportunists in all their manifestation. (p 349).

'At the Mbale conference, realising that the party is primarily to serve the interest of the common man who is only given the opportunity to share common misery provided by those exercising the economic control of our country, a resolution was passed cautioning the party leaders at all levels 'not to associate with big business by way of owning shares or being director therein as this can be used to retract our promises and hinder the realisation of the objectives of our party.' (p 354).

'The party's absolute reliance on the common people is due to the realisation that ... the masses (the common people) are the only absolute revolutionary forces within the society. The document adopted by the Gulu Conference called for 'the final participation of the workers, farmers and youth in the party.' (p 356).

We therefore say:

‘3. That the tasks of national reconstruction require the political consciousness of the masses of the people as a prerequisite, without which no real national reconstruction is possible.

2 Kivejinja, *loc.cit.* pp 346-358

‘4. That the biggest single enemy of the African people is imperialism which is led by the USA and their agents.

‘5. That we shall do everything in our power to propagate SOCIALISM as the ideology of the party’ (p 358).

In my view, the above, in general terms, still remains the situation in Uganda now 53 years down the road since the Gulu UPC conference.

Coming back to the conference, the showdown between the left and the right became personalised in the starkly opposed positions taken by Kakonge and Ibingira. In this struggle, Obote tried to play the middle man, but, more significantly, he thought that Kakonge was a rival to him (since both advocated socialism), and that Ibingira would be easier to control than Kakonge. So behind the scene, he colluded with Ibingira to oust Kakonge. At the last minute, the Conference was inundated by unaccredited delegates with the issue of new membership cards secretly distributed on the eve of the vote the following day. At the rigged election for Secretary General Ibingira won narrowly over Kakonge.

Let us continue the story from Kivejinja’s book: ‘The shattered Kakonge was offered a post at the UN as Uganda’s permanent representative! ... To Kakonge, his removal was the greatest act of betrayal ... he decided ... to seek refuge and solitude in Tanzania as the first political exile. The country’s reaction shocked Obote and his fellow conspirators. Kakonge was transformed overnight into a national hero and martyr ... the Secretary-General of the Breweries and Beverages Workers’ Union called the betrayal a blow to the aspirations of the workers.... The most uncompromising upsurge for Kakonge ... came from people in Lango, Obote’s home place, and West Nile, where Kakonge had become a living symbol of the party ... On Nyerere’s counsel, Kakonge returned from Tanzania.’²⁵

From hindsight it is clear that Obote misjudged the situation in 1964. As the new Secretary-General of the UPC, Ibingira began to create his own base in the Party. There was much talk about him receiving a lot of dollar bills from the United States. Mutesa now found in Ibingira a closer ideological ally than Obote. Ibingira created a new youth league under Matthew Rikikaire, the old youth league was disbanded, and its leader, Raiti Omongin, was expelled from the party. The remaining members of the left went underground and found in Dani Nabudere a new leader under the umbrella of a group he founded called the Uganda Vietnam Solidarity Committee to campaign against American imperialism.²⁶

The 1966 coup, the Common Man's Charter and the Move to the Left In September 1965, Daudi Ochieng, a KY supporter, made an allegation in the parliament that Nabudere had stated at a seminar that 'in a short period of time the revolutionary forces of Uganda would take over and line up capitalists like Ochieng and shoot them.'²⁷ From then on, things began to move fast. Ibingira was already plotting to oust Obote, and appeared to have the support of most MPs in the parliament (with the exception of Kakonge).²⁸ Obote moved first to forestall Ibingira's coup. On 22 February 1966, he arrested the Ibingira group. Two days later, he suspended the constitution and decided to rule by decree. Later, a new constitution was passed – the 1967 Constitution.²⁹ This led to the Lukiiko passing a resolution against Obote's coup, and demanding that the Uganda government must move outside Buganda. Obote sent the army under the command of Idi Amin to storm the Kabaka's palace; King Mutesa managed to escape and flew off to London.³⁰ Obote now moved to carry out a 'revolution', reminiscent of what Kakonge was trying in 1964. In fact, he borrowed some of the language from Kakonge's documents he presented at the Gulu Conference (see pp 28-29 above) before he was ousted. In 1968 Obote called the UPC party conference at which he introduced a number of documents. Document 1 was '*The Common Man's Charter*'. I was involved, together with two other colleagues from Makerere University – Gingyera Pinycwa and Yoweri Kyesimira – in the drafting of the *Common Man's Charter*. Obote was very keen to avoid the impression that he was influenced by Nyerere's concept of Socialism – Ujamaa. In a letter dated 1 October 1969, he wrote to me:

2 In his *Sowing the Mustard Seeds*, Yoweri Museveni writes: 'Some of us also belonged to the Uganda Vietnam Solidarity Committee which Nabudere had formed as a support and protest to oppose the American war of aggression against the Vietnamese people'. Museveni, loc. cit. p 47

2 Mpambara, S M 1970. *The Gold Allegation in Uganda*, Milton Obote Foundation, Kampala, p 90

2 Adoko, Akena. 1969. *Uganda Crisis*, Kampala, 1969, p 50

2 Obote's attorney general argued that the 1967 Constitution was valid because it was brought about by 'revolution'. The High Court agreed

30 For a more detailed account of this, see Adoko, loc. cit, pp 86-102

This document is being drafted under a shadow: the shadow of the Arusha Declaration. You will observe that Socialism is very important in the Arusha Declaration. It is considered within the UPC that allegations and accusations could be made that we are not original and are merely adopting the Arusha Declaration by changing the words. For this reason a view has been expressed to the effect that we should define the direction and the content of the move to the Left without even mentioning it... It is, however, agreed that at the back of the mind the moving spirit should be the basic principles of Socialism, but that in the practical aspects those principles should be tempered with the realities of Uganda.³¹

I quote this paragraph to underline that Kakonge's ouster at the UPC 1964 Conference was directed not at his ideas and ideology, but at the man himself. I will show later how Obote abandoned the goal of Socialism during his second term in office as President – 1980-85. By this time, Obote had become a mere shadow of himself, under the effective control of the army and the British (see pp 44-45 below). Getting back to 1968, Obote was, in my view, committed to Socialism. It was still in an inchoate, rudimentary, form and there was no clear strategy on how to implement the Common Man's Charter (CMC). Nonetheless, the CMC did put forward some of the major themes of a Socialist project. It declared, among other things, that:

31 See Appendix 1

- The resources of the country, material and human, would be exploited for the benefit of all the people of Uganda 'in accordance with the principles of Socialism'. However, fundamental rights, among them the protection of private property, were protected.
- The move to the Left was 'the creation of a new political culture and a new way of life, whereby the people as a whole – their welfare and their voice in

the national government and in other local authorities – are paramount. It is therefore anti-feudal and anti-capitalism.’

- There cannot be ‘two nations within the territorial boundaries of Uganda: one rich, educated, African in appearance but mentally foreign, and the other which constitutes the majority of the population, poor and illiterate.’
- ‘Government must provide social services to the people’, and increase ‘incomes per capita faster than the cost of living’.
- There would be ‘a new banking system’, and co-operative banks.
- Government, in future ‘would wish to see foreign investments coming into Uganda ... engaging in priority projects and not projects decided solely on the basis of profitability’.

These are principles that I would endorse even for today’s Uganda nearly half a century down the road.

A series of other documents besides the CMC followed:

- Document 2: The proposal for National Service under which all able-bodied youth would be brought into camps to undertake training and ‘national service’.
- Document 3: Unified Public Services with a unified salary structure for all government offices.
- Document 4: The Nakivubo Pronouncements (See below).
- Document 5: Electoral System: Every candidate ‘with a basic constituency’ in his ‘home area’ was to contest in ‘three other national constituencies’ – the so-called 1+3 system.

Among all these, the Nakivubo Pronouncements were the most significant. These were made on Labour Day, 1970 nationalising a number of enterprises with immediate effect: the government was assuming 60% control of 84 major industries, which included all oil companies, some industries, the Kilembe Mines, banks, plantations, insurance and credit institutions and the Kampala and district bus services. Compensation was to be paid within 15 years out of the earnings of the 60% share to be held by government.

It is these pronouncements that incensed the British most. On top of that Obote came out strongly against apartheid in South Africa. The then foreign minister said that Britain’s sale of arms to South Africa would be opposing ‘the liberation of the oppressed majorities in Southern Africa’ and

strengthening ‘the hands of the oppressors’. Mark Curtis pretty well summarised the British reaction to Obote’s radicalisation.

Eleven days before Amin’s coup on 25 January 1971, Britain’s High Commissioner in Kampala, Richard Slater, ran through the list of problems that Obote was causing Britain, concluding that Anglo- Ugandan relations were in a ‘deplorable’ state. Most prominent of these was Obote’s nationalisation measures and the threat to withdraw from the Commonwealth if Britain went ahead with resuming arms exports to apartheid South Africa, as it was then proposing to do... British officials were aware that Obote’s planned nationalisation was entirely legal but this was not the point – these measures were a direct challenge to British business interests.³²

Britain also found allies within Uganda – Mutesa (who was now in London) and his supporters in the country – the Ibingira faction within the UPC, and big business whose companies were nationalised

Mark Curtis ‘The rise of Idi Amin in Uganda, 1971-72’ February 13, 2007 <http://32markcurtis.info/2007/02/13/the-rise-of-idi-amin-in-uganda-1971-72/>

(especially the British banks). Israel, that had been training the Ugandan army, too was angry with Obote when in 1968 Uganda voted in the United Nations for GA resolution 242 demanding that Israel withdraw from the occupied Arab lands. It was, as they say, ‘a perfect storm’.

Britain and Israel now moved fast. Counting on Amin (then close to the Israeli military attaché, Bar Lev), the plot for Obote’s overthrow was hatched. By getting Amin to overthrow Kabaka’s rule in Buganda, Obote had set a precedent that Amin – secure that he had support of the Baganda, the British and Israel – was quick to seize power in January 1971.

Amin’s coming to power was met with jubilation in many parts of Uganda – especially in Buganda. But the coup brought fear and panic among the people in the North generally – especially within the higher echelons of the military. The radical wing of the student body – the National Union of Students of Uganda (NUSU) under the leadership of Ruhukana Rugunda – confronted the army by issuing a statement challenging the coup. The statement was drafted at my home in Makerere. (NUSU had chosen me as its staff representative).

Rugunda and I then went to Radio Uganda seeking to issue the statement, only to be stopped at the gate where two friendly soldiers advised us to go where we came from, or else the soldiers who had taken over the radio station would not hesitate to put bullets through us!

The army in politics

Following the colonial takeover in the 1880s, the British had disbanded all the existing defence systems of the various kingdoms of Uganda, and had created their own army – the King’s African Rifles (KAR). Ugandan soldiers were deployed (like all colonial armies) to fight for Britain in the two World Wars. The army was also used to smash all internal resistance to the colonial rule.

At independence, on 9 October 1962, the KAR was rechristened as Uganda Rifles without transforming it. It was still the colonial army. On 22 January 1964, soldiers of the 1st Battalion in Jinja mutinied and demanded for a pay rise and Africanisation of the officer corps. Obote went to the British for help. The British sent soldiers from the Scots Guards to deal with the mutiny. Following the mutiny, Obote, fearful of internal opposition, moved the army headquarters from Jinja to Kampala. He also created a secret police force, the General Service Unit (GSU) to bolster security. Most GSU employees guarded government offices in and around Kampala. When British training programs ended, Israel started training Uganda’s army, air force, and GSU personnel. When Congolese aircraft bombed the West Nile villages of Paidha and Goli on 13 February 1965, Obote again increased the military and doubled the army’s size to more than 4,500. Shortly after February 1966, Amin was appointed Chief of the Army.

In 1970, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) assessed that the Ugandan armed forces consisted of 6,250 with two brigade groups, each of two battalions, plus an independent infantry battalion, with some Ferret armoured cars, and BTR-40 and BTR-152 armoured personnel carriers, plus an air arm of 450 with 12 Fouga Magister armed jet trainers, and seven MiG-15s and MiG-17s.³³

The most important change in 1970 was when Obote placed the army under the command of Idi Amin. As narrated above, in January 1971, Amin – with

the help of Britain and Israel, and support of certain domestic forces – ousted Obote and took over the rein of the neocolony.

Phase Two: Neo-colonialism under Amin (1971-1979) A petty bourgeois or a lumpen-militariat ?

For Mahmood Mamdani the causes behind the coup were domestic. It took place because the ‘African petty bourgeoisie’ had infiltrated the army and used it to carry out their coup and to realise the resolution of their principal contradiction against the Asian ‘commercial bourgeoisie’.³⁴ For Ali Mazrui the coup could be explained in terms of ‘the military-agrarian complex’ (an adaption from Eisenhower’s military-industrial complex). It was ‘a basic revolution’ carried out by the ‘lumpen-militariat’. Amin’s coup, he said, had ‘vindicated and contradicted’ Marx. Mazrui was optimistic that under Amin the revolution in Uganda would finally succeed. For him, in a country like Uganda, the peasantry could not be expected to seize power. Nor could the workers, ‘who were bullied into discipline by the Obote regime’. With both these classes out of the way, the ‘basic revolution’ of the lumpen-militariat ought to be applauded by socialists. He concluded: ‘Yet the most painful of all leftist paradoxes will come when the performance of Africa’s lumpen-militariat is gradually improved through the stabilising influence of its own embourgeoisment’.³⁵

33 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uganda_People%27s_Defence_Force

In contrast to Mazrui and Mamdani, the empire was clear. The *Times* of London declared: ‘The news of the coup d’etat comes as a surprise only because it has been so long delayed ...the [Obote] regime was no longer worth protecting’ (please note!), *since the regime was ‘hostile to British interests, contemptuous of the Europeans, as oppressive as Dr Nkrumah’s [regime], ethnically divisive and patently so unpopular’*.³⁶

The Economy: Aminomics

Amin knew nothing about the economy or economic planning. So the Ministry of Economic Development and Planning, advised by the IMF, drew up the *Third Five-Year Development plan, 1971/2 – 1975/6*.³⁷

Under it, the output of the main cash crops, coffee and cotton, and other crops and livestock was to be increased. Rural credit was to be continued for short-term credits through the Uganda Co-operative Development Bank. For medium term credit a new bank, the Uganda Development Bank (UDB) was to be established. For industry, it was planned to increase overall output in the manufacturing sector from 5.9% at the end of 1970 to 7.5% by 1976 – including crop processing, food processing, textiles, construction, and fresh mineral investigations.

³ See Nabudere, *loc. cit.* Ibid, p 283

³ Ibid, p 284-5

³ Quoted in Nabudere, *loc. cit.* p 288. Italics added.

³ Government of Uganda, *The Third Five-Year Development plan, Entebbe, 1972*

To restore investor confidence (until a new guideline was issued), the following applied:

- A rate of company taxation (40% of profit);
- Allowance of 120% of actual investment expenditure chargeable

against gross income;

- The provision of ‘approved enterprise status’ in accordance with the industrial charter and Foreign Investment Act;
- The provision of vocational training for skilled and semi-skilled labour.

In August 1972, Amin launched the so-called ‘economic war’ against the Asians in Uganda, giving them 90 days within which to leave Uganda, and directing that their properties be confiscated. The British monopoly banks immediately announced that all the properties under mortgage belonged to them, not to the Asians. Although the ownership of these assets remained unclear until 1979 (when the UNLF came to power – see below), many of the properties were either sold or simply given away to soldiers in a move that was soon dubbed by the media as the ‘*Mafuta Mingi*’ (Much Fat) operation.

Very soon the economy literally came to a halt. Those who took over shops ran out of supplies for lack of management and pilfering. Peasant production dropped for lack of implements – ox ploughs, tractors, fertilisers, insecticides and even hoes – and cash crops financing. So the peasants reverted to production for self-survival, and to grow just enough to pay for

taxes and fees for their children in whatever schools remained still on the ground. With no sugar production, the factories in Lugazi and Kakira ground to a halt, the peasants reverting instead to production of food for consumption. Cement factories at Tororo and Fort Portal collapsed from lack of maintenance and neglect.

Only coffee, since it is a perennial crop, still remained in some kind of miracle vibrancy. Peasants collected coffee and then transported it in vehicles or on bicycles or other make-shift devices across the borders – mostly to Kenya – to sell for cash at a third of its real price. So the peasants paid a high price to raise basic cash for survival, whilst middlemen and branches of monopoly banks on the border with Kenya thrived. But the government needed coffee for its own finances, and so Amin appointed his mercenary and political adviser – the Englishman Bob Astles – to take all necessary steps to stop smuggling, including shooting smugglers on sight. That did not help Uganda's economy very much. Most of the foreign currency earned from coffee sold by parastatals went for purchasing weapons and imports for the army. The so-called 'whisky runs' to Stansted Airport in England was well known outside even official circles. The foreign exchange bought not only planeloads of small arms (to suppress the peasant rebellions) but also to purchase expensive Scotch whisky, transistor radios, gold Rolex wristwatches, and other luxury items for Amin's army officers.

Such was the fate of the 'African petty bourgeoisie' that, according to Mamdani, had 'infiltrated the army' to carry out the coup and resolve its 'principal contradiction' against the Asian 'commercial bourgeoisie'. Neither could Mazrui rejoice, because the 'lumpenmilitariat' who, in his vision, would gradually improve the economy 'through the stabilising influence of its own embourgeoisment', and 'put Marxists to shame' were bankrupt!

Very soon Amin's treasury was also bankrupt. So he turned to his friends in Israel to raise a loan, but was flatly refused. This is what started Amin's so-called 'anti-Semitism' – a word Amin had neither known nor put in practice; he only wanted some money, that's all. He had no options left but to turn to Libya and Saudi Arabia. He quickly expelled the remaining Israeli advisers,

and discovered his ‘true identity’ as a Muslim. His fellow Muslims – especially those who had connections in the army – began the new (to use Mamdani’s description of this class) ‘commercial bourgeoisie’. People adopted Muslim names to get into the new game. With Saudi blessings, Amin ordered the reconstruction of the famous Kibuli Mosque. With Gaddafi’s support, he increased the size of the army, including some 3,000 troops from Libya. When the Tanzanian army attacked Uganda after Amin had invaded the Kagera Basin in Tanzania, these poor Libyan soldiers found themselves in the front line ‘defending’ Amin, whilst Amin was taking the last plane out to Libya.

The army and politics under Amin

Although Amin’s coup against Obote in January 1971 did not take Britain or Israel by surprise – because they were the ones who actually engineered it – it sent shockwaves through the country. Amin moved immediately and slaughtered his enemies within the army, mostly pro-Obote officers and soldiers, most of them Acholi and Langi. Over the period of his eight years of brutal rule, he killed thousands

– estimates vary from 100,000 to 500,000; some say even more.

For Amin there was no separation between the army and politics. They were the same. By 1977 the army had grown to 21,000 personnel, more than twice the 1971 level. Obote’s General Services Unit (GSU) was disbanded and replaced by the State Research Bureau (SRB). The SRB at Nakasero became the scene of torture and executions over his rule. With Saudi and Libyan money, Amin enlarged the army. In 1977 (according to the IISS), the army consisted of 20,000 land personnel with 35 T-34, T-55, and M-4 Sherman medium tanks, and a 1,000 strong air force with 21 MiG-21 and 10 MiG-17 combat aircraft. In 1976, Israel attacked Uganda – called ‘Operation Entebbe’

– and destroyed 12 MiG-21s and three MiG-17s. In 1978, there were several mutinies in the army. Amin claimed that President Nyerere was the cause of the mutinies. In October 1978, he sent troops still loyal to him against the mutineers, many of whom fled across the Tanzanian border. He then attacked the Kagera Basin across the border. Tanzania retaliated, and Amin’s army collapsed like a pack of cards. Whatever was left of the tanks and military

aircraft were deployed by the Tanzanian forces. Amin was routed, and escaped to the north ending up in Saudi Arabia.

After the Uganda-Tanzania War, Amin's army dispersed into the woods and the mountains continuing their sporadic attacks on surrounding villages. The Tanzanian People's Defence Force (TPDF) took control of the country, and in April 1979 installed a transitional government under the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF).

Phase three: The UNLF period (April 1979 - April 1980). Following the legacy of I K Musazi and John Kakonge This period (April 1979 to April 1980) was an extraordinary period, although it lasted for only a year. To understand this period one has to go back to the legacy left behind by I K Musazi and John Kakonge. Here is a brief synopsis of what we wrote earlier.

Musazi was a nationalist, par excellence. He was one of the founders and chief organiser of Bana ba Kintu, created on 2 May 1938. He also founded the Uganda African Farmers Union (UAFU) in 1947, and established for the first time a link between the peasants, workers, traders and intellectual petty bourgeoisie forming an alliance of forces of a national democratic movement against colonialism, and the first political organisation whose demands went beyond Buganda.

John Kakonge was a socialist and pan-Africanist. He laid out the first socialist strategy for Uganda preceding the fateful UPC Gulu conference in 1964, where he was marginalised by Obote and replaced by Ibingira as UPC's Secretary-General. His ideological contribution was outstanding. His '*The Fundamental Basis of the Uganda Peoples' Congress*' laid out the 'fundamentals' that remain generally valid to this day, over 50 years down the road. Let me repeat three of the key principles enshrined in these 'fundamentals':

- 'That the tasks of national reconstruction require the political

consciousness of the masses of the people as a prerequisite, without which no real national reconstruction is possible.

- 'That the biggest single enemy of the African people is imperialism which is led by the USA and their agents.

- ‘That we shall do everything in our power to propagate SOCIALISM as the ideology of the party’.

Dani Wadada Nabudere

Nabudere brought forward the legacy of both Musazi and Kakonge to our times. Born on December 15, 1932 in Bugisu, Eastern Uganda, Nabudere was a world-class African Marxist revolutionary, a Ugandan patriot, a scholarly and erudite academic, and a shrewd politician. All these blended in him holistically making him a towering, formidable, figure in any gathering of intellectuals or politicians –local or global. He was an extraordinary man, a visionary; in many ways even a prophet, with a three-dimensional view of the world which few mortals possess. Most of us are two-dimensional with at the most short term and a medium term perspectives. Few have the capacity to look beyond the present. He had a very long foresight, and many of his predictions, on for example, the collapse of the Soviet Union (made well before the fall of the Berlin Wall), and the collapse of the capitalist-financial system (made in a book published in 1980) came true when most of us could not even see the making of crises in these two global systems of the twentieth century.

He attended the Aggrey Memorial School founded by Musazi and Bana ba Kintu, after which he joined Uganda Post Office as a postal clerk posted in Moroto in Karamoja District. Through largely correspondence courses he managed, finally, to qualify as a barrister-in-law at Lincoln’s Inn in England. I first met him in London, where he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Uganda Students’ Association (UGASA) together with Eteker Ejalu, Chango Machyo and Edward Rugumayo. I joined the committee in 1961. We were engaged in helping to raise the political consciousness of young Ugandans like ourselves studying or working in the UK and in Europe. One of our activities was to lobby the British parliamentarians for Uganda’s independence.

Dani and I were close comrades from 1961 to his death on 9 November 2011. This is what Professor David Simon wrote on Dani’s obituary:

Dani was a true polymath: an accomplished academic, lawyer, politician and government minister – not only a towering figure in Uganda but widely in East and southern Africa and Europe. He was one of the last of the liberation

struggle leaders, an enthusiastic teacher, a complex character, a great raconteur and a good friend. His departure from the stage of life will be keenly felt.³⁸

Nabudere was one of those who were in the Kakonge-led youth wing of the UPC at the 1964 Gulu conference, which we discussed earlier. We also discussed how the organisation he founded in support of the people of Vietnam in their struggle against American imperialism put him into trouble on trumped up charges by the right wing of the party that he was behind an imminent revolution in Uganda. In 1970 Obote put him into prison, from which he was rescued by Idi Amin when the latter took power in January 1971. Amin appointed him to the post of Chairman of the Board of Directors of the East African Railways Corporation. However, Nabudere resigned in 1972 after serving less than a year, in protest to the crimes committed by the military regime, and took refuge in Dar es Salaam at the University of Dar es Salaam, where I joined him in 1973 and Omwony-Ojwok later in 1976.

Prelude to the Moshi Conference

Amin's invasion of the Kagera Basin in Tanzania 28 October 1978 had stirred up events of historic significance. Tanzania mobilised its army – Tanzania Peoples Defence Force (TPDF) – to repulse the attack. A number of Ugandan armed groups (some of which were already within Uganda) joined the TPDF.³⁹ But it was the TPDF that effectively removed Amin from power – the Ugandans could not have done it on their own.

3 Review of African Political Economy Vol. 39, No. 132, June 2012, 343-344

In Dar es Salaam, in the meantime, Obote – encouraged by Nyerere – called a meeting of Ugandans to plan for the follow-up to the end of the Amin regime. Among them were Dani Nabudere and Omwony Ojwok, but a number of other groups refused to join the meeting. Nabudere and Omwony came out of the meeting dissatisfied with the way Obote was handling the meeting, more or less assuming that the next government would be formed by the UPC. They reported this to us (among them me and others), and we decided to form the *Ad Hoc Committee for the Promotion of Unity among Ugandans*. At its first meeting we had representation from FRONASA (led by Yoweri Museveni), the UNM branch in Tanzania, the Changombe Group in Dar es Salaam (led by Mahmood Mamdani). The objective of the Ad Hoc

Committee was to form ‘a nationally united front to continue the struggle in our country’. Its ‘Appeal’ titled, ‘Appeal to All Ugandans’ was widely distributed to Ugandan groups in the diaspora - including Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, the UK and the USA.

Museveni was by this time already in Uganda organising his FRONASA forces on the ground. So he never personally attended the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee. Whenever he came to Dar he preferred to talk with his contacts in the Tanzanian government and Obote in order, mainly, to talk about ‘power sharing’ once Amin was overthrown.

Mamdani, on the other hand, was in Dar. He and some of his friends from the Changombe Group attended our meetings. They tried to persuade the Ad Hoc Committee that we should first create ‘the unity of the left’, support those groups that had ‘fighting forces’ within

3 These included Kikoosi Maalum, led by General Tito Okello and Brigadier Oyite Ojok; FRONASA (Front for National Salvation) led by Yoweri Museveni; Save Uganda Movement (SUM) led by Akena p’Ojok and Yona Kanyomozi; and Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM) led by Andrew Kayiira

Uganda, such as UPC and Fronasa, and ensure that the ‘reactionaries’ (those who supported the Kabaka and the ‘petty and commercial bourgeoisie’) do not become ‘the ruling class’ of Uganda. We, of course, could not accept this line (see chapter 9 on the Dar es Salaam Debates). For us, this question could not be answered in general terms. It was a concrete question; alliances cannot be predetermined in abstraction of historical and conjunctural political circumstances. We also could not agree that we should first create ‘the unity of the left’, and support those groups that had ‘fighting forces’ within Uganda. In contrast, we took a different line. Outside of the Museveni and Mamdani factions in the Ad Hoc Committee we decided to unite with ALL forces that could be united against the regime of Amin, which, we argued, was still the regime of imperialism.⁴⁰

There was another group in Nairobi – the *Nairobi Discussion Group* – chaired by Professor Tarsis Kabwegyere. Taking advantage of a wedding party the Group had invited a number of people to Nairobi to discuss the aftermath of the invasion by Amin, including our Ad Hoc Committee and the UPC-aligned groups. I was asked by the Ad Hoc Committee to represent it at

the meeting. (I knew Kabwegyere well from Makerere days and had worked closely with him).

There were about forty of us, among them representatives from the UPC, the Uganda Human Rights Group (UK), Uganda National Organisation (UNO), and the Uganda Freedom Union (USA). During the discussions, the UPC-aligned compatriots challenged me. At the end, however, Kabwegyere and I were able to sway the meeting to our side. We argued that irrespective of our ideologies, we must bring together all Ugandan patriotic movements, including the ‘monarchists’ (whom the Changombe Group had dismissed as ‘reactionaries’).

40 Later, when Museveni seized power from Obote in 1985, Mamdani and the Changombe Group found to their surprise that Museveni did not regard them as part of the ‘revolutionaries’ and they soon found themselves in the cold

At the time, two American journalists – Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey – were covering the story.⁴¹ They claimed to be Marxists and were clearly sympathetic to the line of the Changombe Group. I let them tell the story:

In Kenya the Nairobi Discussion Group, which had sent a letter to Nyerere saying it was solidly behind the unity movement being led by Obote switched its support to the Ad Hoc Committee when it learnt from Yash Tandon that Ugandans in Tanzania were not all supporting Obote’s organisation. Only the pro-Obote Uganda Liberation Group (Zambia) and Obote’s supporters in Nairobi opposed the Ad Hoc Committee’s call for unity conference.⁴²

Avirgan and Honey then give a list of people who were at the Nairobi meeting representing ‘a broad spectrum of political views ranging from Marxist Tandon to social democrat George Kanyeihamba to highly conservative Lutakome Kayiira’. The journalists continue with the story:

They [the participants at the Nairobi meeting] passed a resolution stating that despite their ‘differences and diversity’, they agreed to three common objectives:

i) The removal of the Amin regime and the system ii) The establishment of democratic processes in Uganda iii) The reestablishment of national independence of our country.

I might add here that the latter two objectives were inserted at my insistence. I had argued that the first objective was necessary – and it was all that the groups with fighting forces on the ground in Uganda accompanying the Tanzanian troops, such as the UPC and Fronasa wanted – but it was not enough. We needed to go beyond the removal of Amin from power. *If no agreement was reached beforehand on the necessity of building democratic structures, and also to affirm*

1 Avirgan, Tony and Martha Honey (1982), *War in Uganda: The Legacy of Idi Amin*, USA: Lawrence Hill & Co; London: Zed Press

2 Ibid, p 98

the need to ensure the ‘national independence’ of Uganda, then the groups with armed forces would get on to each other’s throats, and it would become a struggle for power between them. This argument was also consistent with the position we had been maintaining in the Ad Hoc Committee. The significance of this point became clear later when, in March 1979 at the Moshi Unity Conference, the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) was formed to take over the administration of the country from Tanzania.

Further down in their book – ‘*War in Uganda*’ – Avirgan and Honey explain the basis of the split between what they called the NabudereOjwok group and the Changömbe group.

This split within the Ad Hoc Committee reflected a long standing debate among the University of Dar es Salaam Marxists as to how best to organise a resistance movement. Nabudere postulated that in a neo-colonial state the main enemy was imperialism, not internal ‘petty-bourgeois’ national elements... In contrast, Mahmood Mamdani and others over the years had taken the more Leninist (sic!) line that it was important to build a progressive ‘vanguard’ that would correctly guide the course of the struggle. Further, they argued, the struggle must be waged on two fronts: against both imperialism and its allies within the neo-colony. Now these debates had moved, for the first time, from the seminar room to the arena of real political struggle.⁴³

I doubt if Mamdani might have phrased it quite this way. That only he can decide. Nonetheless, the reference to Mamdani as taking ‘the more Leninist

line' is gratuitous and might seem a bit of flattery. In any case, the issue was not who is more 'Leninist' than the other! The point rather was *that the 'vanguard' issue had never featured in the 'debate'*. And in any case, this was not the time to raise it. We were faced with an invasion of Tanzania by Uganda, and Nyerere was waiting for a political process to yield a structure of an interim government to which he could transfer power. *We argued that to insist at this point for a 'unity of the left' would scuttle the process of trying to unite with all democratic forces arraigned against Amin. And, in any case, which 'left' was the Changombe group talking about?* If by 'left' was meant the alliance between the UPC, FRONASA, and the Changòmbè group, then this was quite absurd. But even more importantly, to exclude all 'reactionary' groups from a democratic conference would have been divisive of national unity, which is what was needed in that hour as the Tanzanian forces were waiting at Mpigi to decide whether to march into Kampala.

3 Ibid p 101

I returned to Dar es Salaam with a mandate for our Ad Hoc Committee – together with the Nairobi Discussion Group – to hold the unity conference in Tanzania. The Ad Hoc Committee mutated into the Dar es Salaam Negotiating Committee for Democratic Unity.

The Moshi Unity Conference

The Moshi conference was facilitated by the Tanzanian Government. With the mandate from Nairobi, Nabudere approached President Nyerere with the Nairobi proposal, and Nyerere accepted the plan of inviting Ugandans in the Diaspora to attend a unity meeting. The Nairobi Discussion Group was tasked with sending out invitations to as many groups as possible. In all, over thirty organisations were invited; most of them sent delegates. The meeting took place in Moshi from 23 to 25 March, 1979 at the Police Training College. A total of 77 delegates representing 21 organisations, including 10 soldiers and three 'Special Delegates' invited by the Government of Tanzania (including Y K Lule), attended the Conference.⁴⁴

The Conference was chaired by Semei Nyanzi. Tanzanian Foreign Minister Benjamin Mkapa addressed the conference stating that Tanzania had no claim over any Ugandan territory, and that it was the responsibility of Ugandans to form their own government after the overthrow of Amin. After the preliminaries were over I was asked by the Chairman to address the issue of

credentials (The Nairobi Group had appointed me to head the Credentials Committee). As I was about to speak, I was heckled by members of the UPC groups saying that ‘as an Asian’ I had no right ‘to interfere in Uganda’s affairs’. Under the Chairman’s protection, I went on to explain the criteria by which the delegates were accredited to the Conference.⁴⁵

44 It was actually the British that ‘encouraged’ Nyerere to invite Lule. Britain had threatened to bring a resolution in the Security Council of the United Nations to denounce Tanzania’s ‘aggression’ against Uganda, but agreed not to push it if Nyerere would invite Lule to the Moshi Conference. I might add that Lule was in Arusha only on the last day of the Conference, and never participated in its deliberations. As later events were to show, Lule played his part as the agent of the British in the months that followed the installation of the UNLF interim government in Uganda

As expected, the first day was a display of a lot of belligerence between the various groups. The stakes were high. The day started badly with the two pro-UPC groups marching out of the meeting in anger. The afternoon was spent by among others Nabudere to persuade them to return to the conference. Later that day they did, welcomed by the rest of us with a warm applause. This is the origin of the phrase ‘Moshi Spirit’.

I recount this episode to underline that whatever our differences, we have to meet and talk to resolve what I have earlier described as ‘secondary contradictions’ amongst us. The primary contradiction is with the Imperial system. The ‘Moshi Spirit’ must be kept alive.

45 A brief autobiography might be in order here. My parents came to Uganda in the 1930s from India. I was born in 1939 in the village of Kaberamaido in a mud and grass-thatched hut, and since there was no midwife, my mother (then 26) cut my umbilical cord and nursed me. My father was away on business; he was a small time trader, later to become a transporter between Soroti and Moroto. I spent my childhood in Soroti and Moroto, and later in Mbale where I completed secondary education. After a small spell at the University of Nairobi (then still a college), I went to the UK in 1958. I graduated with a degree in Economics at the London School of Economics (LSE). At independence, I acquired Ugandan nationality. From 1964 to 1970 I taught at Makerere. After expulsion in 1971, I taught at the LSE in 1971-2, but returned to East Africa to teach at the University of Dar es Salaam from 1973 to 1979, and to join the struggle against Amin and Imperialism

Following a proposal by the Negotiating Committee for Democratic Unity led by Nabudere, the Conference adopted a resolution to create the UNLF ‘government in transition’ as a ‘national front’. Two organs of the Front were created – the National Consultative Council (NCC) as the supreme organ and the National Executive Committee (NEC) as the Front’s executive arm. Y K

Lule was elected chairman of the NEC by consensus. Three Commissions of the NEC were set up – the Military (under Paulo Muwanga of the UPC-Obote); the Political and Diplomatic Commission, (under Dani Nabudere); and Finance and Administration Commission (under Semei Nyanzi). Rugumayo was elected as Chairman of the NCC, Omwony Ojwok as NCC's Secretary.

I will not go into a lengthy narrative, but one episode is worth recalling. When the military command was created, Museveni was not present. Later he complained to President Nyerere, who called Nabudere saying a place must be found for him in the UNLF structure. So Nabudere went to Lule asking him to respond to Nyerere's advice and bring Museveni into the UNLF structure. Lule replied that Museveni was 'Nyerere's problem', and Nabudere corrected him to say that Museveni was also our problem. Thus, Museveni became the Deputy Chairman of the Military Commission.

The UNLF in power

The UNLF forces were greeted by the people with mammoth rallies. The Chairman of the NEC, Lule, became the interim President. The NCC established itself with Rugumayo as its chairman and OmwonyOjwok as its Secretary ... and I as an NCC backbencher. Nabudere was in the Cabinet as Minister of Justice, but for him his position as Commissioner of the Political and Diplomatic Commission (PDC) was more important. Soon the four of us (Nabudere, Rugumayo, Omwony-Ojwok and I) came to be known as the 'the Gang of Four'. Again, I will not go into the details, limiting myself to comment on some of the politically more significant issues.

Nabudere started immediately on the task of mobilising the people behind the four principles of the UNLF – Unity, Democracy, National Independence and Social Progress (UDNIS). He used to organise '*barazas*' practically all over the country along with members of his Commission – sometimes tugging me along along as well as Rugumayo and Omwony-Ojwok. The Commission's task was to explain the importance of maintaining the unity of Uganda against forces of intrusion from outside; the importance of democracy – denied to the common people since before independence; explain the significance of the 'National Question' (NQ) – the need to be vigilant to protect the hard won national independence; and to underscore the principle that all this was in vain if it did not translate into social progress.

For us who came with the ‘Moshi spirit’ the freedom of speech and of the press was an important bulwark against dictatorship. On one occasion, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Paulo Muwanga, detained some journalists, and I questioned him in a meeting of the NCC. Muwanga responded ‘explaining’ the detention, but soon the journalists were released. However, this did not stop Muwanga’s actions against free speech and media.

Despite obstacles UDNIS provided the emblematic principles of UNLF. Whilst the common people were excited about UDNIS, the top leadership of UNLF’s ‘interim Government’ had no interest in these principles. Very soon, President Lule declared that he did not draw his authority from the Moshi Conference but from the September 1967 Constitution drawn during Obote I period that gave the president considerable powers – an act that was both ironic and opportunistic. He also decided that the NCC had no function, relying on a coterie of close friends to guide him. He appointed a 17-man cabinet of ‘men of substance’ – linked with British finance capital. Without consulting the NCC or the Chairman of the Political and Diplomatic Commission (Nabudere), he invited the Commonwealth Secretariat (CS) to Uganda to study how Uganda’s economy might be rehabilitated. The report of the CS was endorsed by the World Bank. Here then, right within the heart of the state, was an agent of the Empire.

Undeterred, the NCC and the Political and Diplomatic Commission pursued the Moshi agenda. The only way to counter state power was to help the common people work towards a new dispensation whose doors the UNLF had opened. The Commission launched a countrywide *mayumba kumi* (ten houses) program of mobilisation, borrowing from the experience of Tanzania. I was part of that program. It was quite amazing to see that without any financial support from Lule’s government we were able to travel throughout the country with the help of transport and accommodation freely provided by the *wananchi* (the common people).

The tension between Lule and the NCC reached a point where it was either one or the other – either the agent of the Empire or the agent of the common people. On 19 June 1979, an NCC member, Paulo Wangoola moved a motion of no confidence in Lule’s government. I seconded the motion. We met at the state house in Entebbe, surrounded by the TPDF forces. It was a marathon

ten-hour session. Lule's supporters spoke strongly in his favour arguing that the Moshi Conference was now a dead letter, outdone by events in the country; that as the 'Head of State' Lule had an obligation to run the country under the 1967 Constitution. Following the debate the motion was put to vote. Lule lost by a margin of 18 for the motion and 14 against.

It was a non-violent, democratic removal of Lule from office, after 68 days in power. The NCC went on to elect Godfrey Binaisa to take over as President. Lule accepted the decision, and wished the new government well. However, when a BBC correspondent interviewed him, he maintained that he was still President. This caused much confusion. His supporters marched in the streets of Kampala branding the slogan 'No Lule, No Work'. The Political and Diplomatic Commission quickly issued a statement explaining why Lule had to go. Museveni was particularly active, daring to face the angry crowds in Kampala in an open jeep explaining why Lule was removed.

Let us be clear about who Lule was. He personalised a bigger class interest – that of the '*Mafuta Mingis*' (rich millionaires), who saw Nabudere and the Gang of Four as a threat – trying to bring *Ujamaa*- style socialism into Uganda. But the *Mafuta Mingis* were not the only problem. Another daunting problem was the cult of militarism that had infused the body politic of Uganda. Here I quote Rugumayo from his (yet to be published) autobiography: *Why do fireflies glow?*

Several challenges lay ahead. These included ... lurking behind the scenes, that manipulator and destroyer of democratic forces in the neo-colonies – imperialism. The latter manifested itself most starkly in the dark forces of Aminism and, to compound the matter even more, there were nascent forces of militarism, especially in UNLA and FRONASA and, to a lesser extent, in the original NCC.

Military coup against the UNLF

Paulo Muwanga (of UPC-Obote) was elected at Moshi as the Chairman of the Military Commission, and, after the intervention of Nyerere and Nabudere, Museveni (of FRONASA) was brought in as Deputy Chairman. They were rivals, vying for power. On 25 March 1980, Binaisa declared that national elections would be held in December under 'the umbrella of the UNLF.' He himself, however, had no political base, and soon the military

factions in the UNLF turned against him. In his first cabinet reshuffle, Binaisa removed Museveni as minister of defence, and UPC's Brigadier Oyite Ojok as chief of staff. This intensified the rivalry between UPC-Obote and FRONASA, but ironically, this also brought the two together to form an alliance of convenience to overthrow the UNLF government.

One evening, Nyerere's political commissar, Shekilango, came to my room in the Nile Mansions to warn me that Muwanga and Museveni were plotting a coup. (I later learnt that he had also warned the other three members of the Gang of Four). He had said that he was going to Dar es Salaam to alert Nyerere and persuade him not to support the coup, and stick with the agreement between him and the UNLF government, which was to support the UNLF against any coup attempt. The next day he took the flight. As the plane reached Monduli hills near Arusha there was a mid-air explosion and the plane crashed in flames, killing all.

On 12 May, 1980, the Military Commission removed Binaisa from power, accusing the 'Gang of Four' of 'hijacking the (Moshi) Conference from the military plane to the political plane'.⁴⁶

What lessons might be learnt from this experience of the one year when the UNLF was 'in power'?

Theory is fine; practice is far more complex. Classes exist, of course. But there are other identities that surface during active struggles – such as gender, ethnic, religious, regional, language, etc. How to resolve these contradictions while resisting the Empire is one of the most difficult challenges. It is easy to be wise in retrospect with the knowledge of hindsight, but when you are on the ground facing these contradictions, you need a clear ideology, a vanguard party with skills to mobilise the masses, and sacrifices by the leadership. This is what we learnt during our short rule as UNLF. We learnt that this is easier said than done.

Phase Four: The Obote II period (1980-1985)

There is very little to write about this what I regard as one of the saddest period in Uganda's history – five wasted years of violence, corruption and degeneration.

The UNLF government stayed in power for one year, shielded by Tanzanian army. But the same army turned against the UNLF, when it was overthrown by a military coup led by the joint forces of Obote and Museveni. On the eve of the coup, Rugumayo and Omwony Ojwok had flown to Arusha to meet with Nyerere to remind him of the agreement he had with the UNLF to defend it against possible takeovers by the military. I think Nyerere could have, and should have, defended the UNLF, but he chose not to. From hindsight I can understand, though not necessarily defend his decision. Nyerere was caught up in a difficult situation with Obote still holed up in Dar es Salaam, and the enormous burden of sustaining the army in Uganda. He had to find a way of bringing Obote back to Uganda.

See, Nabudere, *op. cit.* p 344

From hindsight it is clear that Obote had made peace with the British whilst he was still in Dar es Salaam. Obote was no longer the radical nationalist that he was in the first period of his rule. For six months (May - November 1980) the army under the effective control of the Oyite Ojok ran the country preparing for Obote's return. In December 1980, the UPC won a majority in an election for parliament, marred by violence and blatant irregularities, which was clearly rigged, but a team of Commonwealth observers pronounced it as 'free and fair' no doubt with the blessings of the British government.

Evidently, Obote had also made contacts with the World Bank and the IMF whilst he was in Dar es Salaam. With the support of the IMF and other donors, Obote tried to reconstruct the economy. With DP agreeing to function in the parliament as 'loyal opposition' Obote must have thought that Museveni too would come around. He had never thought that Museveni would go to the bushes to fight a guerrilla war. From here on all efforts of Obote and his army were focused on defeating Museveni.⁴⁷

The economy, even with the support of the IMF and aid from external donors, was hostage to the five years of relentless guerrilla war unleashed by the National Resistance Movement (NRM). As a result, the economy was effectively run by the '*Mafuta Mingi*' businessmen ⁴⁷ One of the most informative and extraordinary stories of how Museveni won the

guerrilla war is narrated by him in his *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, pp 124-177.

who had spawned under Amin and had now resurrected themselves and ran a profitable black market economy. Predictably, the peasants went back to food production and minimal commodity production to feed their families and raise enough cash to pay school fees, just as in the days of Amin. Inflation and corruption made life difficult even for the bureaucracy.

The poorly paid soldiers – mostly from the North (Acholi and Lango) – survived through ravaging the villages and urban markets. It was only a matter of time before the Acholi and Langi factions split along tribal lines. Museveni was quick to take advantage of this and build an alliance with the Acholi commander, Tito Okello. On 27 July 1985, the Acholi troops took Kampala and overthrew Obote, who fled, via Kenya, to Zambia where he remained a disillusioned man until his death in South Africa in October 2005.

In the meantime, whilst Okello was making contacts with western countries for their support, Museveni reached out to Libya (which had earlier supported Amin) to provide military support. Gaddafi agreed to support not only the NRM but also Andrew Kayiira's Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM) in an effort to unite the two. But the NRM managed to get its share of weapons, without an alliance with the UFM. Museveni also contacted British politicians, including Richard Luce who was Minister of State for Overseas Development.⁴⁸

In the end, Museveni was able to persuade Nyerere to support him, who did so with 10,000 rifles and one million rounds of ammunition. Gaddafi did so too with 800,000 rounds of ammunition and 800 rifles parachuted into Uganda using Ilyushin 76 planes.⁴⁹ With these, while the Nairobi peace talks were still going on between Okello and Museveni, the NRM forces were able to defeat the Okello forces and take over power on 26 January 1986. The next day Museveni was sworn in as President.

⁴⁸ Museveni, *Ibid*, pp 144-146 *Ibid*, pp 168-169 ⁴⁹ *Ibid*, pp 168-169

QUESTIONS

1. What differentiates bilateral from multilateral imperialism? How did Uganda pass on from the first case to the second, and what were its consequences?
2. What role did the ideologies of nationalism and socialism play in the early years leading to independence?
3. What were the objectives and achievements of the two five years Development Plans (1962-66; and 1966-71) under Obote? Where did finance come for these plans? Who benefitted and who lost from these plans?
4. Why did the president of the Uganda Labour Congress (ULC), Humphrey Luande, resign from the UPC in 1964?
5. '*The Fundamental Basis of the Uganda Peoples' Congress*', UPC Gulu Conference, 1964, stated: 'Our party ... has been the vanguard of mass struggle against colonialism and imperialism. ... The economic control of our country is not in the hands of our people and continues through the continued exploitation of our people by a handful of comprador capitalists and their agents. International monopoly capital, the father of imperialism and neo-colonialism, is the most dangerous enemy to our people.' Debate the proposition that this statement still remains valid to this day.
6. How and why was John Kakonge marginalised at the Gulu Conference?
7. Discuss the similarities and differences between the 1964 UPC declaration and the 1968 'The Common Man's Charter'.
8. Debate the proposition that the 1970 Nakivubo Pronouncements led to Obote's demise as Uganda's head of state.
9. What are the various theories about the reasons of the 1971 military coup and the forces behind it? What do you make of Mazrui's characterisation of Amin's rule as 'lumpen-militariat' that would gradually improve the economy 'through the stabilising influence of its own embourgeoisment, and put Marxists to shame'?
10. Under Amin there was no distinction between politics and the army. How would you characterise the relationship between army and politics under Obote I, the UNLF, Obote II, and under Museveni?

11. This book credits Dani Wadada Nabudere for having a threedimensional view of the world. Is this a fair description of Nabudere?
12. The Dar es Salaam based *Ad Hoc Committee for the Promotion of Unity among Ugandans* split between the Nabudere-led group and the Mamdani-led Changombe group. What were their differences?
13. A meeting called by the Nairobi-based Discussion Group under Kabwegyere laid the basis of the 1979 Moshi conference. What decisions did they reach, and how did these influence the Moshi Conference?
14. What is the origin and significance of the phrase – the ‘Moshi Spirit’?
15. What decisions were taken at the Moshi unity conference? How did Nabudere’s leadership influence the conference and Uganda under the UNLF?
16. How did Museveni become the Deputy Charman of the Military Commission of the UNLF?
17. Explain the significance of the four principles of the UNLF – Unity, Democracy, National Independence and Social Progress (UDNIS). Are these still relevant today?
18. The UNLF government was overthrown on 12 May 1980, and the Military Commission accused the ‘Gang of Four’ of ‘hijacking the (Moshi) Conference from the military plane to the political plane’. What does this say about the character of the regimes in power since 1980?
19. What lessons might be learnt from the experience of the one year when the UNLF was in power?
20. How do you explain the transformation of Obote from an antiimperialist and socialist, to an agent of imperialism during his second regime (1980-85)?
21. What forces (internal and external) helped the NRM under Museveni to overthrow Obote II and come to power in January 1986?

PART TWO

The current realities

CHAPTER FIVE

The base and the superstructure

Here I borrow from Marx in one of his most profound observations. He divides society into essentially two parts: the base and the superstructure. To put it simply, the “base” comprises of the economy, the forces and relations of production and the science and technology applied in production, and the relationship between workers and the owners of capital. The “superstructure” comprises of the government, the army, laws, religion, ideology, culture, education, etc.

Multilateral imperialism and Uganda as a neo-colony Earlier we looked at the phenomena of multilateral imperialism and neo-colonialism. Those remain the bedrock realities of Africa. Whilst we analyse the concrete manifestations of these in the case of contemporary Uganda, we must keep these realities at the back of our mind.

The historical bilateral colonial relations have morphed into multilateral (or collective) imperialism. In the case of Uganda, it is not just Britain that rules the neo-colonial state of Uganda, but the Imperial trio – Europe, the US and Japan. The trio use the instruments of global governance to dictate policies to Uganda on behalf of global finance capital. These are the United Nations (especially the Security Council), the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

In other words, Uganda’s political independence does not negate the rule of the international financial oligarchy over it. As the bilateral colonial order morphed into a multilateral imperialism, the colony morphed into a neo-colony.

Of course, it is not as simple as it appears. The new situation is in fact quite complex. How? Here is how:

1. At the global level the trio (the US, Europe and Japan) can get together to impose their collective imperial might on Uganda but at the local level, in

Uganda, they do have competing interests in securing its resources (for example oil) and markets. So they compete as they collaborate.

2. Although the trio has direct presence in Uganda – for example, through their banks and corporations – they still need local agents (a comprador class) to mediate between them and the neo-colonial state and economy.

3. Increasingly the trio is challenged by China and Russia. The trio perceive especially the Chinese presence in Africa as a threat to their historical and future interests in Africa.

4. For Africa, the new geopolitics opens up opportunities to counter the hegemonic trio. I must add, however, that it is still early days to predict how these new dynamics will shape Uganda's future. Much depends on how the Ugandan elite is linked with the Trio and China/Russia and how they can use the contradictions between them to leverage Uganda's interests.

5. And finally, political independence opens space for the people of Uganda to express their democratic aspirations through elections and through peoples' movements. The common people have always resisted the rule of the Empire (as we saw in Part One), but political independence makes domestic class contradictions more open and explicit. The danger, however, is that they begin to see the 'local ruling elite' as the principal enemy rather than imperialism.

The above scenario raises a number of strategic issues that the common people need to address. To these we shall return in Part Three. But, let me emphasise this important point again. The strategic significance of democratic struggles, and defining the terms and conditions of this struggle at several – especially at the economic and political – levels cannot be underestimated. The Independence Constitution (with subsequent amendments and changes) is but a 'superstructure' that reflects particular relations of production and class relations; the economy (under the control of imperial forces and the compradors) is the real 'base' of class exploitation.

The base and the superstructure

Here I borrow from Marx in one of his most profound observations. He

divides society into essentially two parts: the base and the superstructure. To put it simply, the ‘base’ comprises of the economy, the forces and relations of production (e.g. in agriculture, industry, etc.), and the science and technology applied in production, and the relationship between workers and the owners of capital. The ‘superstructure’ comprises of the government, the army, laws, religion, ideology, culture, education, etc.

SUPERSTRUCTURE

Science & Technology of Production **BASE** Relations of Production

I quote Marx here (rather than in a footnote) because it forms the essential methodological basis of the rest of this book. It is one of the most astute observations of Marx, and worth reading over and over until one understands its significance.

In his preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx explains:

‘In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely [the] relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution’.

I should add that this is a long view of history, when the BASE, the ‘material forces of production’ – the economic structure of society – determine the SUPERSTRUCTURE – the social and political processes and our ‘consciousness’ about what is going around us. The previous section where I

trace Uganda's history from the colonial times, to the struggle for independence, to today will bear testimony to this profound insight into how history evolves.

At the same time, however, from a short view of history, as events develop from day to day, it is the social and political consciousness (arising out of the material reality) that shape the events. The relationship between the BASE and the SUPERSTRUCTURE is dialectical – each impacts on the other. In fact, as Mao said, *in the short run it is politics that are in command*. He said: ‘You should put *politics in command*, go to the masses and be one with them ...⁵⁰ This is a very important advice. We shall examine its significance in the last part of the book when we talk about ‘rebooting the revolution’.

[0 https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/peking-review/1966/PR1966-47b.htm](https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/peking-review/1966/PR1966-47b.htm)

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the significance of Marx's categories of the ‘base’ and the ‘superstructure’ in relation to Uganda's past and present.
2. How has Uganda's political independence opened space for the people to move forward to the next phase of the struggle? What are the main characteristics of this phase?

CHAPTER SIX

The 'base' of Uganda's economy

The depersonalisation (dehumanisation) of the agricultural sector (indeed of the whole economy) by the neoliberal mindset has been disastrous.

Adult female members bore the brunt of food shortage: 53.1% of them skipped meals; 61.1% ate 'less preferred food'; 68.3% reduced size of meals.

(Report of survey by Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2011). What could be more appalling than this?

Nabudere carried out a meticulous historical analysis of the rise of money as money (as distinct from its evolution as capital), and made the prediction that money will eventually overcome capital and then meet its own demise as an instrument of credit.

Economic growth and Income distribution

Growth without development and widening income gap Despite high economic growth rates, Uganda is a very unequal society, with Gini coefficient estimated at 0.47 in 2014.⁵¹ Growth is benefiting relatively few people at the expense of the majority. The richest 20 percent claim just over half of national income and, noticeably, this proportion has grown by a big margin of nearly 14 percent in recent years. As for the richest 10 percent of the population (at the top of the pinnacle), the data shows not only that they enjoy over one-third (35.7 percent) of national income but that this proportion has grown to nearly 42% over the past two decades.⁵²

On the other hand, the bottom poorest 10 percent of the population has a meagre 2.5 percent of national income, and this proportion has declined by 21 percent over the past 20 years. If you take the poorest 20 percent, they have only 5.8 percent and again this proportion has declined significantly – by 20.6 percent. All this is evidence that the gap has been widening between those in the highest and lowest income groups.

⁵¹ Gini Coefficient is a statistical measurement of income distribution, with 0 representing perfect equality (everybody has the same income), and 1 with perfect inequality (one person has all the income)

52 See: Oxfam, 2017, Uganda Report: Key Drivers of Inequality. Figure 2.3

The Oxfam Report shows that the incidence of poverty remains far higher in rural areas (85 percent of the population) than in urban locations (15 percent).

I have looked at other studies on the subject. The Oxfam data on location-specific poverty is collaborated by a study by Frederick Golooba-Mutebi and Dr Sam Hickey. In their '*Governing Chronic Poverty under Inclusive Liberalism: Case of North Uganda Social Action Fund*', they argue that Uganda is paraded by some as a model of 'inclusive neoliberalism' with its emphasis on community-based responses to the often structural problems of poverty and exclusion. But their research shows that '...the World Bank-funded Northern Uganda Social Action Fund offers greater support to the sceptics, not least because of the ways in which the more pernicious tendencies within inclusive neoliberalism have converged with the contemporary politics of development in Uganda'.⁵³

Land in Uganda

Different types of land tenure in Uganda

This is one of the most tantalising issues in Uganda. In this brief, I cannot go into its complexities, except to highlight some of its essential features.

3 Samuel Hickey & Frederick Golooba-Mutebi (2009), *The Government of Chronic Poverty: from the politics of exclusion to the politics of citizenship?*
<http://www.chronicpov.rty.org/publications/details/governing-chronic-povertyunder-inclusive-liberalism-the-case-of-the-northern-uganda-social-action-fund>

According to the Ugandan Constitution, land belongs to the citizens of Uganda in accordance with the land tenure systems provided for in the constitution. These are classed as customary, freehold, Mailo and leasehold.

1. Freehold tenure: The Land Act 1998 defines freehold as a tenure that bestows upon someone ownership of registered land in eternity. The Land Act specifies that the holder of land in freehold has full power of ownership, which means they can use it for any lawful purpose and sell, rent, lease, dispose of it by will. The act also decrees that only citizens of Uganda are entitled to own land under freehold tenure, with non-citizens allowed only the alternative of leasing it for a period of up to 99 years.

2. Mailo Tenure: this type of tenure is predominantly in Buganda, but also in parts of Ankole, Bunyoro and Toro. Under it the owners have perpetual ownership and are free to sell or pass on their rights to their heirs. Mailo land owners are not allowed to use their powers against the interests of customary tenants, bona fide or lawful occupants. This provision was introduced in 1998 and revised further in 2010 with the aim of inhibiting the possible eviction by landlords of people occupying mailo land as customary tenants or squatters.

3. Customary tenure: Land in other parts of Uganda is held mostly under the customary tenure, where land is owned communally, by a clan, or a tribe. The rules of customary law vary in different parts of the country. The Land Act 1998 states that customary land tenure shall be governed by rules generally accepted as binding by the particular community, and anyone who acquires land in that community shall also be bound by the same rules. With customary tenure, obtaining of a private certificate of title is possible for individuals, whereby they simply have to agree with the community that owns the land (the clan or tribal chiefs), then the sub-county and government land boards take up the process of issuing the title. The constitution also provides for turning of an individual on communal tenure into one on freehold, and lease hold can also be issued by owners to tenants under this tenure. **4. Leasehold:** It is tenure where one party grants to another the right to exclusive possession of land for a specified period, usually in exchange for the payment of rent. Under it, a land owner grants a lease to another person. In practice, much of the land that is leased was previously owned by government bodies, particularly the Land Commission and the District Land Board, and normally this comes with some development conditions imposed on its use by the leaseholders.

The reality on the ground

Citizens owning land under customary ownership have to acquire certificates of ownership in a manner prescribed by Parliament. However, Parliament has yet to prescribe this. Consequently, the majority of the community members do not have land titles and/or certificates. *In fact, a large number of people owning land under customary tenure system are in rural areas and most do not know how to go about acquiring the certificates.* In the interest to protect tenants, the law gives the tenants powers that are almost of ownership, because the law states that a landlord cannot sell off any piece of land without the consent of the tenants. This is the cause of most of the disputes among people who buy land under Mailo tenure and the tenants they find on the land.

The Land Act of 1998 and the National Environment Statute of 1995 protect customary interests in land and traditional uses of forests, but the same laws also authorize the government to exclude human activities in any forest area by declaring it a protected forest, overriding the customary land rights of the common people.⁵⁴

See: <http://www.ulii.org/ug/legislation/consolidated-act/22> and <http://www.ulii.org/ug/legislation/act/2015/1-3>

Intensified land grabbing in Uganda

What is ‘land grabbing’?

I borrow the following from an excellent study carried out by the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (Friends of the Earth – Uganda)⁵⁵

Land grabbing occurs when land that was previously used by local communities is leased or sold to outside investors, including corporations and governments. Typically, the land is taken over for commodity crops to sell on the overseas market, including for agrofuel and food crops. However land grabbing also occurs to clear land for tree plantations (grown for carbon offsets), protected reserves and mines; and can often result from speculative investments when funds predict a high rate of return from land investments.

Land grabbing is not a new phenomenon. For centuries, communities have been intimidated to abandon land – driven by high food prices and growing global consumption, with multinational corporations, often in partnership with governments, seizing the land.

Land grabbing is part of the imperial system

In 2010, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that between 2007 and 2010, foreign corporations acquired 20 million hectares of land in Africa. Most of them are land leases, with durations ranging from a short term to 99 years. It went on to say that African governments act essentially as middle men between the corporations and the native land holders.⁵⁶

Why are the corporations so hungry for land? The short answer is – for profit, of course. What is driving them, however, are three factors:

55 See: 'A study on Land Grabbing cases in Uganda April 2012' Compiled by: National Association of Professional Environmentalists (FoE –Uganda) supported by: Friends of the Earth International (FoEI). http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_3823.pdf

<https://www.google.co.uk/#q=FAO+2010+report+on+land+grabbing>

1. Over-consumption of agricultural, dairy products and meat by the countries of the north, and the over-consuming classes in the south.
2. This has driven corporations to look for land to secure food and energy supplies.
3. Speculative capital looking for a quick buck.

The FoE–Uganda report cited earlier, quotes (GRAIN, 2011) that in Uganda between 4 and 8 per cent of land is under foreign hands.⁵⁷

The result is that poor farmers, small-time cattle keepers and fisher folk – as well as rural households – are being dispossessed of the means of their own survival.

Land grabbing has been disastrous for the common people and the environment

The Oxfam Report cited above gives a stark picture of the rich grabbing land from the poor. It says that land 'giveaways' by powerful politicians have emerged as a major issue. A number of schools and other stakeholders (e.g. Namulonge Agricultural Research Station) have raised serious concerns. There have also been numerous evictions of 'squatters' in districts such as Mukono and Kayunga by absentee landlords, who then sell their mailo land titles to investors. Privileged members of society, including wealthy 'investors' from outside and other government functionaries take advantage of their positions to exploit the poor and the voiceless. The legal system – which the *bibanja* holders don't understand – provides no protection, and there is no help from the government. Land laws are in place, but their implementation is very weak leading to Court decisions unfair to the common people.

As local populations migrate, local traditions and customs, and important cultural sites are lost. Land grabbing has been disastrous

⁵⁷ GRAIN is a small international non-profit organisation that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems.

also for the environment. Forests have been cleared to make way for the plantations. Wetlands have been drained, damaging the rich natural biodiversity. Whilst forests have been cleared on the one hand, on the other large estate owners and corporations are replacing native forest with monoculture plantations of non-native species such as eucalyptus and pine in order to earn what is called ‘carbon credits’.⁵⁸ Land grabbing has also intensified conflicts and intertribal and intratribal clashes. Women farmers and workers are among those who have suffered most from dispossession and loss of property rights.⁵⁹

A case study of Kalangala

The National Association of Professional Environmentalists (FoE - Uganda) report of April, 2012, cites a case of land grab and its consequences for the people of the island of Kalangala. Here are some of the details:

1. Violation of Land Rights: Under the terms of the agreement,

the 6,500 ha of land for the oil palm estate on Bugala was to be provided by the Government. This land has been provided to BIDCO. This has been at the expense of members of the community who did not hold formal land titles to the land they occupied – often Mailo land, which is now officially recognised as public land; and at the expense of forests and the lakeshore buffer zone.

2. The remaining 3,500 ha was allocated to smallholders and outgrowers, of which 2,000 ha had been acquired by 2009.

3. Land conflicts have arisen between members of the local community and BIDCO, following the allocation of land for the oil palm development, with reports of people being evicted from their homes in the forest to make way for oil palm.

58 Carbon credit is a certificate which represents the right to emit one tonne of carbon dioxide (CO₂), or they can be traded for money

59 See: Margaret A Rugadya, Hema Swaminathan, and Cheryl Walker (2009) ‘Women’s Property Rights, HIV and AIDS & Domestic Violence: Research Findings from Two Districts in South Africa and Uganda’. Also, Amanda Ellis (2005), ‘Gender and Economic Growth in Uganda: Unleashing the Power of Women’, Directions in Development

4. Because few rural dwellers hold official land titles for the land they lived on, they often cannot seek redress. Under the Constitution land tribunals are

supposed to resolve land conflicts (Article 243) but these operated for only a short time before collapsing.

5. Later the tribunals were supposed to be replaced with Land Committees in the districts, but these have not yet become fully operational. As a result there is little to prevent land grabbing, and indeed the government has appeared to sanction the process, giving land occupied under customary tenure to foreign investors.

6. Some small holders have also said that they were effectively forced to sell land they owned after planting oil palm because they were not able to pay for the fertilizer and other inputs needed.

7. With no income from the oil palm, and no land for growing food, they faced little option but to sell.

8. Human Rights Violations: People have reported that they were denied access to resources, including grazing lands, building materials and water, contravening their human rights. In Kulugulu village, the path to the communal well, which was the source of clean water for the community, was blocked by BIDCO.

9. Fertilizers and pesticides used in the oil palm plantation were also reported to have affected the community's water point. The community sent a petition to Kalangala District Council Authorities asking it to exert pressure on BIDCO to reopen the path to the well, but they have not received a response. Wells in Jovu village, Kibaale, were also reported to have been destroyed.

10. Animals found trespassing on former grazing lands in the oil palm project area have been confiscated and owners have been fined. This is discouraging people living in the area from raising animals, affecting their food supplies.

11. Areas previously used for sand mining in Bukuzzindu have been allocated for oil palm, including accommodation buildings for staff and workers.

12. This has meant the local community no longer has access to the sand supplies, which are used for building. This has led to a conflict with the local community, with the community digging sand ditches along the roadside, creating a hazard for BIDCO vehicles and employees. A community playground in Kasenyi, Bamungi, has been taken and converted into an oil palm plantation, depriving the local children of opportunities to play.

The FoE has made some recommendations on how the Government should move forward on the issue of land. Here is a summary of these:

1. Conduct comprehensive research on the impacts of land grabbing.
2. Respect constitutional provisions on land tenure.
3. Respect and protect natural forests rather than promoting plantations at the expense of natural forests rich in biodiversity areas.
4. Move quickly to design, enact and enforce a law to protect citizens who own land under customary tenure system.
5. Stop grabbing land for agrofuel, carbon credit trading and other monoculture systems and instead support policies and laws that promote agro-ecological farming systems and practices.
6. Enforce its policies regarding social and environmental impact assessments, including assessments of impacts on local/ community based food production before the commencement of any project throughout Uganda.
7. Domesticating international treaties, conventions, protocols and any other binding agreements regarding land and sacred sites including the Voluntary Guidelines on Land and Natural resources tenure.
8. Hold International financial institutions (IFIs) and the World Bank to account for funding projects that promote poverty through violation of community rights and subsequent land grabbing.

Agriculture, cattle herding and fishery

Basic data

I put the three sectors together although they are distinct parts of the economy. I do so because they often go together (the same people



Kalangalanga Secondary School

or communities involved in them), and the people face the same challenges of climatic changes, land grabs, exploitation by the rich and powerful, the scarcity of finances, and generally, lack of support from government.

Agriculture is the backbone of the bulk of Uganda's people. It employs over 80% of the workforce, of which close to 70% are poor peasantry, about 25 % middle-income farmers, and about 5% rich farmers and the state and corporate sectors. Unfortunately, the Uganda statistics office does not collect data on the basis of class stratification. One can extrapolate these from other data (such as income and land holdings), but here, to give a general picture, I have given ballpark figures. It is important to keep these figures in mind as we explore the agricultural side of the economy.

The primary food crops, mainly for domestic consumption, include plantains, cassava, maize, millet, and sorghum. The most important export crops are coffee, tea, cotton, tobacco, and cocoa. Over some years in the recent past, government has encouraged the cultivation of horticultural products, including flowers, chillies, vanilla, asparagus, and medicinal plants.

Agriculture in northeast Uganda is dominated by cattle herding, though normally most peasant-farmers practice 'agro-pastoralism' (integrated cattle

and crop farming). Cattle herding is also common in most other parts of the country. It is a source of livelihood for millions of people in Uganda.

Another significant source of livelihood for people is fishery. Uganda is located in East Africa's great lakes basin. Its lakes – Victoria, (Africa's largest fresh water lake), Albert, Kyoga, Edward, George, Nabugabu – provide ample fresh water for fishing for both local consumption and export.

Two views on the most basic source of people's livelihood The common people argue that these are their basic sources of livelihood, and therefore it is the government's obligation to ensure that they not only have access to these, but that they are provided with the necessary knowledge, tools, credit, market access and proper prices so that they can feed their families, educate their children, have a roof over their head, and some surplus they can save for the days and months when the climatic and other factors impede their farming, herding and fishing activities.

The government view is that these are sources for the country's exports to the global market in order to earn foreign exchange for necessary imports. In order to enable this, the government has to provide incentives for those who bring capital, knowhow, tools of production, etc. and have access to the complex chain of production, financing and marketing. Unless these 'entrepreneurs' do not earn profits, they will not bring the necessary capital that the country needs.

The common people argue that all the above – including capital and knowhow – can be provided from domestic sources within a policy that is based on self-reliance, and Cuba for example, is a case that shows that this can be done.

The peasants argue that the government policy should be based on the Swahili wisdom: not '*Kulima Kwanza*' but '*Mkulima Kwanza*' – not agriculture first, but peasants first.

Fall in agricultural production

Uganda produces two kinds of coffee mainly for export - Arabica and Robusta. In 2014, a total of 211,872 tons of coffee was procured – reduced by 1% from 2013. Cotton and tobacco were 12,700 tons and

25,500 tons respectively, registering reductions of 32% and 25% respectively. Tea production increased slightly by less than one percent in 2014.⁶⁰

The grossly underfunded and overly exploited agricultural sector

- Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy and employs more than 70% of the population. Nonetheless, it gets only 3% of the national budget.
- The government provides tax exemptions to major players in the private sector. Commercial banks, middlemen, and rich consumers (especially, for example, of milk) benefit from these. Not the peasant farmers. The Commercial banks charge usurious interest rates. The result is that although overall access to credit has increased in the country – from UGX 626 billion in 2001 to UGX 8,618 billion by 2013 – the share of agricultural loans has increased only marginally, from 7.1 to 8.4%.
- There is no preferential lending to agriculture; agricultural producers are subjected to the same borrowing conditions as other enterprises.
- Because of administrative corruption, middlemen have used tax exemptions to evade taxes. For example, value added tax (VAT) exemption on agricultural machinery is abused by importers, declaring all kinds of machinery as ‘agricultural equipment’.
- Government says that agriculture gets the zero-rated preferential treatment on VAT. Sure, but look at it closely. The zero-rated VAT is on seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides, not on the final product. Only the corporations that produce these profit from it, not the farmers.
- The whole justification for tax subsidy is highly biased: products supplied by the corporations get VAT exemption, but not the products consumed by the poor e.g. soap and salt.

On the advice of the IMF and the World Bank – and conditions imposed by the so-called ‘donors’ – the government has adopted ⁶⁰ See: UBS, 2015 Statistical Abstract, Table 3.1. [http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/](http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/statistical_abstracts/Statistical%20Abstract%202015.pdf)

[uploads/ubos/statistical_ abstracts/Statistical%20Abstract%202015.pdf](http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/statistical_abstracts/Statistical%20Abstract%202015.pdf)

Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). The outcome has been disastrous for the economy and the common people:

- Co-operatives (the self-managed system of agricultural production

and marketing) have collapsed;

- State depots that used to buy products from small farmers have been closed, putting these producers at the mercy of middle-men traders;
- It has become increasingly difficult for small farmers to raise credit.

Report of survey by Uganda Bureau of Statistics

Here is some interesting data from a survey done by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBS) in 2011, reported in 2015.⁶¹

The survey was on the following aspects of the agricultural production:

1. Number and size of holdings;
2. Land access/Ownership/Tenure and Use;
3. Demographic characteristics of the holder and his/her household;
4. Use of agricultural labour;
5. Access and use of implements, farm machinery, etc.;
6. Irrigation;
7. Agricultural Credit/Loans;
8. Agricultural Buildings/Storage facilities;
9. Mode of transportation, Sources of Agricultural information;
10. Access to facilities e.g. electricity, roads, markets, inputs etc.;
11. Membership to Farmers' groups.

Although the survey was done in 2011 the findings remain generally valid to this day. It is an eye-catcher. One has to read the whole report to appreciate the depth of the crisis farmers in Uganda face. Here are some of the highlights:

⁶¹ [http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/statistical_abstracts/Statistical%20 Abstract%202015.pdf](http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/statistical_abstracts/Statistical%20Abstract%202015.pdf)

Conservatively estimated, Uganda has a population of about 20 million agricultural Households (HHS). Of these some 3.6 million responded to the survey. Of these 3.6 million:

1. An estimated 906,000 (3 %) were members of Farmers Groups,

of whom 462,000 (51 %) were male and 444,000 (49 %) were female.

2. 10% had accessed credit in the five years prior to the survey, and of these 272,000 (76.0%) were required to provide collateral as security. Of these, 29.1% used their land titles (for the effects of this, see the earlier section on ‘land grabbing’). Some 9.8% used their salary as ‘security’.
3. Out of 3.2 million HHs that did not access credit, 27.1 % cited high interest rates, 20.9% cited lack of collateral as security.
4. Irrigation was practiced by less than one per cent (0.9%). This implies that agriculture is mainly rain-fed.
5. As their main ‘technology of production’, only 0.8% reported to having tractors. 95.8% used traditional hoes; 67% used axes; 36.5% used slashers; and 85.5% used pangas.
6. 91.7% used local seeds; 31.1% used improved or hybrid seeds.

The most shocking data is on the household food security:

1. 56.7% were not able to afford eating their normal food.
 2. The main causes of food shortage were: loss of crops (71.4%); lack of adequate capital (19.3%), & lack of adequate land (10%).
 3. 1.8 million (91.5%) experienced drought.
 4. 1.3 million (66.0%) experienced pests/diseases.
 5. Most of them sought assistance from relatives.
 6. Adult female members bore the brunt of food shortage: 53.1% of them skipped meals; 61.1% ate ‘less preferred food’; 68.3% reduced size of meals.
- What could be more appalling than this?

Tilted analysis of the World Bank

As we observed earlier, the government’s policies are designed not in Uganda but in Washington, USA by the IMF and the World Bank. Here is the WB’s analysis of Uganda’s agricultural woes. It points the finger at the people of Uganda and its government – not on itself.⁶²

1. Slow transformation of agriculture: Land disputes are estimated to reduce the level of agricultural growth in Uganda by between 5 and 11 percentage points. Small farms are not able to achieve high levels of productivity, while low productivity large farms co-exist with a number of promising commercialization and agroindustry businesses failing to expand due to lack of a system that could facilitate efficient and fair sell or rental of land, especially in areas with communal land ownership.

2. Access to finance constrained by limited land registration: Financial institutions typically require collateral for over 86.5% of the loans. The limited existence of easily transferable legal titles leaves the bulk of land as 'dead capital' that cannot be mobilized for development nor expand the deposit base of financial institutions.

3. Urban areas not supporting economic development: Urban authorities lack access to the land required for the necessary public works and social infrastructure. This, together with the lack of enabling site and building standards, has resulted in urban centers that are not developing efficiently, with these areas often characterized by horizontal expansion rather than more profitable high-rise buildings. For this reason, urban centres in Uganda still have low economic density, not allowing them to generate growth, jobs and decent housing for their increasing populations. If current patterns continue, the process of urbanization will result in proliferation of slums; increased congestion; and deterioration in the quality of, or a failure to develop, infrastructure due to an escalation in the costs of construction and payment of compensation.

4. High compensation rates makes infrastructure development costly: Authorities are struggling to afford high compensation

62 Fact Sheet: World Bank Uganda Economic Update - Sixth Edition, September 2015
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uganda/brief/fact-sheet-uganda-economic-update-sixth-edition-september>

rates involved in the acquisition of land due to highly inflated land prices. This is caused by the lack of available alternative investment opportunities and the need in many cases to pay compensation not only to registered land owners, but also to bona fide occupants.

5. Mismanagement of land systems promoting corruption: Land transactions are often braced with very high transaction costs, mainly resulting from corruption.

All this jiggery-pockery (deceitful and dishonest) is well known to independent analysts.

The class basis of agriculture, and its policy implications. A few observations might help to give a sharper picture of the class basis and WB-led agriculture policy and its implications. 1. 70% of the poor peasants and the 25% of the middle-income

farmers provide the bulk of the staple food (agricultural, dairy, meat, and fish products) for the local (communal and village) markets, and for the 80% of the population that live in the rural areas. It is mostly the poor peasants who provide food for the people, even if they have little for themselves or for their families.

2. A relatively small section of the middle-income farmers, the vast majority of the rich farmers and the corporate sector produce mainly for export. Because these classes also control the state apparatus, there is an over-indulgent appreciation of the value of their contribution to the economy.

3. Given the fact that it is the poor peasants who provide the basic staples for domestic consumption, it is amazing that official policy emphasis is on exports, which enrich the wealthy agricultural and fish farms. In fishing, for example, ordinary people prefer catfish, but the government encourages the production of exotic tilapia because these have an export market. Why is this so? It is because the government (urged by the IMF, the WB and neoliberal pundits) believe that growth comes from exports. It does not. Real growth comes from domestic value-added industrial production through using agricultural raw materials (to which we shall come later).

4. There is an obvious contradiction between the official (and IMF/ WB) and the common people's views on the significance and focus of the agricultural sector – a paradox that damages both the ordinary people and the economy.

5. In fact, the depersonalisation (dehumanisation) of the agricultural sector (indeed of the whole economy) by the neoliberal mindset has been disastrous.

Mining & Manufacturing

Uganda's rich resources as the basis for industrialisation Uganda is endowed with rich natural resources, including fertile soils, fresh water supply from its numerous lakes, regular rainfall in most parts of the country

and sizeable mineral deposits – cobalt, gold, copper, iron ore, tungsten, tin, limestone – and still largely untapped crude oil and natural gas. Following Uganda’s discovery of oil deposits in 2006, the country’s development prospects look better. Different stakeholders (including foreign interests) have high expectations. Ironically the government is faced with the problem of how to manage these expectations.

Owen Falls and the UDC

Historically, the British left behind a basic infrastructure of industry. Two developments were outstanding: one was the Owen Falls Dam built in 1952 to generate hydro-electricity for industries. And the other was the creation of the Uganda Development Corporation, whose main function was to promote and provide the much needed supply of raw materials (mineral and agricultural) to British manufacturing enterprises. The UDC companies were, of course, under the control of British finance capital, but managed by the UDC. For example:

- Kilembe Mines Ltd. (which mined copper and cobalt) was under the control of Duncan, Gilby & Matheson Ltd.
- Universal Asbestos Manufacturing Co. (E A) Ltd (producing cement) was a subsidiary of the British company, Universal Asbestos Manufacturing Co. Ltd.
- Chillington Tool Co. (E A) Ltd was a subsidiary of Chillington Tool Co. Ltd of Wolverhampton.



Mineworkers: Copper Mines, Kilembe

UDC distillery, which manufactured waragi as well as ‘local’ brands of brandy, gin and whisky, was in ‘partnership’ with the British spirits monopoly of Duncan, Gilby & Matheson Ltd. And so on.⁶³

Industrial ups and downs under Obote and Amin

In the 1960s President Obote started a massive program of import substitution to diversify the economy by establishing basic industries producing goods like textiles, tea, sugar, beverages, edible oil, wood, paper and paper products, iron and steel, non-metallic and metallic products among others. Import substitution is the basis of the development of most countries in the past – such as the United States, Germany, France, Switzerland and Japan. But in Uganda, because of lack of proper planning and control over production left largely to foreign companies, this strategy failed.

In 1970, following the declaration of the Common Man's Charter, Obote made the so-called Nakivubo Pronouncements. With immediate effect the government took control of 60% (up from at most 51%) of over 80 corporations – mostly owned by British finance capital. These included banks, insurance companies, manufacturing and mining industries, plantations, oil companies and transport. Foreign investors were to be compensated out of the post-tax profits

63 For a historical account of the UDC

See: <http://www.udc.go.ug/index.php/about-us/background> - Last modified on 18 January 2016

of the firms themselves over the next 15 years. These created serious problems with the British, and Obote was overthrown in 1971 by Idi Amin with the connivance of the British.

Amin revoked the Nakivubo Pronouncement. In 1972 he expelled Uganda's Asian population, and took over Asian companies including those owned by the Madhvani and Mehta Groups, and a diverse British portfolio including tea plantations, a printing firm, a cigarette factory, and a hoe factory. Most of these (except the sugar mills) were handed over to the UDC to manage, or to some '*mafuta mingis*' among Amin's cohort. At the time of Amin's coup industry was operating at about 70% capacity. By 1976 it had run down to barely 30%. By 1979 most industries had collapsed, and the country became almost entirely dependent on imports.

Things did not improve very much under the UNLF one-year administration and Obote's second term of five years. This was the state of industry when the NRM, under President Museveni, took over power in 1986.

The rise of neo-liberal institutions and industrial policies Museveni started an energetic program of reviving the economy based on the 10-point program that was drafted during the course of the guerrilla war against Obote. Point 5 is about ‘Building and independent, integrated and self- sustaining national economy’; and point 10 about ‘Following an economic strategy of mixed economy’. The reality on the ground posed many challenges, and Museveni turned to the World Bank and the western donor countries for assistance. But this came with a price. He had to take on the neoliberal policies that came under the WB-IMF- donor aid and investment package.

Since late 1980s, state-guided developmental goals succumbed to market-determined priorities. The UDC and public enterprises were systematically attacked and literally closed down. Borrowing the language of the neoliberals, the President argued that public corporations such as the UDC, Uganda Electricity Board, Uganda Development Bank and Uganda Commercial Bank were a hazard to the private sector. In 1991 the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) was created – backed by the Uganda Investment Code – to encourage private investments, especially, foreign direct investments (FDIs). The UIA set up a one- stop centre for the promotion of FDIs. To this end, Uganda became a member of the World Bank’s Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). MIGA is an international guarantor of investors against non-commercial risk, including the risk of war and civil disturbances, and possible breach of contract, currency transfer problems, and expropriation.

The informal sector, ideological and sexist bias of ADB Some surveys and reports, such as by the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) and the African Development Bank (ADB) give only a partial picture of the reality on the ground. They are correct in suggesting that Uganda’s manufacturing sector is small and largely engaged in the production of low value-added products – processed foods; tobacco and beverages; non-metallic minerals and metallic fabrication; wood and wood products; footwear; clothing; sawmilling and printing, and publishing.

However, they must recognise two very important aspects of Uganda’s industrial sector. One is the significant contribution made by the informal sector, which these reports discount. For example, the African Development

Bank's 2014 report says that the formal manufacturing sector has experienced growth, while informal manufacturing has been declining over the last decade.⁶⁴ This is not true. It is a reflection of the Bank's ideological bias in favour of the formal sector. The ADB should redefine what it means by 'informal sector', and do its research again in Kampala (and indeed in the whole country), and they will know that this sector is growing by the day.

64 African Development Bank. Uganda Country Report, 201 https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Generic-Documents/Eastern_Africa%2080%99s_Manufacturing_Sector

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics admits that its Business Registry (UBOS 2007) that lists 3,280 manufacturing establishments in Uganda is focused on the formal sector, that is, businesses employing 5 persons and above. This means that the informal sector is not included. 'This is a major limitation,' says the UBOS, 'as the informal sector is widespread and is believed to account for a large proportion of employment and output.' In November 2016, I was witness to a horrendous display of violence by the police to drive out literally hundreds of women traders off the streets of Kampala. The official records by institutions such as the ADB not only have an ideological bias, but also a sexist bias against recognising the contribution by women informal workers who outnumber men in that sector.

Foreign domination of industry

The second point data collectors such as the ADB must recognise is that the formal sector (whose importance they vastly exaggerate) is dominated by subsidiaries of trans-national corporations (TNCs) who sponge off an increasing number of Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to service them in various ways and at various different levels. Here is a table from an impressive study done by Marios Obwona, Isaac Shinyekwa, Julius Kiiza, and Eria Hisali.⁶⁵

Ownership of firms in the manufacturing sector between 2007 and 2009

Ownership	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Joint-venture majority foreign	178	16	178	15	170	15
Joint-venture majority local	62	5	63	5	58	5
Wholly foreign	465	41	479	41	472	42

Wholly local 440 38 457 39 436 8
Total 1,145 100 1,177 100 1,136 100

65 Marios Obwona, Isaac Shinyekwa, Julius Kiiza, and Eria Hisali, (2016) Brookings Institute. Table 9
https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/L2C_WP9_Obwona-et-al.pdf

The most remarkable figure is on ‘wholly foreign’ compared to the ‘wholly local’ companies. I could not get more up-to-date figures, but it is unlikely to have changed very much since there is no shift in government preference for foreign companies that are supposed to bring capital into the country.

Following the liberalisation of the economy during the 1990s, the construction industry has experienced a boom, mainly because of the rehabilitation of a number of public and private residential, commercial, and institutional premises destroyed by incessant wars for some six years. Quarrying (mainly around Kampala) dominates the construction industry and is heavily dependent on imported equipment and materials such as cement, lime, floor and wall tiles, hard core stones, clay, slates as well as sanitary ware, plumbing pipes and associated fixtures, glass, ironmongery including hinges, door lock handles and pulls, steel reinforcement structures, electrical items, including water heaters, light fittings, switch control units, and metal socket boxes. Other small items such as nuts, bolts, screws, rivets and washers are also imported.

Marios Obwona et.al. also looked at the ownership in the construction industry. Here are the figures:

Ownership in construction industry⁶⁶

Ownership in construction industry

Year	Ownership	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Joint-venture majority foreign	Joint-venture majority local	Total
2007	Wholly foreign	818	35	16	29	14	84	84	84	215
2008	Wholly foreign	984	46	99	46	99	48	71	33	100
2009	Wholly foreign	984	46	99	48	71	33	75	35	217
	Wholly local	100	33	100	35	100	5	100	100	208

The table says it all. In 2009 48% (almost half) of the companies were ⁶⁶ Ibid, Table 16

wholly foreign owned. If you add the Joint-venture majority foreign owned companies, the total comes to nearly two-thirds – 62 %.

If foreign direct investments (FDIs) are to be taken as an indicator of growth, then Uganda has done well. The country ‘attracted’ (a favourite term of state officials working in the ministries of trade, industry and finance) US\$11.6 billion between 1991 and 2009. The biggest share of this has gone into the industrial sector – close to one third and an equivalent of US\$2.9 billion. The other industrial subsectors (construction, electricity, water and mining and quarrying) attracted investment to a tune of US\$1.8 billion representing 17 % of the total.⁶⁷

A case study of the textile industry

The textile industry was flourishing in the period preceding and following Uganda’s independence. The UDC worked in partnership with companies such as the Calico Printers (UK) and the YAMATO International (Japan). There were several textile mills with vertical integration – from spinning, weaving, the production of fabric, and clothing. These included Nyanza Textile Industries Ltd and Mulco Textiles in Jinja; African Textile Mills in Mbale; Lira Spinning Mill in Lira; and others. A national Textile Board was established in the late 1960s to encourage import substitution.

Uganda now has only two functional textile mills. Most mills such as Mulco, African Textile, Rayon Textiles, and Lira Spinning are closed. At its peak in 1972/3 the textile industry consumed approximately 400,000 bales of cotton per year; now it is down to 15,000 bales (barely 3.8% of earlier times). This has virtually destroyed cotton production and the livelihood of thousands of peasant-farmers. Whatever cotton is grown is now exported, while the citizens go to the supermarkets to buy imported clothing, and those who cannot afford (the common people) go to the second-hand clothing market, which are littered all over the townships of Uganda.

Source: Uganda Investment Authority Database (2010). See table 3 in Marios

Obwona, et al study, Ibid, Table 3

In 2004, the former owner of the Mbale-based African Textile Mill (ATM), Praful Patel, appealed to the government and other financing partners to help it secure Ushs 25 billion for the rehabilitation and expansion of the factory. Nothing came. At its peak the ATM employed over 4000 people directly and indirectly across Uganda. The World Bank valued it at US\$44,535,148, but the Uganda government sold it to the Mukwano Group at US\$1.2million.

Mukwano has destroyed the equipment and has sub-let the estate to build supermarkets that now sell imported textiles.⁶⁸

Such is the paradox of the times we live in. It is clear that the decline of the textile industry is a product of the neoliberal, open-door, policy of the government, but to this we shall return when we talk about trade in the next section.

Sunrise industries and their challenge to Uganda

A ‘sunrise industry’ is one that is new or relatively new – such as information and communications technology sectors. In the last few years Uganda has seen a spectacular increase in these. Once again, like in most large-scale industries, these are dominated by big Transnationals (TNCs), such as MTN, Orange, Uganda Telecommunications Limited, Warid, and Airtel.

Oil curse?

On the 2015/16 budget speech, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development informed the parliament about the developments in the oil sector. ‘The land acquisition for the proposed Oil Refinery at Kabaale in Hoima is almost complete’, she said. ‘The Environmental baseline study for the Oil Refinery project has also been concluded. The major priority next financial year will be commencement of detailed engineering studies for the Oil Refinery, following the selection of a lead investor on a PrivatePublic Partnership (PPP) basis. Government shall also fast track infrastructure development for the commercialization of oil, including the development of an airport ... [and] the development of the crude oil pipeline to the Indian Ocean and petroleum products pipelines.’⁶⁹

<http://www.thelondoneveningpost.com/sadness-as-uganda-abandons-textile-mills/>

Ever since the discovery of oil, the expectations of people have skyrocketed. The oil revenue could, the people and the government hope, finally catapult Uganda to a middle-income country. On June 20, 2016, President Museveni launched a 20-point development agenda, restating his promise of turning Uganda into a ‘middle-income country’ in four years.⁷⁰ However, some people, among them, for example, Julius Kiiza of Makerere⁷¹ have thrown doubts on this possibility.

Trading & Regional Integration

IMF-WB imposed neoliberal ideology accepted as Uganda's trade policy

As stated in the section on Industry, the IMF-World Bank imposed neo-liberal ideology was accepted as the main policy framework by the government. In that section we analysed how this affected Uganda's institutions and industrial policies. The same ideology became the linchpin of Uganda's trade policies.

Here I analyse how this has impacted Uganda's trade policies. I base my analysis on my experience. For the last thirty years I have been involved in trade negotiations at various levels - global, regional and bilateral. As founder of SEATINI, the Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute, existing since 1997, and between 2005 and 2010 as the Executive Director of the Geneva-based South Centre (a policy-based think tank of the global South), I have learnt a lot about how the structure of global economic governance works.

69 <http://www.statehouse.go.ug/media/speeches/2015/06/11/uganda-budget20152016>

70 <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Museveni-plans-to-elevate-Uganda-to-middle-income-status/1066-3277934-pxuaqz/index.html>

71 See: '*Righting Resource-Curse Wrongs in Uganda: The Political Economy of Oil Discovery and the Management of Popular Expectations.*' https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Julius_Kiiza_PhD/publications

I have attended the very first World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial meeting in Singapore in 1996, and since then I have attended practically all WTO Ministerials, often officially representing Uganda but also, on other occasions, Kenya and Tanzania. I have in the process acquired a fairly good insight into the workings of the East African Community. With SEATINI, I have also been active in facilitating EAC's negotiations with the European Union over the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) – a colonial arrangement which to this day remains a festering sore on the body politic of Africa.

Some home truths about the World Trade Organisation From my experience in Geneva (2005-2010), I can speak with firsthand knowledge the following home truths about the WTO that we need to grasp in order to understand why Uganda is in crisis in its trade policy. I have done a detailed

analysis of the WTO in my book *Trade is War*. Here I summarise the main points.

1. The WTO is not a development agency; it is a trade body – a trade negotiating forum. Its assumption that development is a byproduct of trade is based on an untenable neoliberal ideology. There is no empirical evidence to support this assumption. In fact, unfettered trade polarises nations between the rich and the poor. Ironically, while the rich advocate free markets for poor countries, they practice protection. The US, the EU and Japan ferociously protect what they call their ‘sensitive’ products (as they define them).

2. It is a veritable battleground where the warring parties fight over real issues. Trade wars are as lethal as real wars. Trade kills. The big and powerful employ sophisticated weapons – technical arguments, legalisms and ideological and political weapons with deftness and chicanery – as lethal as drone attacks. The US and EU change the rules of the WTO as they go along. For example, the principle of ‘single undertaking’ is a means to ensure that there is a ‘balanced outcome’ at the end of negotiations. But increasingly, the US and EU have attempted to change the architecture of the Doha Round’s single undertaking in order to ‘early harvest’ some issues to their advantage. And when the multilateral trading system (MTS) does not suit their interests, they turn to ‘plurilaterals’ in the WTO and to bilateral or regional Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) outside the WTO. The WTO, like all multilateral agencies, is driven by certain balance of economic, ideological and political forces in the global domain. Asymmetrical power relations are part of the dynamics of global negotiations and outcomes.

3. The WTO is an extended arm of the US, the EU and Japan – i.e. the Empire. It was crafted by the US and EU, and there are structurally embedded aspects of the WTO that are resistant to change, except where it suits Western interests. Japan used to be in this league, but has become a second-rate power. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) – the so-called ‘the newly industrializing countries’ – are significant players, but they still have limited clout in the WTO.

4. The WTO is essentially a conspiratorial organisation. Its decisions are made by a few selected members (the big powers plus a small number of countries from the South selected by the North) in the so-called ‘green

rooms'. These decisions are then binding even on those not present. Thus, for example, Uganda was not allowed in the 'green room' in the first WTO Ministerial Conference in Singapore in 1997. The small coterie of negotiators decided on some matters, now called 'the Singapore Issues'. Uganda did not participate in this, and yet it is bound by the decisions then taken. Since then (20 years later) Uganda and other African countries of the global south are still fighting against these issues. We'll come to one of these issues – called 'trade facilitation' – later in the chapter.

The ideology of 'free trade' is a red herring

There is no such thing as 'free trade'. I know this as an economic historian. Even during the 'golden period of free trade' i.e. the

mercantile period (late 16th to mid-18th century) when Britain ruled

the seas, there was no free trade. Britain, more or less, defined the rules. The United States was the first country to challenge Britain, adopted a vigorous policy of industrial protection, followed by Germany, France, and Japan. Ironically, today they are champions of 'free trade', and through their control of the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank, they force the countries of the South (including Uganda, of course) to open their doors to imports from outside. This is the reason why Uganda got de-industrialised, as we saw in the last section.

African governments are weak, but need not be

I discovered to my dismay that practically all African countries had signed the Uruguay Agreements that set up the WTO without even reading the text. How does one explain this? In his book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon applied psychoanalytic theory to explain the feelings of 'dependency' and 'inadequacy' that black people experience in a white world. Fanon said that this was particularly the case with the educated black people who want to be accepted by their white mentors. 'The Negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behaves in accordance with a neurotic orientation.'

Unlike the leaders, the common people are not weak. As we saw in earlier chapters, the Common People have been resisting colonisation and fought for Africa's independence. But on the eve of political independence, the leaders

compromised. But the CP are still fighting for real independence. Patriotic African civil society organisations (CSOs) and non- governmental organisations (NGOs) try to hold the ground in alliance with the common people and within the state structures.

African weakness lies in the capitals and in their political leadership

African weakness lies among its leaders - officials and politicians – who are easy targets of both political pressure and aid dependency; it robs Africa of an independent economic policy. In Geneva, African negotiators have shown remarkable unity and bargaining skills over the years. For example, as I write these words (17 March, 2017), the Ugandan ambassador, Christopher Onyanga Aparr, on behalf of the least-developed countries (LDCs), said that ‘...domestic regulation disciplines imply effective market access and the LDCs will be granting “unfettered” market access because of DR.’ And he is not the only African that dares to speak truth to power.⁷² Outside the WTO, Uganda is engaged in several regional trading arrangements, the most important being, of course, the East African Community. Outside Africa Uganda has trade and investments agreements with various countries, of which the two most important ones that have serious negative consequences for Uganda (and Africa) are the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union, and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) with the United States. Between the two the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) is very complex.

Economic Partnership Agreement

This is a long, complicated, story and goes back to the colonial days. The EPAs are Europe’s attempt to continue neo-colonial ties with Africa.

I have gone into great detail on EPA in my book *Trade is War*. So I will simply summarise the principal reasons why Uganda need not (should not) sign the EPA.

1. It is an unequal treaty between two asymmetrical ‘power blocs’ – on one side 28 countries of the European Union speaking with one voice (through its Trade Commission in Brussels), and on the other the EAC speaking with five discordant voices.

2. Kenya is the only one that wants to sign the EPA, mainly because of pressure from a clique of local elite and few global corporations that want to maintain a preferential access to their horticultural products (including flowers) into Europe.
3. The rest of the EAC members (Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda) are LDCs, and have preferential access to Europe. They have no reason to sign the EPA.
4. The Uganda Ministry of Trade and Industry argues that Uganda must sign the EPA in solidarity with Kenya. In my view, that solidarity is best expressed if Uganda (together with Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania) demand of the EU to extend the LDC preferences to Kenya.
5. Europe needs EPA more than the EAC, especially in the light of an increasing trade (and investment) relations between the EAC and China in recent years. EPA is a means for the European Union to hold on to Africa.
6. EPA will undermine the regional integration of the East African Community.

In January 2017, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) met for ten days in Kampala, Uganda, to discuss various matters. On EPA, the Speaker of the EALA (Daniel Fred Kidega) made a statement warning the member states to handle the EPA ‘with utmost care’. However, at the time of writing, it was reported that Kenya and Rwanda had signed the agreement and Uganda had reversed its earlier decision and decided, also, to sign. Burundi said, it will not sign unless the EU lifts sanctions on it. The only country that remained adamant against signing was Tanzania. Its newly elected Head of State, President Magufuli, said Tanzania will not sign ‘until it has done an in-depth analysis taking into account the prevailing circumstances, particularly with regard to issues such as Brexit’, and until Tanzania, Uganda and Burundi provide data on products they are trading in, value of imports, and tax rates.

African Growth and Opportunity Act

The first thing to understand about AGOA is that, unlike EPA, it is not a negotiated agreement between the USA and Africa. It is a unilateral Act (or legislation) of the US Congress passed in May 2000. In other words, it is a

one- sided agreement. The United States decided that it wants to do Africa a ‘favour’ as it were. We’ll come to this ‘favour’ soon, but let us first look into AGOA and its promises.

AGOA provides trade preferences for quota and duty-free entry into the United States for certain goods, beyond the benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. GSP’s most important principle is the so-called Most Favoured Nations (MFN) principle. Simply put, the MFN states that if say Uganda gives a trade advantage (like low tariffs) to one country, it must extend the same to all countries.

Here is where AGOA comes in. Under it, the GSP is waived. But there is a catch here. There are countries in Africa that are not covered, such as Zimbabwe (which has been under US sanctions). The most significant goods covered under AGOA are textile and clothing. The Act’s apparel special provision permits AGOA countries to use foreign fabric for their garment exports. This is of no particular benefit for Uganda or Kenya for they can already do so under the EAC treaty. But for a country like Lesotho it is good, for it can import cotton from Uganda to make textiles for export to the United States. But there is a caveat. Lesotho can import from Uganda, but not from Zimbabwe because the latter is not included in the American list of AGOA ‘beneficiaries’. But then there is another problem for Lesotho. Under its neoliberal economic policy (influenced by the IMF and the World Bank), it lowered down its tariff walls generally. One outcome of this is that textiles from outside, for example China, have flooded the Lesotho market, and its AGOA mills have closed down.

This is just by way of background information. Let us now get back to East Africa. The American government has created three regional AGOA hubs in Africa – Accra, Gaborone, and Nairobi. On 28 November to 2 December 2016, EAC Experts had met and reviewed the so-called Regional AGOA Strategy and developed an implementation draft Work Plan, and a request was made to the US for approximately \$114,900,000 which the experts claimed the EAC would require to implement the Plan.

At the time of writing, concurrently, the US was negotiating an EAC - US Trade and Investment Agreement. Their respective experts were meeting in Nairobi to look at the template prepared by American experts. One of the

background documents was the December 2016 EAC AGOA strategy Work Plan. The experts were also negotiating a Regional Trade Facilitation Implementation Action Plan (RTFIAP). So although AGOA is a unilateral creation of the US, it becomes part of the agenda for the RTFIAP. In other words, we are looking at two parallel processes.

Doubtful benefits of AGOA: I have not come across an official assessment of what benefit Uganda has derived from AGOA. Trade flow data between Uganda and the USA do not separate the effects of AGOA from the total figures. In any case Uganda does not need AGOA.

- AGOA provides quota and duty-free entry of certain products into the US beyond the GSP which is constrained by the MFN principle (explained above). Generally, however, the rich countries have been able to get around the MFN principle for one reason or another. For example, the US refuses to extend GSP to countries that support terrorism.
- In any case, as a Least Developed Country (LDC), Uganda already gets duty and quota free access to the American market beyond GSP.
- An even more significant factor is that Uganda's agricultural sector has been literally devastated for reasons stated above in the section on agriculture. For example, Uganda now has only two functional textile mills, and the consumption of cotton has fallen from its peak of 400,000 to 15,000 bales per year. Instead of wasting time on AGOA, the officials should be looking at the root causes of Uganda's deindustrialisation.
- The 'AGOAs' apparel special provision permits Uganda to use foreign fabric for its garment exports. This is of no particular benefit for Uganda for it can already do so under the EAC treaty. AGOA was extended in June 2015 by a further 10 years, to 2025. The question is what is the point?

Uganda should join forces with Tanzania. It should focus its energy and diplomatic skills to further the integration of the East African Community to which we shall return in Part Three on 'Imperial Reckoning: Rebooting the Revolution'.

Finance Capital and the Role of Transnationals

The Centrality of Finance Capital Finance over production

The contemporary phase of capitalism is where finance rules over production - the 'financialisation of capitalism'. It is production capital that creates added value, and promotes scientific and technological development. Of course, it needs finance to undertake production. But whilst during the early phase of capitalism, finance was an accessory to production, today, in the dying phase of capitalism, it is production that has become an accessory to finance. Carroll Quigley, a renowned American historian and theorist of the evolution of civilizations, in his book *Tragedy and Hope* (1966) said: 'The powers of financial capitalism had another far reaching aim, nothing less than to create a world system of financial control in private hands able to dominate the political system of each country and the economy of the world as a whole.'⁷³

3 Quigley Carroll (1966) *Tragedy and Hope*, New York: Macmillan, p 324

The system is in the throes of a deepening financial crisis We are in the middle of a 'systemic' crisis, worse than the crisis of the 1930s. One of the best analysts of the deepening financial crisis is the Ugandan political economist, Dani W Nabudere. He throws much light into the causes of the financial crises and *explains why a social-political revolution is necessary to get out of a system that reproduces itself*. In 1989 he wrote an over 300-page manuscript called *The Rise and Fall of Money Capital*.⁷⁴ It is probably the most comprehensive analysis of money since the early writings of, among others, Marx, Engels, Hilferding, Rosa Luxemburg, and Keynes, all of whom came under his critical analysis. Nabudere carried out a meticulous historical analysis of the rise of money as money (as distinct from its evolution as capital), and *made the prediction that money will eventually overcome capital and then meet its own demise as an instrument of credit*.

The systemic crisis, as Nabudere says, is essentially political. But it manifests itself at the economic level in many forms. Let me elaborate this with some of my own recent research.

- The real problem for the financial system is the bond bubble. In

2008 when the crisis hit it was \$80 trillion. It has since grown to over \$100 trillion.

- The derivatives market that uses this bond bubble as collateral is over \$555 trillion.
- Transnational corporations, even governments, use derivatives to fake earnings and hide debt. No one knows the extent of its spread, but it is likely to be significant.
- Corporations today are more leveraged than they were in 2007. As Stanley Druckenmiller noted, in 2007 corporate bonds were \$3.5 trillion... today they are \$7 trillion, an amount equal to nearly 50% of US GDP.⁷⁵
- The Central Banks are now all leveraged at levels greater than or

74 Nabudere Dani Wadada (1989). The Rise and Fall of Money-Capital, London:

Africa In Transition Trust

<https://www.google.co.uk/#q=Stanley+Druckenmiller+corporate+bonds+are+equal+to+nearly+50%+of+US+GDP>

equivalent to where Lehman Brothers was when it imploded. The US Fed is leveraged at 78 to 1!

- The Central Banks have no idea how to exit their strategies. FED minutes released from 2009 show that Janet Yellen, the then Chair of the Board of Governors of the US Federal Reserve System, was worried about how to exit when the Fed's balance sheet was \$1.3 trillion (back in 2009). Today it is over \$4.5 trillion.

To get out of the crisis the ruling classes first 'remedial' action is to bail out the banks not the people, indeed at the cost of the people. Quite clearly it is an anti-people or anti-democratic system. In the process, the people are subjected to bear the burden of 'adjustment' of the system, and the smaller, weaker nations like Greece and Ireland are made hostages to the demands of the bigger players like Germany, France and the United Kingdom, and the global capitalist banking and money system. It is not only anti-people and anti-democratic, but also predatory.

With this at the back of our minds; let us get back to Uganda.

The banking system in Uganda

Earlier we analysed how British finance capital was central in the creation of the colonial economy; how the colonial state created a fragmented peasantry to engage in commodity production at minimal cost in order to profit colonial

corporations. Thus finance capital played a dominant role in production. The State also provided the conditions for the creation of a monetary system and the currency. An important point worth mentioning is that most of the finance came from inside Uganda primarily in the form of cotton tax both in production and in export levies. Relatively little came from the Colonial Welfare and Development Fund, and none from World Bank or the IMF.

Of course, the situation is very different today. Uganda is hostage to the World Bank, the IMF and to the so-called ‘donors’ that provide ‘development aid’. I shall come back to this later.

The Bank of Uganda (the Central Bank)

At the apex of the banking system is the Bank of Uganda (the Central Bank). It is wholly owned by the government but it is not part of the Ministry of Finance. However, the governor and his deputy are appointed by the president for five-year renewable terms. The governor runs the Bank at the behest of the board of directors whose members (between four and six) are appointed by the minister of finance for three-year renewable terms. The secretary to the treasury is an ex- officio member of the board. But, and this is important, the Bank is supposed to be independent of the Government. Its board, chaired by the governor, is the ‘supreme’ policy making body.

The Bank of Uganda maintains branches and currency centres in various locations around the country – Arua, Fort Portal, Gulu, Jinja, Kabale, Kampala, Masaka, Mbale and Mbarara. Their function is to store, process and monitor the supply of currency to the government and private financial institutions in the surrounding cities, towns, and villages.

Development, Commercial and other types of banks

The Uganda Development Bank Limited (UDBL) is a government- owned development bank which began operating in 1972. UDBL’s main function is to promote and finance development in various sectors of the economy. With the coming into power of the NRM government, the UDBL was able to obtain large credits from external financiers, such as the African Development Bank, the International Development Association, the European Investment Bank, the European Economic Community, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA). Between 1997 and 2001, the bank was restructured, recapitalized,

and re-organized as a limited liability company. As of December 2015, UDBL's total assets were valued at UGX: 205.6 billion; the shareholders' equity was valued at about UGX: 141.55 billion; with a loan book valued at UGX: 141 billion. It had developed a medium-term recapitalization plan (2013-2017) that will increase shareholders' equity to UGX: 500 billion (US\$200 million).

The Uganda Commercial Bank (UCB) also used to be a government owned bank until it was privatised in 2001. Besides the UCB, Uganda has 26 licensed commercial banks. Since UCB's privatization the banking sector is totally controlled by private commercial banks, the largest of which have foreign owners, including Citibank, Barclays, Stanbic and Standard Chartered. Their primary motivation is the maximization of profit. Interest rates are high: it is quite common for commercial banks to charge 20-30 percent interest on loans. Even when banks are willing to offer credit, they demand as security land titles, assets such as buildings, vehicles and equipment or personal valuables, often of a much higher value than the credit requested. Many rural areas are considered unviable by the private banks and so lack banking services.

This has given rise to micro-finance institutions (MFIs), many of which are owned and financed from outside. Thus, for example, the UK-based Five Talents International provides funds to rural areas in Uganda. The FTA claims that it has enabled more than 15,000 financially excluded members across 5 dioceses in Uganda to access financial services (savings, loans and insurance) along with training and mentoring. The loans are typically about £150 or less.

Many MFIs are modelled after the Grameen Bank founded by Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh. Typically MFIs charge interest rate of 30% or more. As the loans are repaid, the funds are recycled and further loans are made. There is no question that in the absence of ordinary commercial banks in the rural areas, the MFIs provide the necessary funds, but there is no doubt that in return the villagers pay exorbitant charges, and are put in inescapable debts, and are thus severely exploited.

Critical insights into Uganda's banking system

In concluding this section, I draw some critical insights into Uganda's banking

system from Ezra Struma's semi-autobiographical '*Advancing the Ugandan Economy: A Personal Account*'.⁷⁶ I refer to chapter 7: 'Transforming the Bank of Uganda' and chapter 10: 'The Struggle for Uganda Commercial Bank'. Suruma was Bank of Uganda's deputy governor from 1987 to 1992 and UCB's chairman and managing director from 1993 to 1996.

The people who worked in the Central Bank, says Suruma, 'were a special aristocracy unlike any other organization in the country' (p 47). Suruma gives a detailed account of how the Bank paid out to ministers of state their budgetary allocations that had 'neither been collected from taxes nor received from abroad' leading to triple digit inflation, and strangely 'nobody was stunned' (p 48).

This was the background to the Bank of Uganda Act that, on the advice of the IMF and the World Bank, strengthened the Bank's 'independence'. But then the government went too far in giving the Bank its 'independence'. Suruma advised that 'In the future, the law should be amended so that the central bank is more specifically answerable to the minister of finance, the president, or parliament or to some other public body' (p 54).

In 1993, Suruma became the head of the Uganda Commercial Bank, then owned by the state. Very soon he discovered that the UCB was run by 'expatriate consultants' appointed by the World Bank, 'paid by the World Bank and therefore answerable to it' (p 67). He also found that the bank was bankrupt. 'The UCB was not just *technically* insolvent, but *actually* insolvent.' It had no money (p 68). The bank suffered from 'liquidity illusion' (p 69).

Why was the UCB bankrupt and what could be done about it? Here Suruma and the World Bank had contradictory diagnosis and ⁷⁶ Suruma, Ezra Sabiti (2014). *Advancing the Ugandan Economy: A Personal*

Account, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC

prescription. The WB argued that it was because the bank was 'a public institution' and should be privatized. Suruma's view was that 'the UCB was an instrument of Uganda's independence, and it should remain so, either in government hands or in the hands of the Ugandan people as shareholders' (p 71).

For four years the UCB was caught up in a ‘major confrontation ... between the executive branch [of government] and parliament’ (p 68). Suruma had to take tough decisions, and retrench the bulk of staff. A friend asked him: ‘Do you intend to live in Uganda?’ If so, then he should be more careful in this retrenchment (p 71). But Suruma went ahead carefully avoiding risks – ‘For example, I avoided being served with food or beverages in the office’ (p 71).

In the end the UCB recovered and became solvent. Soon the World Bank descended upon him, saying that it should now be privatized ‘for it would fetch a better price’. Suruma protested, but the President sacked him, and the UCB was privatized, amidst strong disapproval by the parliament (pp 72-73). The UCB was first sold to a Malaysian bank which was itself insolvent. The government reacquired the bank, and sold it to the Standard Chartered Bank of South Africa for \$19.5 million, which the new owner recovered ‘as profit in the very first year of operation after the sale’ (p 73). So much for the ‘independence’ of the banking system in Uganda!

The UCB and other commercial banks were working for foreign capital in league with a local comprador class, not for the people of Uganda. ‘Despite an average inflation of about 5 percent over the past fifteen years, commercial bank lending rate[s] are stuck at about 20 percent’ (p 74). In other words, the banks were making huge profits at the cost of the ordinary people. ‘In particular,’ Suruma writes, ‘access to long-term capital and the cost of borrowing remain severe challenges for small-scale enterprises in the Ugandan economies’ (p 75).

Tax system and the role of TNCs

The situation has not changed from colonial days

You will recall our earlier analysis of the colonial period. The colonial state provided some capital – from the Colonial Welfare and Development Fund – but most of it came from within Uganda in the form of cotton tax - both in production and in export levies. In 1940, for example, 50% of the export revenue consisted of tax on peasants put aside as ‘reserves to stabilise prices’. By 1949, the State accumulated £20 million from peasant tax. *In fact, there was a net capital outflow from Uganda to Britain.*

The situation has not changed. There is still a net capital outflow to Uganda's creditors including the World Bank and the so-called 'development aid donors', but also to Transnational corporations (TNCs). In her research Maria Sanchez says that Uganda owes approximately US\$ 3,100 million to the multilateral creditors with World Bank, IMF, and African Development Bank being the main creditors.⁷⁷

Speaking at the launch of African Development Bank's *Economic Outlook for Africa 2014*, the acting commissioner of Ministry of Finance, Robert Okudi, said, '*Although Uganda is attracting a lot of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), it loses \$400 million (about Shs1.05 trillion) per year in capital outflows in form of dividend payments to the shareholders...* Owing to economic liberalisation, there are many multinational companies operating in Uganda in the energy, agriculture, oil, and manufacturing, among others' that externalise their profits from Uganda.⁷⁸

Uganda's heavy dependence on aid

Uganda is also heavily dependent on 'development aid'. Around 80% its development expenditure has been aid dependent. Two of the ⁷⁷ Maria Sanchez, 2016, *Foreign Aid and Growth in Africa: a case study of Uganda*.

<http://research-methodology.net/foreign-aid-and-growth-in-africa/> ⁷⁸ See report by Martin Luther Oketch, *Daily Monitor*, July 26, 2014 (Italics added)

<http://www.monitor.co.ug/Business/Uganda-loses-Shs1-trillion-in-capitaloutflows-annually/688322-2396296-2215ptz/index.html>

institutions involved in this are the UN Millennium Project, and the Commission for Africa set up by the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2005. Without bringing any net gain for development these have made Uganda even more aid dependent. In his book *The Value Chain of Foreign Aid: Development, Poverty Reduction, and Regional Conditions*, Christian Schabbel cites Uganda as 'a stark example of ineffectiveness of foreign aid... in terms of contributing to economic development'.⁷⁹ On several occasions, the 'international community' has 'forgiven' Uganda's debt, but the debt continues unabated.

Tax regime skewed in favour of TNCs and rich Ugandans Nestle is a Swiss transnational food and drink company. It is accused of 'inappropriate' marketing practices in Uganda. Its *Cerelac* baby food products have been

advertised as being more beneficial to babies than breastfeeding. This, the Baby Milk Action group says, is a hoax. It launched a campaign against Nestle and to promote breastfeeding. Nestle should put health of babies before their profits. But Nestle, operating from Nairobi, continues to profit at the cost of Uganda's children and the economy.

As we said earlier, the TNCs externalise massive amount of profits out of Uganda. This affects exchange rates, disadvantages local businesses, increases cost of imports, as well as job and wage freezes. The TNCs have complex tax regimes worked out by big accounting corporations such as KPMG, Deloitte Touche, Price Waterhouse Coopers and Ernst & Young. They have tax planning schemes (e.g. transfer pricing) and inadequacies in tax administration (e.g. audit skill gaps) to avoid paying taxes whilst making huge profits. Mostly the poor suffer.

Leaving aside the TNCs, the tax regime in Uganda is cripplingly influenced by politicians and bureaucrats in favour of the wealthy

79 Schabbel, Christian The Value Chain of Foreign Aid: Development, Poverty Reduction, and Regional Conditions. <http://www.springer.com/gb/book/9783790819311>

– rich landlords, large-scale farmers (e.g. livestock owners, banana growers, coffee producers), and limited liability companies claiming large expenses, thus paying little tax. Again, it is the Common Person who suffers.

The Social Services: Health, Water and Education

The social services are basic and critical needs of the common people. These include health, water, education – which are the focus of this section – as well as power, sewage and waste collection, telecommunications, financial services, food security, etc. These are also needed for agricultural and industrial development. For example, earlier I quoted from a report on a survey carried out by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBS) that irrigation was practised by less than one percent (0.9%) of the 3.6 million households that responded to the survey. The survey also showed that 2 million rural households (56.7%) reported that their members were not able to afford eating what they would normally eat.

Health

Providers of health care

Uganda's health system is composed of health services delivered in the public sector, the private sector, community-based health care systems, and by traditional health practitioners (such as herbalists, spiritual healers, traditional birth attendants and hydro therapists). More than three-quarters of the not-for-profit providers are religion based, and deliver services at local as well as national level. Three of the main ones are: the Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau, Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau, and the Uganda Muslim Medical Bureau. The not-for-profit organisations include Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), especially for HIV/AIDS counselling and treatment.

The health system is largely decentralised with national facilities as well as at district levels. At the national level are the referral hospitals (national and regional), and semi-independent institutions including the Uganda Blood Transfusion Services, the National Medical Stores, the Uganda Public Health Laboratories and the Uganda National Health Research Organization (UNHRO).

Health providers at the village level Health Centre I level include Village Health Teams (VHTs), and volunteer community health workers. The Health Centre II is an outpatient service run by a nurse, serving approximately 5,000 people. At a higher level – Health Centre III – the clinics serve approximately 10,000 people and provide in-patient, simple diagnostic, and maternal health services. Above HC III is the HC IV (in addition to all the services provided at HC III) also provide surgical services, blood transfusion services and comprehensive emergency obstetric care. At this level the clinics are run by a medical doctor.

In terms of governance, the Ministry of Health (MOH) coordinates *stakeholders* and is responsible for planning, budgeting, policy formulation, and regulation. At the district and sub-district, the district health management team (DHMT) is led by the district health officer (DHO) and consists of managers of various health departments in the district. The heads of (HC IV) are included on the DHMT. The DHMT monitors implementation of health services in the district, in coherence with national policies. A Health Unit Management Committee (HUMC) composed of health staff, civil society, and community leaders is charged with linking health facility governance with community needs.⁸⁰

All this looks impressive, until you consider the realities on the ground.

0 Stephen Malinga. 'The Second National Health Policy: Promoting People's Health to Enhance Socio-Economic Development', Uganda Ministry of Health, July 2010; and Tashobya C, Nabyonga J, Murindwa G, Kyabaggu J, and Rutebemberwa (2016), 'Meeting the challenges of decentralised health service delivery in Uganda as a component of broader health sector reforms'. London: Department for International Development, Westminster

Some figures of health conditions as causes for serious concern According to the World Bank figures, health in Uganda lags behind any other country in the East African Community except Burundi. Total health expenditure in Uganda as a percentage of the GDP was 7.2 percent in 2014; and as of 2015, the probability of a child dying before reaching age five was 5.5 percent (55 deaths for every 1,000 live births).⁸¹

The leading causes of death in Uganda are HIV/AIDS, malaria, respiratory infections, and diarrheal disease. The risk factors most responsible for death and disability include child and maternal malnutrition, unprotected sexual activity, contaminated water and poor sanitation, and air pollution.⁸² In 2013, 16 million cases of malaria and 10,500 deaths were reported in Uganda.⁸³

The people in the northern region suffer most

In the northern regions of Uganda including West Nile and Karamoja, up to 26% of people are chronically poor; 80% of households live below the poverty line compared to 20% in the rest of the country. The region has the lowest per capita household expenditure of UGX: 21,000 compared to UGX: 30,000 of the general population.

Most districts in the region lack clean piped water supply with the exception of a few town centres like Gulu, Lira, Arua, and Soroti. The pit latrine coverage ranges from 4 to 84 percent in some districts. The region has the lowest numbers of health facilities compared to other regions. Of the total 5,229 health facilities in Uganda (2,867 operated by the government, 874 operated by non-governmental organizations, and 1,488 private facilities), there are only 788 health facilities in the Northern Region (664 operated by government, 122 operated by NGOs, and 2 private facilities). Health facility deliveries range from 7 percent in Amudat, to 81 percent in Gulu.⁸⁴

1 World Bank (2013), 'Life expectancy at birth'; World Bank (2015), 'Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)'; World Bank (2015) 'Health expenditure, total (% of GDP)'

2 Ke Xu; David B Evans; Patrick Kadama; Juliet Nabyonga; Peter Ogwang Ogwai; Ana Mylena Aguilar (2005). 'The elimination of user fees in Uganda: Impact on utilization and catastrophic health expenditures'. Geneva: World Health Organization.

83 Bulletin of the World Health Organization (2006), 'Treating Malaria at Home in Uganda'

The region was the worst in infant child mortality indicators (under age 5 mortality: 178 deaths per 1000 live births; under age 1 mortality: 105 deaths per 1000 live births; neonatal mortality: 42 deaths within the first month of life per 1000 live births). The region has the highest HIV prevalence rates of 8% in the country, second only to Kampala. Nodding syndrome – a little-known disease that disables mental and physical faculties of children – hit the region during the early to mid-2000s. This came to light only in 2009 when the WHO and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention first investigated it. The disease affected children aged 5–15 years, mainly in the Acholi sub-region and a few in the Lango sub-region. Over 3,000 confirmed cases were documented as of 2012, with Uganda having the highest number of cases in the world. These children eventually develop various forms of epileptic seizures as well as disabilities such as severe malnutrition, burns, contractures, severe kyphosis, cognitive impairment, and wandering away from homes. Since the interventions began in 2012, there have been no new cases reported in the region. The exact cause of this disease has not been found, although there is a strong association with onchocerciasis. Communities believe their children could have been exposed to chemicals during the war, particularly when they were displaced into internally displaced persons' camps because they observed that their children became sick only when in the camps.⁸⁵

The sub-region that suffers most is Karamoja. For example, under age 5 mortality rates (deaths per 1000 live births) are the worst in the country. Ongoing civil strife and conflicts have affected the pastoral

84 Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS): 2015 Statistical Abstract

85 Mutamba, B; Abbo, C; Muron, J; Idro, R; Mwaka, A D (2013), 'Stereotypes on Nodding syndrome: responses of health workers in the affected region of northern Uganda'. African Health Sciences. 13 (4): 986-91

life style including pasture, livestock and water. As a child I was brought up in Karamoja, and I have visited it several times in recent years. I was there in October, 2016, and I was told by the people that the situation has worsened over the years. At least 640,000 people in Uganda's north-eastern Karamoja region – more than half its population – are facing food shortages because of the drought.⁸⁶

Education

Among the key drivers of inequality is differential access and quality of education to the rich and the poor.

Education as a ladder

I have travelled up and down Uganda talking to people. Above everything, parents prioritise education over even health. They are prepared to forgo meals for themselves to save money for school fees so that their children get good education. They dream of their children growing up as teachers, lawyers or doctors. 'She is ten years old, and very clever,' a mother told me, 'no matter what, I will work hard so that she gets to Makerere and Mulago to become a doctor. I don't want her to sell maize and matoke on the roadside as I do'.

The Universal Primary Education

By the time the NRM government took over power in January 1986, government expenditure on education amounted to about 27% of the levels of the 1970s. In 1997 the government introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) to improve the badly deteriorated system in education. Its objectives were:

- to reform the education of primary teachers;
- to prepare for reforms in the primary school curriculum;
- to reform the pupil examination system;
- to improve the provision of textbooks and reading materials in

classrooms;

- to introduce a system of assessing the quality of education provided;

[http://www.irinnews.org/report/102373/uganda%E2%80%99s-karamoja-facesdrought-emergency\]](http://www.irinnews.org/report/102373/uganda%E2%80%99s-karamoja-facesdrought-emergency)

- to introduce a framework for country-wide assessments of the overall progress in education.

But, in the end, the UPE failed in its objectives. Here is an assessment by Willy Ngaka.

It was initially realized to provide free education for four children per family, but the program was not performing based in its regulations due to the complex structure of Ugandan families. Most Ugandan families have more than four children and households started sending every child, which resulted in a rapid increase in student enrolment in primary schools. Due to the circumstances, President Museveni announced that the UPE was open to all children of all families. When the new policy was executed, schools experienced a massive influx of pupils and the demand for learning materials, teachers, and infrastructure became a challenge to the education system.⁸⁷

Ngaka argues that the UPE resulted in costly consequences, including but not limited to a poor quality education, low pupil achievement, untrained teachers, improper infrastructures and classroom settings. This is a damning verdict on such an important matter of deep concern to the common people.

Class, gender and regional differences

I have visited some of schools in both the urban and rural areas. My visual evidence and talking to teachers confirmed my intuitive sense that class differences have a significant impact on access to education and the quality of delivery to the children. I was told that rich families (with houses, electricity, indoor toilets, and telephones) would place their children in private schools (including boarding schools), whilst poorer families (mainly in the rural areas) are likely to place their children (when there are places available) in government-aided or religion affiliated schools.

⁸⁷ Ngaka, Willy. 2006. 'Co-Operative Learning In a Universal Primary Education System'. *International Journal of Learning* 13.8 (2006), p 172

The UPE did help rectify the gender bias against girls, but more girls are likely to drop out of school mainly, I was told, because of socialcultural factors.

Of course, I have not said anything new. Most people know this. But it has to be restated again and again.

The UPE helped to rectify some regional differences, but these still remain. In northern Uganda (partly because of insecurity and other factors that we mentioned when discussing health), facilities for education tends to be of a low quality – classes held under trees, no books, high rate of teacher absenteeism. On my last visit to the Karamoja I was told about rebellious pupils, many addicted to substance abuse (wildly grown cannabis like substance). Very few children complete even primary education.

What are the challenges?

The education system is based on an outdated and inappropriate curriculum that is largely academic and fails to develop skills or human capital. As a result, young people are experiencing more ‘schooling’ than ‘skilling’ and, due to liberalization and privatisation policies, even schooling carries a very high opportunity cost. To send their children to school, families commonly sell household assets such as land, which cannot be replaced, and even then most school leavers fail to secure gainful employment.

School drop-out rates between primary and post-primary levels are very high (up to 80%).

Water ⁸⁸Water, water, everywhere...

Almost the whole of Uganda lies in the Nile basin, and is the source of the world’s longest river – the Nile. It is in the heart of the Great ⁸⁸ The full line is ‘Water, water, everywhere; but not a drop to drink’. It is a wellknown line from Samuel Coleridge’s poem ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’.

Lakes region including Africa’s largest lake – Lake Victoria. Other lakes include Lake Edward, Lake Albert, and Lake Kyoga. There should thus be no shortage of freshwater supply. Besides the lakes, Uganda’s surface and groundwater is supplied by plenty of rain. The average annual rainfall ranges from 900 mm in the semi-arid areas of Karamoja to 2000 mm on the Ssesse Islands in Lake Victoria.

The National Water and Sewer Company

Under the 1995 Constitution the government is responsible for providing for a good water management system at all levels. The 1995 Water Statute⁸⁹ sets out the following objectives:

- Promotion of rational water use and management
- Promotion of the provision of a clean, safe, and sufficient domestic water supply to all people
- Promotion of the orderly development of water and its use for other purposes, such as irrigation and industrial use, among others, in ways that minimize harmful effects to the environment
- Pollution control and promotion of safe storage, treatment, discharge, and disposal of waste that may cause water pollution or other threats to the environment and human health.

The agency in charge of implementing these is the National Water and Sewer Company. It is a public utility company 100% owned by the Government. It works under the Ministry of Water and Environment which sets out the policy and regulations on economic and performance, the environment, drinking water quality, and financial aspects. The Local Government Act of 1997 provides for the decentralization of services, including the operation and maintenance of water facilities.

Uganda: Water Statute, 1995 (Statute No. 9 of 1995)

Bushenyi rain harvest water tank

The common people face challenges and try as best as they can to find ways to overcome these. Here is an example.

In Bushenyi, people have created their own system of harvesting rain water. The Bushenyi Hill Co-Op Hospital and Clinic has installed a rain harvest water tank and gutter system using metal gutters placed at the edge of the clinic roof to divert rainwater into a large storage tank. The local tea farmers and farm workers had hand-carried sand and water up the mountainside to build the hospital. They baked thousands of red bricks to build a five-room building with a tin roof. The co-op members who live on the steep hillsides surrounding the clinic set aside a portion of their tea harvest each month to fund the project. That relatively clean source of water helps treat patients in the clinic.⁹⁰

In addition, the Uganda Rainwater Association working with existing institutional structures, has helped to mobilise and sensitise the community and equip them with hands on training in construction of domestic roof water harvesting systems at selected beneficiary households.⁹¹

The challenges

Under PEAP, water supply and sanitation are recognised as key factors in poverty eradication. PEAP estimated that Uganda needed about US\$1.4 billion (US\$92 million) per year to increase water supply coverage by 95%.

The National Water and Sewer Company (NWSC) carried out a country wide customer satisfaction survey in 2009-2010. Out of a

90 Halvorson, George (2007). Health Care Co-Ops in Uganda. The Permanente

Press. [https://www.google.co.uk/#q=The+Hospital+on+Bushenyi+Hill 1 Grace Nakanjakko and Gloria Kamugasha Karungi, 'Piloting the delivery of domestic roof water harvesting systems In Bushenyi and Mbarara districts in Western Uganda'](https://www.google.co.uk/#q=The+Hospital+on+Bushenyi+Hill+1+Grace+Nakanjakko+and+Gloria+Kamugasha+Karungi,+Piloting+the+delivery+of+domestic+roof+water+harvesting+systems+In+Bushenyi+and+Mbarara+districts+in+Western+Uganda). <http://www.eng.warwick.ac.uk/ircsa/pdf/12th/4/NakanjakoGrace.pdf>. For excellent photos on the Bushenyi water tank, see <https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=Bushenyi+rain+harvest+water+tank#>

sample of 5319 customers, 2731 responded. Customer care received the highest rating, while water quality and pressure received lower, but still overall good ratings. Customers complained about low water pressure, muddy water during the wet season, supply interruptions during the dry season, low water pressure, slow implementation of new connections, erratic bills, disconnection despite having paid their water bills, and the rudeness of field staff.⁹²

This was a survey by the provider of water services. Despite complaints, it paints an overall rosy picture. It says that a 'customer satisfaction index' was calculated across all questions; it showed that '85% of customers are satisfied, up from 83% during the last survey'. But this needs to be verified by an independent assessment. My own experience leads me to believe that the picture is not as rosy as the NWSC indicates. For example, I have seen sewage disposed directly into the environment without any treatment creating hazards for public health – not only in the rural areas but also in the midst of Kampala.

Above all, despite lying in the heart of the Nile basin and good rainfall, access to water and a good sewage system is a real challenge to more than three-quarters of Uganda's population, and this means mostly the poor in the rural areas. Lake Victoria has been receding. Between 2003 and 2006 it lost 75 billion cubic meters, about 3% of its volume, because of decline in rainfall, changing weather patterns, and increasing use of water from the lake for growing flowers for export.⁹³

92 Sheba Bamwine: Customer Relations Monitoring. 'Customer Satisfaction Survey July–Oct 2010: Survey Findings and Discussions'

93 One of the companies in this industry is Rosebud Limited, a flagship company of the Ruparelia Group of companies. It advertises itself as 'the largest exporter of Sweetheart cut'. The farm has steel structures and a 100% Hydroponics system supported by a fully automatic centralized irrigation system. The farm produces approximately 40% of total Ugandan flower exports. Rosebud Limited is in the process of expanding up to 65 hectares of green houses for the targeted export of 15 million stems per month. [http:// www.rosebudlimited.com/](http://www.rosebudlimited.com/)

Some concluding observations on the 'base' of Uganda's economy

1. Since the NRM took over Uganda in 1996, the government has made heroic attempts to reconstruct an economy that was almost totally shattered under Amin and the next six years following Amin's overthrow. The reality on the ground posed many challenges, and government turned to the World Bank and the western donor countries for assistance. But this came with a price. Since late 1980s, state-guided developmental goals succumbed to market-determined priorities under neoliberal policies that came with the WB-IMF-donor aid and investment packages.

2. Despite high economic growth rates, Uganda is a very unequal society, with Gini coefficient estimated at 0.47 in 2014. Growth is benefiting relatively few people at the expense of the majority. Land grabbing is rampant. It is part of the imperial system. The result is that poor farmers, small-time cattle keepers and fisher folk

- as well as rural households - are being dispossessed of the means of their own survival. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy and employs more than 70% of the population. Nonetheless, it gets only 3% of the national budget. Government policy has placed agriculture above the lives of peasants. Effectively, it is 'Kulima Kwanza' not, as it should be, 'Mkulima Kwanza'.

3. The most shocking data is on the household food security: 56.7% were not able to afford eating their normal food. Adult female members bore the brunt of food shortage: 53.1% of them skipped meals; 61.1% ate 'less preferred food'; 68.3% reduced size of meals. The leading causes of death in Uganda are HIV/AIDS, malaria, respiratory infections, and diarrheal disease. The risk factors most responsible for death and disability include child and maternal malnutrition, unprotected sexual activity, contaminated water and poor sanitation, and air pollution.

4. Uganda is endowed with rich natural resources. Ever since the discovery of oil, the expectations of people have skyrocketed. Oil may bring bonanza, but that will depend on government's overall development policies. The record of the industrial and manufacturing sector remains unimpressive. The share of manufacturing in GDP grew marginally from 6.3% in 1982 to 8.4% 1997; thereafter, it declined to about 7%. But more important than statistics is the quality of industrial activities. These are low value-added end-product assembling, or processing. This is largely because of the government's market-driven strategy.

5. The IMF-WB imposed neoliberal ideology has also compromised Uganda's trade policy both regionally and globally. The government appears to believe that there is something called 'free trade' and that the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is a benign organisation. It is not. Trade is war, and the WTO is an extended arm of the empire. Outside the WTO, Uganda is engaged in several regional trading arrangements, the most important being, of course, the East African Community. But the prospects of regional integration look dim as a result of the 'globalisation' policies of all the member states in the region.

6. The Central Bank of Uganda is in the control of the IMF/World Bank and not the Uganda government. The tax system has not changed from colonial days - the productive labour of peasants and workers contribute the bulk of Uganda's revenue; the rich class and the multinationals pay as little as they can through accounting manipulation.

7. The bravado about 'attracting' impressive amounts of FDIs is totally misplaced. Our own interpretation of this remarkable 'success' in 'attracting' the FDIs is that the state of Uganda has handed over the formal sector of the

economy to global (imperial) finance capital. It is no wonder then that most citizens of Uganda are reduced to penury working either as underdogs of the transnational companies as SMEs, or in the informal sector.

8. The NRM started in 1986 with an energetic program of reviving the economy based on the 10-point program. That is now history. The challenges of underdevelopment and the imperial control over the productive forces and the working classes remain unchanged.

QUESTIONS

1. How do you explain that the richest 10% of the population enjoys 42% of the national income, whilst the bottom poorest 10% have a meagre 2.5%, and moreover, this has further declined by 21 percent over the past 20 years?

2. What are the different types of land tenure in *present-day* Uganda?

3. What are the main causes of land disputes in Uganda?

4. The book gives several instances of land grabbing in Uganda. Describe an instance of land grab in your knowledge, preferably near where you live or work.

5. Why does the legal system (the laws and the judiciary) not provide protection to *bibanja* holders?

6. Discuss why land grabbing has been disastrous for the environment.

7. The people on the island of Kalangala are suffering as a result of land grabbing. If they were to approach you, what advice and activist assistance would you provide?

8. The agricultural sector is grossly underfunded and the peasants are over-exploited. Why is that so? In whose interest? How would you turn around government policy so that peasants are prioritised over agriculture - not '*Kulima Kwanza*' but '*Mkulima Kwanza*'?

9. Explain how and why the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) imposed by the IMF, the World Bank, and the 'donors' has been disastrous for the economy and the common people.

10. The World Bank's September, 2015 report (cited in the book) points the finger at the people of Uganda and its government for the failure of the agricultural policies. Write a memo to the Ministry of Agriculture to counter the WB's evidence and argument.

11. In 1991 the Uganda Investment Authority was created to encourage foreign direct investments (FDIs). Was that a wise move? Do FDIs really help?
12. The state official data ignores the 'informal sector'. What contribution does this sector make to the country's economy, and the employment and livelihood of the common people?
13. Who owns the industrial manufacturing sector in Uganda?
14. The cotton and textile industry was flourishing at independence. Much of it collapsed during Amin's regime. Why have these not been resurrected during the last 35 (plus) years since the NRM came to power?
15. Is the discovery of oil in Uganda a boon or a curse?
16. Uganda's trading policy is based on the assumption of free trade. I argue that there is no such thing as 'free trade'; it has never existed since the birth of capitalism. Write an essay to challenge me.
17. Should Uganda sign the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Europe? Give pros and cons of signing it.
18. Give pros and cons of signing the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) with the United States.
19. Why is the present phase of capitalism described as the 'financialisation of capitalism'? What are its consequences for Uganda?
20. The global capitalist system has been in the throes of a deepening financial crisis since 2007. Why is the crisis still persisting?
21. The Central Bank of Uganda is wholly owned by the government but it is not part of the Ministry of Finance. Why not? Who makes policies in, or for, the Central Bank?
22. The Uganda Commercial Bank, once owned by the state, has been privatised. Why and with what consequences?
23. The tax system in Uganda has not changed from colonial days; it is essentially the same. Does that surprise you? Explain why you find this surprising.
24. Why is there more capital outflow than inflow? What are the various mechanisms through which capital flows out of Uganda?
25. The people in the northern regions of Uganda suffer more than the rest of the country from lack of basic social services like health, water and education. Discuss the causes and the possible way forward.
26. Class differences play a major part in the asymmetric distribution of social services. How can these be counteracted?
27. The outdated education system focuses on 'schooling' rather than

‘skilling’. What are the reasons for this, and how may these be addressed?

28. According to one survey, among adult females 53.1% of them skipped meals; 61.1% ate ‘less preferred food’; and 68.3% reduced the size of their meals. Why should women bear the brunt of food shortage, and what is the way forward?

29. The NRM started in 1986 with an energetic program of reviving the economy based on the 10-point program. But the challenges of underdevelopment and the imperial control over the productive forces and the working classes remain unchanged. Explain why.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The superstructure

The relationship between the base and the superstructure is dialectical – each impacts on the other. Earlier I quoted Mao that in the short run “politics are in command”. He went on to say, “... go to the masses and be one with them.” It is possible, with the masses behind you, to overturn the rule of the Empire.

Earlier I quoted Marx on his long view of history, when the BASE, the ‘material forces of production’, the economic structure of society, ‘material forces of production’, the economic structure of society, – determine the SUPERSTRUCTURE – the social and political processes and our ‘consciousness’ about what is going on around us. The ‘superstructure’ comprises of the government, the army, laws, comprises of the government, the army, laws, religion, ideology, culture, education, etc.

In this section, we will not deal with the superstructure’s whole range of issues, focusing mainly on its two major components – governance and the army.

Governance and Politics

Politics in command

The relationship between the base and the superstructure is dialectical – each impacts on the other. Earlier I quoted Mao that in the short run impacts on the other. Earlier I quoted Mao that in the short run ‘politics are in command’. He went on to say, ‘... go to the masses and be one with them.’ It is possible, with the masses behind you, to It is possible, with the masses behind you, to overturn the rule of the Empire. In the previous section we dealt with the economy. But the struggle to wrest control of the economy is a political challenge, and this is what we analyse in this section.

Let us go back a bit and summarise the experience of the past before coming to the present.

Attempts to control the economy from 1962 to 1985

The first point to make is that the gaining of political independence does not end the domination of international financial oligarchy at the economic level – as we saw above when discussing, for example, the industrial and banking sectors of the economy. Uganda, in other words, is still a neo-colony, still dominated by the Empire. However, and this is politically very important, the Empire's domination is not total during the neo-colonial period – as during the period when Britain had direct control over both the base and the superstructure. What does this mean? It means that the Empire has to rule Uganda indirectly, through its agents in the economy and the state apparatus. It makes its control over Uganda cumbersome. Also, political independence opens space for the people of Uganda to express their democratic aspirations through elections and through peoples' movements. It creates an opportunity, as Mao said, to 'go to the masses' and challenge the Empire.

In Part one, we traced the efforts of the previous governments of Obote I, Amin, the UNLF, and Obote II to challenge the Empire. They did not succeed, but the masses did demand of the governments to use political independence to gain control of the economy. In 1969-70 Obote tried this with his 'Common Man's Charter', and the 'Move to the Left Strategy', but the masses were not mobilised, and so Britain, together with Israel, plotted with the army and dissident factions within certain regions and the comprador classes⁹⁴ to stage a military coup and install Amin in power as their agent. In his own way, Amin also tried to challenge Britain when he expelled the Asians (many of whom were compradors – though Amin was unaware of this), and bring native Ugandans to control the economy, but '*Aminomics*' did not work. Then, during the short period under the UNLF administration, the government attempted to mobilise the masses to bring about fundamental changes in the governance and the economy of the country, but the May 1980 military coup abruptly ended that period. Obote's second coming (1981 to 1985) was a period of total confusion, and the Empire was able to restore its domination over both the economic base and the political system. That brings us to the present period – from 1986 to now.

⁹⁴ Compradors, as we had explained earlier, are people who act as agents of the Empire engaged in trade, investments and politics.

N RM during the guerrilla war and the early years

In January 1986, following a guerrilla war, President Museveni took over power. On 12 May 2016, he was sworn in for a fifth term following an election that the opposition declared was not 'free and fair'. The NRM has been in power now for over 30 years.

Museveni the revolutionary idealist

In the preface to his '*Sowing the Mustard Seed*' (1997, 2007),

Museveni says:

I feel I should reiterate my position on leadership. This is that unless one's purpose in seeking it is to steal public funds, leadership, especially in an underdeveloped country like Uganda, is an endless sacrifice. ... In addition, there is the ever present danger of unprincipled divisions within society caused by an incomplete social metamorphosis.... I am not a professional politician. For me, political leadership is a kind of national service. ... I must, for the time being, accept the sacrifice as a service to my country. ... I feel it is important for the people of Uganda to learn about the history of our struggle to liberate our country from dictatorship and to transform it into a democratic, modern, industrialised nation.⁹⁵

Accordingly, the NRM set about a correct ideological orientation in the form of the 'The Ten-Point Programme'.⁹⁶

The NRM's Council, together with the High Command and the senior army officers, adopted to form 'the basis for a nationwide coalition of

⁹⁵ Museveni, Yoweri Kaguta, 1997, 2007. *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, Oxford: McMillan Education, pp x,xi

⁹⁶ Ibid, appendix, p 221

political and social forces that could usher in a new and better future for the long suffering people of Uganda'. Here are the 10 points:

1. Restoration of democracy
2. Restoration of security of person and property
3. Consolidation of National unity and elimination of all forms of sectarianism
4. Defending and consolidating National Independence

5. Building an independent, integrated and self-sustaining national economy
6. Restoration and improvement of Social services and the rehabilitation of the war-ravaged areas
7. Elimination of corruption and misuse of power
8. Redressing errors that have resulted in the dislocation of sections of the population
9. Co-operation with other African countries
10. Following an economic strategy of mixed economy.

The NRM also radicalised the administrative and political structures. These were centred on the Resistance Councils (RCs). The RC system was built on a pyramid-like structure – starting with RC1 at the village level; then RC2 (parish level); RC3 (sub-county); to RC4 (County District level). *The Decentralisation Statute of 1993 gave the RCs power over civil servants by giving them supervisory powers as well as money.*

Museveni explains further:

There are about 800 sub-counties in Uganda and they usually cover a radius of four miles (six km) and have about 20,000 inhabitants each. Whereas previously, when taxes were collected at the sub-county (gombolola) level, all the money was taken away by district and central government, now 50 per cent of it is left at that administrative level to cater for their activities. A further 10 per cent of the money is taken to the higher county level and the rest goes to the district level.⁹⁷

97 Ibid, p 193

The RCs also dealt with judicial matters.

*The RCs dealt with administrative and judicial matters... It was only for homicide that we imposed the death penalty. During the whole of the bush war, there were only four or five capital offences. ...we only four or five capital offences. ...we already had our local courts.... [We] followed the Law of Moses – in the Law of Moses – in other words, an eye for an eye, a life for a life... Our courts used different concepts from Western ones...*⁹⁸

The NRM and the fate of democracy in later years

Back in the fold of the empire

Earlier we quoted Museveni describing imperialism as the main enemy, and denouncing Obote for ‘emphasising internal differences while neglecting to address the contradictions between the country’s national interests on the one hand, and those of imperialism on the other’. He had said: ‘This relegated the evolution of a national strategy for disengaging from imperialism to the sidelines... The UPC was largely composed of lumpen bourgeoisie. Ideologically, they were bankrupt...’

That was in the 1980s. Then, Museveni was still committed to a ‘national strategy’ and ‘disengaging from imperialism’. By the turn of the century, things had changed dramatically. The reality of imperialism and the control over the economy by the World Bank (WB) and corporate finance capital had caught on. In the earlier section on the economy, we related the experience of Ezra Suruma as head of the Uganda Commercial Bank in 1993. *He recorded that the UCB was run by expatriate consultants appointed by the World Bank.* Worse, when Suruma succeeded in turning the UCB (then a state bank) from total bankruptcy to viability, the WB stepped in and advised President Museveni to privatise it because, the WB argued, ‘it would secure a good price in the market’. Suruma protested, but the President dismissed him, and the UCB was privatized, amidst strong disapproval by the parliament.

98 Ibid, p 137

The economy, however, continued to deteriorate.

Two kinds of corruption

The World Bank, instead of carrying out a proper analysis and its own role in the declining economy, blamed everything on ‘corruption’. The Oxfam Uganda Report cites the authority of the WB to say that Uganda loses \$500m annually through corruption. The Oxfam Report adds:

Uganda is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. There have been many cases involving the loss of colossal sums of public money, and it is estimated that the country loses \$500m annually in this way. However, there is a lack of political will to pursue those guilty of corruption and an absence of meaningful deterrents, and so abuses continue.⁹⁹

According to Transparency International (TI), Uganda ranks number 151 out of 176 countries scoring only 25 out of 100.¹⁰⁰

Both the TI and the World Bank are quantifying into figures something that is far more complex than the figures make out. There are, in my view, two forms of corruption. One is bribes. This is rampant all over the world – including the United States. An article in the *Wikipedia* provides a list of federal political scandals in the US (from the birth of the nation to the time of President Trump), within the federal Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches.¹⁰¹ It is scandalous that all three branches of government are involved in corruption. For the US this is quite normal. Even the citizenry has accepted this as part of their system.

They call it ‘democracy’.

The second form of corruption is when political leverage and financial muscle are used by the empire to force the developing countries to adopt policies that serve imperial interests. Of course, the Uganda government cannot escape responsibility for corruption. *But the World Bank is guilty of masquerading behind figures to hide the fact that it figures to hide the fact that it is the biggest source of corruption – corruption of policy – in Uganda. Uganda.* The WB and the IMF have pushed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) on the government forcing it to privatise the economy; open it to imports (in the name of ‘free trade’); compromising the state’s responsibility to provide social services such as health, education and water; and so on. This form of corruption is worse than that of bribes. It corrupts the entire state and robs the country of its independence. In the empire’s narrative, this, too, is called ‘democracy’. An ‘overgoverned’ country.

99 Ibid, p 137

100 <https://www.transparency.org/country>

101 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_federal_political_scandals_in_the_United_States

The ‘model’ that the NRM had created during the guerrilla struggle in the bush, though not free of flaws, was far better than what we have now. During the period of ‘bush democracy’, the Resistance Council system was built on a pyramid-like structure – starting with RC1 at the village level; then RC2 (parish level); RC3 (sub-county); to RC4 (County District level). The

Decentralisation Statute of 1993 had given the RCs power over civil servants by giving them supervisory powers as well as money.

This is all gone.

Here is what the Oxfam Report says about Uganda's present system of governance.

It is an over-governed country, with public administration, accountability and public sector management absorbing 15 percent of total expenditure under the 2016/17 national budget plan. Yet the country has only one doctor for every 24,725 people, according to UBOS and the Ministry of Public Service.¹⁰²

102 Ibid, p 55

It is a damning verdict on the reversal of the original NRM. The Report argues that the parliamentary system is almost totally dominated by the executive.

The government has been reluctant to strengthen key state institutions. Most key decisions are made, or influenced, by the executive, and the judicial system is weak. Although women now have significant representation in both parliament and the cabinet, there has been little progress in breaking down gender discrimination, especially at the grassroots level¹⁰³

The executive's dominance has undermined the independence of the judiciary, and of an excellent system of the Inspector General of Government that the NRM government had set up in the early years.

This is what the Oxfam Report says:

Apart from the army, police and a few semi-autonomous agencies (such as the UNRA, the URA and the KCCA), the government has appeared reluctant to strengthen critical state institutions like the judiciary, the Inspector General of Government (IGG) or Parliament itself. Most key decisions are made, or are influenced, by the executive. Whenever a parliamentary vote is mandatory, the executive 'whips' the ruling NRM party caucus to support the

desired government position. In the judicial system, there is increased evidence of weak and delayed dispensation of justice for poor people. A recent spate of land grabbing, reallocation of assets and dispossession has resulted in an increased number of cases in civil courts, but most people say they have not received justice.¹⁰⁴

From one-party to multiparty system

As we saw earlier, it was the UNLF that had introduced the idea of 'movement' as a means of dealing with the scourge of the multiparty

103 Ibid, p 21

104 Ibid, p 54

system that had characterized the Obote I period. But the UNLF lasted only a year, and was overthrown by a military coup. The December 1980 elections returned to the multiparty system; the UPC won the elections that were widely criticised by the opposition parties which alleged they were rigged. Museveni created the NRM out of the shell of FRONASA and took to the bush. In 1986, he took power and abolished all parties restoring the one-party system.

But the old parties did not disappear; they simply went underground. There was a groundswell of demand to return to the multi-party system backed by the Uganda People's Congress, the Conservative Party, the Democratic Party, the Forum for Democratic Change, and the Justice Forum. Following a referendum on 28 July 2005, Uganda returned to the multi-party system.

But this did not satisfy the people. The opposition parties continued to demand constitutional reforms to ensure free and fair elections – including the creation of an independent and impartial Electoral Commission; non-involvement of the security forces in the electoral process; clear demarcation of electoral boundaries; and a new system of adjudicating disputes over the outcome of elections. On August 11 2015, Parliament passed the Constitution amendment Bill. But this did not satisfy the opposition who claimed that the NRM had its 'automatic majority' in the parliament to introduce superficial changes that did not really alter an unfair electoral system.

February 2016 Elections

The country held general elections on 18 February 2016 to elect the president and parliament. Since 2001, Kizza Besigye – head of the Forum for Democratic Change – has been vying with Museveni for the office of the president. While in the bush, he was Museveni’s personal physician as well as a military officer in the UPDF. There were several other presidential contestants, including, the former Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi. According to the Electoral Commission, Museveni was re-elected with 61% of the vote to Besigye’s 35%. The NRM secured 293 seats out of 426, including 25 seats for ‘special’ categories.

As expected, Besigye and the other presidential candidates challenged the election results. Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who led a 13 member Commonwealth group, stated that the group was concerned over ‘the increased prevalence of money in politics, the misuse of state resources – which led to significant advantages for the incumbent – and the competence, credibility and ability of the Electoral Commission to manage the process effectively and impartially.. [These] have seriously detracted from the fairness and credibility of the result of the elections’.¹⁰⁵

However, the East African Community (EAC - comprising of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi), commended the Uganda’s Electoral commission for ‘conducting free and fair elections’. Museveni declared that the NRM had earned the mandate of the people and anyone who disputed the election would be defeated. He vowed to put a ‘political end’ to the Ugandan opposition in his new five year term branding them a bunch of liars who had no vision for Uganda. When the president was probed about the negative election observer’s reports, he said that the European Union (that had challenged the outcome) had no authority to preach democracy to him, questioning their knowledge of Uganda’s history.¹⁰⁶

My reflections on 2016 Uganda elections

I was in Uganda in December 2015 – January 2016. I was able to monitor the events preceding the elections. These are my reflections. None of the presidential candidates offered anything exciting. The NRM was a shadow of its old self. Besigye’s Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) was the main opposition party, but it had little to offer different from the NRM. The UPC

was divided into two factions. The old Democratic Party was practically non-existent. The only person who caught my attention was Professor August Nuwagaba. After losing in the NRM primaries (in what he claimed were rigged), he stood as an ‘independent’ presidential candidate, knowing he had no chance whatsoever. Nonetheless, he made some interesting observations. He said that the elections were ‘a sham’, but the electoral commission chairman was not to blame; ‘the whole system lacked transparency’. Politics in Uganda were ‘commercialised’: people were prepared to sell their souls for as little as Ushs.100 (US 30 cents). 83% of the youth were unemployed. The education system was ‘out of touch with reality’; and so on.¹⁰⁷

107

general-elections

106 See: Samuel Kasirye, ‘Uganda’s Presidential election 2016: A foregone conclusion’, <http://www.rosalux.co.tz/2016/02/25/election-report-ugandaspresidential-election-2016-a-foregone-conclusion/>

National security and defence¹⁰⁸

Museveni and the guerrilla war: 1980-1985

It is better for the reader to read Museveni’s own blow by blow 50 pages account of the guerrilla war in his ‘*Sowing the Mustard Seed.*’¹⁰⁹ (The page references below are to this book). Here are some of the highpoints, and my observations:

1. The birth of National Resistance Movement (NRM) was as a result of the merger between Museveni’s own Popular Resistance Army (PRA) and Yusuf Lule’s Uganda Freedom Fighters (UFF) (p 144).
2. His book shows that he was a brilliant military/ guerrilla strategist. But he was an uncompromising leader. He talks about his ‘battle against unprincipled compromises’ (p 212), but he makes a distinction between ‘the misleaders and the misled’. In war killing is justified, he argues; it is ‘like killing *olumbu* which is a very vicious weed grass... that invades gardens’. However, ‘if there is an opportunity, we can achieve reconciliation’. On the other hand, within his own army, he led from the front with an iron fist, and did not tolerate divisions. Kirunda-Kivejinja, in his

book *Uganda: the Crisis of Confidence* says Museveni was ‘highly disciplined, and neither drank nor smoked’, but he was disciplined, and neither drank nor smoked’, but he was ‘a peasant with a simple peasant mentality’, and ‘the most-gifted commander Uganda had ever produced’.¹¹⁰

107 The Observer, 14 May, 2016

10 For an interesting account of the period until 1985, see: Omara-Otunnu, Amii. 1987, *Politics and the Military in Uganda 1890-1985*, New York: St. Martin’s Press

109 Museveni, *Loc.cit.* pp 124-176

3. Having recognised his good qualities as a leader, I’d say, nonetheless, that Museveni tended to put the military ahead of politics. In his book, *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, he says that: ‘I was accused of militarism, dictatorial tendencies, and so on’, followed by an account of how he lost ‘half the people in my platoon ... including my good friend Mwesiga Black’ (p 71). He did not attend the Moshi Unity Conference in March 1979, because he was fighting in the front and thought that the Conference was of no consequence. He says that when Nyerere put his trust in ‘the Nabudere-Rugumayo group ... they tried to use that position to suppress the fighting groups – Fronasa and the *Kikoosi Maalum* (KM)’ (p 114-115).

Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of Museveni’s politics, he won the guerrilla war against Obote’s chaotic forces, and took over power in January, 1986.

Uganda’s wars on several fronts

The size and deployment of Uganda’s army

The information on the size of Uganda’s army is based on publicly available data, but it is very difficult to verify the figures on the ground.

Following the guerrilla war that Museveni won in 1985, the Uganda forces consisted largely of the Rwanda Patriotic Front personnel. Indeed, Tutsi refugees formed a disproportionate number of NRA 110 Kirunda-Kivenjinja, A M 1993. *Uganda: The Crisis of Confidence*, Progressive

Publishing House, Kampala, pp 265, 278

officers. Thus, for example, Fred Rwigyema was deputy minister of defence and army commander-in- chief, second only to Museveni; Paul Kagame was appointed chief of military intelligence; Chris Bunyenyezi was the commander of the 306th Brigade; and so on.¹¹¹

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) estimated that in 2011 the UPDF had a total strength of 40,000-45,000 and consisted of land forces and an air wing.¹¹² In the following six years, the army must have increased in size, but it is hard to get more upto-date figures on the military. On the other hand, the official figures might have been exaggerated – according to a report by General David Tinyefuza, between 1990 and 2002 the army payroll had at least 18,000 ghost soldiers.¹¹³ The UPDF has also been the subject of controversy for having a minimum age for service of 13 - condemned as being military use of children.

A more important question is, of course, the involvement or deployment of armed forces. Let us first look at some realities on the ground. There are essentially two terrains of battle – domestic and regional or global. And these are interconnected – the domestic impacts on the regional and global and vice versa. There is a very thin line separating the two.

Uganda is involved in several military operations outside of Uganda. Here I give account of three of these – the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Somalia. Most people, even in Uganda, are not well informed about the complex issues involved in these conflicts across the borders of Uganda, and there is very little public discussion within Uganda. So it is important that we look at these conflicts – at least to understand their complexity, why Uganda is involved in them, and their domestic ramifications.

111 Monitor (Kampala), UPDF commanders behind Operation Lightening Thunder, 20 December 2008

112 IISS Military Balance 2007, 297; IISS Military Balance 2011, 447 ‘World Development Indicators - Google Public Data Explorer’. 7 October 2016. Retrieved 8 January 2017.

113 Joshua Kato, ‘Assessing the cost of an army’, Sunday Vision, 30 June 2006

Uganda’s involvement in Southern Sudan

We shall not go too much into this history, but we must remember that even

before its independence, Uganda has been involved in conflicts and wars in the southern Sudan.

When Sudan was formed, it inherited its boundaries from an AngloEgyptian condominium, established in 1899. Sudan was Christianized by the sixth century and Islamized in the seventh. The Muslims (Arabs) met with stiff resistance from the Nubian population in the south. Since Sudan's independence in 1956, the south has been fighting for its independence – First Sudanese Civil War (1955- 1972), then the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005), and then the War in Darfur (2003-2010), culminating in the secession of South Sudan on 9 July. However, already in August 2006, the United Nations had sent a peacekeeping force of 17,300 to Darfur. Uganda had sent troops to this force.

This is only one side of the story.

Matters got complicated with the war in Uganda itself, when the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), took refuge in the Sudan following NRM's seizure of power in 1986. The LRA, a rebel heterodox Christian cult, operates in northern Uganda, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). But the roots of the present-day conflict in Uganda go back to the colonial days when Britain forged together diverse ethnic groups into 'Uganda'. One could say that in general the British worked closely with the agricultural communities (mostly in the south), while drawing the bulk of the armed forces from among the Acholi and Langi semipastoral communities (mostly in the north).

Following Uganda's independence, the north continued to provide the bulk of the armed forces, whilst commerce and wealth concentrated in the south. Obote's attempt to rectify this imbalance had failed. Following the Uganda-Tanzania war in 1979-80, the UNLF government had tried to disarm the ethnically based armies of the UPC and FRONASA. These two – enemies at their birth – joined forces to remove the UNLF government, but then split and (as we narrated above) Museveni took to the bush where he relied mostly on Tutsi and other south-based ethnic groups to fight against Obote. The north was largely pacified between 1986 and 1990 by the UNLA forces, but the LRA took to the bush to fight Museveni.

The LRA was first led by Alice Lakwena and then Joseph Kony. Both claimed that they were acting as spirit mediums, and had knowledge of how to protect their followers from bullets by covering their bodies with shea nut oil, and so they should never take cover or retreat in battle. In August 1987, Lakwena's forces scored several victories on the battlefield and began a march towards Kampala, only to be decisively defeated. She fled to Kenya and Kony took over. Kony fought battles mostly in the Acholi region playing on Acholi nationalism and the often brutal treatment of the civilian population by the NRA forces. The Kony forces have also been brutal to the population, and have used child soldiers to fight this erratic war – now mostly from within the Sudan and the DRC.

So the LRA has now become a regional problem. According to African Union (AU) sources, its atrocities have induced the internal displacement of about 416,000 civilians and refugees in the region. In November 2011, the AU authorised a Regional Co-operation Initiative (RCI) to eliminate the LRA co-ordinated by Uganda, South Sudan, the DRC, and the Central African Republic with a combined force of up to 5,000 troops. At the time of writing it has a force of 3,085-2,000 from Uganda, 500 from South Sudan, 500 from the DRC, and 85 from the CAR. Uganda was already getting support from the United States to help fight the LRA.

The LRA has been fighting for close to 30 years. Kony has been able to evade capture by operating out of DRC's remote and unprotected Bas Uele province – a relatively safe haven from Ugandan and US troops.

Uganda's involvement in the DRC

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been having serious internal conflicts ever since it was created, artificially, as a Belgian colony during the partition of Africa in 1885. There are multiple factors, including the conflict between mainly the Hutu and the Tutsi population of the region, leading to Uganda's involvement.

In 1996-1997 (the First Congo War) Rwanda and Uganda intervened to help Laurence Kabila to overthrow Mobutu Sésé Seko. But Kabila, to avert a coup, expelled all Rwandan and Ugandan forces from the Congo. This event was a major cause of the Second Congo War the following year. Some experts prefer to view the two conflicts as one war. The Second Congo War

began in August 1998, and ended (officially) in July 2003. But the eastern region of the DRC remains a conflict zone with proxy wars fought between Hutu- and Tutsi- aligned forces – fearing each other’s annihilation.

While the Uganda- and Rwanda-aligned forces worked closely together to gain territory at the expense of Kinshasa, competition over access to resources created some tension in their relationship. So violence continues in many regions of the country. For Rwanda backed Tutsi rebels it is due to fears of Hutu rebels on its border. For Uganda this remains an area of security concern when the Lord’s Resistance Army insurgency began operating from the DRC. On 19 December 2005 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that the DRC’s sovereignty had been violated by Uganda, following which the DRC demanded \$10 billion in compensation from Uganda.

Meantime, the UN observers, who were to oversee the disengagement of forces, have remained. The fighting has already cost the lives of hundreds of thousands, and an estimated additional two million Congolese have been displaced as a result. The violence has also encouraged ethnic militarism to grow, and the east of the country has already been transformed into a patchwork of warlords’ fiefdoms. The Rwanda and Uganda-backed second war in the Congo has seriously endangered their own stability and strained their resources. Money needed for economic development has been redirected towards their growing defence budgets.

Uganda’s involvement in Somalia

Somalia is yet another example – like the Sudan and the DRC – of a conflict that cuts across colonial history, culture and emerging geopolitics. It is, also, so little understood.

The dominant narrative vilifying Somalia as a ‘failed state’ is not persuasive. Somalia is disparaged the world over for hosting AlShabaab and the pirates who have terrorized maritime fishing for several years. A significant and legitimate question to ask is: has Somali piracy anything to do with illegal fishing by European, American and Japanese fleets? Has it anything to do with the illegal dumping of toxic (including nuclear) waste, devastating Somali coastal resources and people’s livelihoods? Give a thought to these

not insignificant questions. In my view, the Western ‘fish pirates’ are as culpable as the Somali ‘ship pirates’ in the continuing malaise in Somalia.

Following a proper understanding of this, more questions arise. Does the looting by the ‘fish pirates’ from the West and Japan and the deprivation of people’s livelihoods have anything to do with the emergence of the Al-Shabaab? And then there are some questions on regional war and peace. Does the imposition of an order from outside Somalia in the form of Ethiopian, Kenyan and Ugandan troops, and the forcible removal of the Union of Islamic Courts that for a period had brought some peace to Somalia in 2011-12, have anything to do with the continuing strife in the whole region? If so, are not Somalia’s neighbouring countries as culpable as the feuding warlords of Somalia? Are the neighbouring countries fighting proxy wars on behalf of, for example, the United States in its relentless ‘war on terror’? If so, are not the East African governments culpable for putting their innocent civilian populations at risk of violence? These, I grant, are difficult questions. I pose them not rhetorically but to raise issues on which there is very little public debate outside of the African Union. Within the AU, there is also a need to discuss the Somalia issue against the larger geopolitical and economic context. Somalia now (at the time of writing this in February 2017) has better relations with the west. Somalia elected a new president - Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo – not by popular vote but by members of the parliament. What is interesting is that Farmajo is a Somali-American national. The vote was held at the heavily guarded airport complex in Mogadishu. Traffic was banned and a no-fly zone imposed over the city to prevent attacks by militant Islamists. The militants are suspected to have been behind a series of attacks on the eve of the vote, with two mortar rounds fired close to the voting venue. They also attacked an AU base there. The US also has a huge military base in neighbouring Djibouti, using it to carry out air strikes against the militants.

Would this assure peace in Somalia? In my view it is unlikely until the age-old historical problems and the presence of the US in the region are addressed. This is unlikely to happen in the African Union; hence a new venue has to be found to address these issues.

Militarisation of politics under the NRM

One of the most significant consequences of these wars is the militarisation of Uganda. According to the US CIA *World Factbook* and other sources, in 2011 Uganda's military expenditure consumed 3.73% of GDP.¹¹⁴ In the earlier section on 'The Base: The Economy' we looked at economic growth and income distribution, and the sad state of the provision of basic social services – health, water and education – to the ordinary people. Why would the government want to spend 3.73% of the GDP on the military when the ordinary people cannot afford even elementary education and health facilities? The classical answer is that security is more important than social services, which is what explains the extraordinary budgetary allocation to the military, not just in Uganda, but even in the developed countries

114 http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/uganda/uganda_military.html

at the cost of people's immediate welfare needs. Without security, the reasoning goes, the people would be in danger of losing lives from external aggression; governments are obliged to put security before the provision of social services.

There may be some merit in this argument. However, I am not persuaded. But I will address this issue in chapters 9 and 10: Imperial reckoning and rebooting revolution in Uganda.



President Museveni: Trooping of the National Guard

Also, these wars have also increased Uganda's dependence on military support from outside, mainly from the West. Some people have argued, not unreasonably, that Uganda has become a stooge of the United States – especially in the war against 'terrorists' as defined by the US and the West. The Western narrative is too simple. As the above accounts of these wars show, a whole lot of factors – colonial history, culture, religion, spirits mediums and their mythologies, competition for resources, and interference from the empire – make these wars very complex to unravel. These wars have fuelled conflicts within Uganda – parts of northern and western Uganda and are still far from stabilisation.

One of the biggest problems is that there is practically no systematic discussion of these wars in Uganda – either in the parliament or in the media. The government has provided little guidance to the people or the media, fuelling controversy and confusion. Some cynics have argued that this is on purpose – namely, to divert public attention from internal problems within the country.

Ultimately it is the common people who have borne the brunt of Uganda's involvement in these wars in which Uganda has been engaged. On 11 July 2010 Kampala was attacked by suicide bombers killing 74 dead and injuring

70 injured. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility as ‘retaliation for Ugandan support for AMISOM’

– the African Union Mission to *Somalia*. The common people have paid the heavy price not only in terms of lives lost and damaged, but also in terms of deprivation of essential services such as education, health, water, sanitation, and above all internal security.

Some concluding observations on Uganda’s Superstructure As I write these words, my thoughts go the UNLF period, in which I was deeply involved. The UNLF had lost power within one year for various reasons, but mainly because, in my view, its leadership was too far ahead of the masses. The objective conditions in Uganda are ripe for revolution (it has been so for decades), but the consciousness of the people has lagged behind. Why this is the case is a complex socio-political and ideological issue. But it is also a question of party politics and organisation.

1. The Empire still rules Uganda, using internal divisions amongst the people. These are what Mao called ‘secondary contradictions’. The ‘principal contradiction’ is still with the imperial system. Here I agree with Museveni in what he said during his guerrilla days: he had described imperialism as the main enemy, denouncing Obote for ‘emphasising internal differences while neglecting to address the contradictions between the country’s national interests on the one hand, and those of imperialism on the other’.

2. The material reality of people’s existence has not changed. However, and this is the problem, their consciousness about imperialism as the root cause of their poverty is not understood, and during elections politicians play the secondary contradictions (and money hand-outs) to vie for state power. People’s poverty and marginalisation is increasing.

3. What Uganda is missing is a vanguard party rooted among the people. The beginning of such a party was killed at the UPC Gulu conference in 1964. Over half a century since Gulu, this still remains a challenge for the left in Uganda.

4. In his book, *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, Museveni says: ‘I was accused of militarism, dictatorial tendencies, and so on.’ Indeed, Museveni has tended

to put the military ahead of politics. Uganda has been involved in wars on several fronts. One of the most significant consequences of these wars is the militarization of Uganda. Also, these wars have increased Uganda's dependence on military support from outside, mainly from the West.

QUESTIONS

1. In the preface to his 'Sowing the Mustard Seed' President Museveni says: 'I feel I should reiterate my position on leadership. This is that unless one's purpose in seeking it is to steal public funds, leadership, especially in an underdeveloped country like Uganda, is an endless sacrifice.' Has the President lived up to his own role model? If not, why not?
2. On taking over power the NRM set for itself a 'Ten-Point Programme'. Which of these ten are presenting the most serious challenge to the NRM?
3. What are the two kinds of corruption analysed in the book. Which of the two is worse?
4. The 2017 Oxfam Report on Uganda says that it is 'an over-governed country'. Do you agree?
5. The Commonwealth group of observers of the February 2016 elections expressed concern over the fairness and credibility of the outcome of the elections, but the East African Community observer group upheld it as free and fair. What is your verdict?
6. In his book, 'Sowing the Mustard Seed', Museveni says that: 'I was accused of militarism, dictatorial tendencies, and so on.' He does not accept this charge. What is your verdict?
7. Why would the government want to spend 3.73% of the GDP on the military when the ordinary people cannot afford even elementary education and health facilities?
8. No systematic discussion of wars Uganda is engaged in - either in parliament or in media. Why is that so?

CHAPTER EIGHT

The prince of *sowing the mustard seed*

I am not a professional politician. For me, political leadership is a kind of national service.' My own understanding is that Museveni is actually a very shrewd politician. I know this from personal experience, and from talking to common friends.

Museveni the idealist prince

For us, looking back from the vantage point of history, it is important to understand where the 'idealist' Museveni came from. The following are direct quotes from *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, Chapter 13: '*The Reconstruction of Uganda, 1986-96*'.

We had realised for a long time that once we came to power it would be necessary to do away with the old colonial-style army which had been recruited along sectarian lines and manipulated by unscrupulous politicians and dictators. Therefore, immediately after the fall of Kampala we started organising a new national army (p 177).

Museveni goes on to elaborate at great length the character and principles of a new kind of army.

If you call yourself an army and you want to defend the country and its borders, or to defend a system, what will give you the strength to do so? An army per se is nothing ... an army uprooted from the people is a weak army. Previous armies in Uganda were brutal because they came from the colonial system. The strength did not come from the community but from their status as auxiliaries of an alien force. If you want to defend the country and the system, relying on the people ... how can you afford to antagonise them, and at the same time achieve your mission? The ideological realisation of where your fundamental interests lie is crucial if the mission is to succeed ... [T]here is no alternative but to make sure harmonious relations exist with the population. An army must adhere to a strict code of conduct ... ideological and organisational discipline (p 178). The Army Council is like the army's

parliament. ... Then there is a smaller group known as the High Command composed of division commanders the President, who is the chairman. This principle of collective leadership democratises military input so that decisions are not only obeyed in mechanical fashion, but are also respected because they are understood (p 179).

Museveni the Prince of Machiavelli?

Nelson Kasfir, a former lecturer at Makerere and a long-time observer and analyst of Uganda politics, says:

The 1996 election, the first in which Museveni ran for President ... was among the freest and fairest, before or since. After that, the regime began to exclude political rivals, relying increasingly on dominant party mobilization, patronage and intimidation ... An outstanding trait of the 2016 elections ... were the multiple arrests and preventive detention of Besigye, again his leading opponent, before, during and after polling day. Here, it seems likely, Museveni was intent to thwart the emergence of any repetition of the 'Walk to Work' protests that followed the 2011 elections for fear they would attenuate the legitimacy of his victory and his ability to rule unimpeded.¹¹⁵

James Nkuubi in his essay '*Of "Yellow" Police, a Cadre Army and the Liberation War Psychosis*' says:

The level of repression – the military lockdown; attacks on innocent bystanders caught up in legitimate protests, and even the physical assaults against the Media – indicate that the regime was determined to leave no stone unturned in order to retain power. It has left the realm of idealism and embraced political realism and resorted to Machiavellian tactics and strategies. Party functionaries showed that they were no longer interested in pretentious politics. The mask of fundamental change is off and what we are witnessing is a real struggle to retain power. In very specific ways, the patterns of violence deployed in the 2015/2016 electoral cycle were apace with those of previous elections. These extended to public strippings and assaults by security operatives in day light, to the cordoning off of opposition houses. What are the citizens to do about the era: the end of pretense?¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/uganda/uganda_military.html Kasfir Nelson, 'Explaining the 2016 Elections: Social Structure or Personal Agency?' Paper presented at a conference in Oxford, UK,

on The NRM Regime in the 2016 Ugandan Elections, 22 April, 2016. [https:// www.politics.ox.ac.uk/materials/events/Elections_Workshop_-_Programme.pdf](https://www.politics.ox.ac.uk/materials/events/Elections_Workshop_-_Programme.pdf)

The biting criticism of Nkuubi refers to how Museveni descended from ‘the realm of idealism’ to ‘Machiavellian tactics and strategies’. For those who don’t know, Machiavelli was a 16th century Italian diplomat and political theorist who wrote a famous book called *The Prince*, where he advocated the use of cunning and duplicity in statecraft.

What has gone wrong? Is it the person or the system? Earlier I had quoted Museveni to say: ‘I am not a professional politician. For me, political leadership is a kind of national service.’ My own understanding is that Museveni is actually a very shrewd politician. I know this from personal experience, and from talking to common friends. When he came to power, he created a fairly broad-based government – including, for example, Godfrey Binaisa, Chango Machyo (a well-respected veteran communist), as well as his close comrades such as Eria Kategaya, Ruhukana Rugunda, and Bidandi Ssali. Museveni enjoyed widespread popularity in the early years. Over the years, however, he became less tolerant of opposition, and more aloof from his comrades. The 2016 elections, I think, was

116 James Nkuubi ‘Of “yellow” police, a cadre army and the liberation war psychosis: the question of electoral security’, in J Oloka-Onyango & Josephine Ahikire, eds.2017. *Controlling consent : Uganda’s 2016 Elections*. Trenton, New Jersey : Africa World Press.

his nadir. He was not always sure if the open and consultative system that he had created under the NRM would deliver, and so he maintained a tight control over outcome of elections, using the police and the army to break up opposition rallies.



President Museveni with his cows

What has gone wrong? Is it the person or the system? Is it up to him, or is it now beyond his grasp? Can Museveni return to the original prince of *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, or has the system become so embedded in the political culture of the regime – and the dynamics of global politics – that there is no turning back? Is there any hope for the army to return to the principles set out by Museveni during the guerrilla war?

These are not insignificant questions, nor as simple as they appear.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with James Nkuubi that ‘The level of repression the military lockdown; attacks on innocent bystanders caught up in legitimate protests; and even the physical assaults against the Media - indicate that the regime was determined to leave no stone unturned in order to retain power. It has left the realm of idealism and embraced political realism and resorted to Machiavellian tactics and strategies’?

2. What has gone wrong? Is it the person or the system? Can Museveni return to the original prince of *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, or has the system become

so embedded in the political culture of the regime that there is no turning back? Is there any hope for the army to return to the principles set out by Museveni during the guerrilla war?

PART THREE

Imperial reckoning & rebooting the revolutions

INTRODUCTION

Some aspects of political philosophy and practice

In Part three we deal with larger issues of political and moral philosophy, political economy, the causes underlying war and violence, and more concrete issues relating to the strategy and tactics of revolutionary social transformation. No single book or one person alone (with some exceptions such as Jesus Christ, Prophet Mohammed, Mahatma Gandhi and Karl Marx) can undertake such a formidable challenge. Most of us can only select some issues that are relevant to the concrete tasks ahead – in my case specifically in relation to Africa and, in this book, in relation to Uganda.

Nonetheless, keeping both a broad philosophical vision and concrete tasks ahead, there is one particular issue that I need to explain: you might describe it as my principle (or prejudice), but I know that there are people out there who might share my thoughts.

Question of violence

What concerns me most of all is the issue of violence. I cannot go into this extremely complex matter here and now. I will go into this in the last chapter where I go deeper into the question of ways and means – whether the ends justify the means. Here I will say simply and bluntly that I am against violence. I know fully well that there are so many different kinds of violence that it is risky to make such a bold statement. So I will expand on this proposition a little bit. What I am against is what I call ‘aggressive violence’. I take a gun and go and kill or hurt somebody. Of course, the big question is one of motivation. I may have a ‘reason’ to kill. This is always subjective – a minefield of socio-psychological traps, and I will not dwell into this. But there is a motive that goes beyond the individual, the subjective, considerations. You might justify killing ‘in the interest of your nation’ (or religion, or ideology) – in other words, a larger entity than just yourself. I limit myself to the nation, but this too provokes



Uganda's Heads of State and Government from Independence to date

difficult questions: what is a nation? And what is national interest? Without going too much into it at this stage, let me simply say that 'national interest' is a shared experience coming out of collective suffering and persecution ... but also more mundane motives like collective greed, and the corporate profit motive. Taking, for our purposes, the African experience of suffering and persecution over the last 500 years, I would say that taking up arms to fight against oppression and exploitation may be 'justified' (or you may feel it IS justified) on moral and political grounds. Yes, but that too, in my view, has to be not a decision made by an individual but by a collective where the masses – who pay the price for what is often called 'structural violence'¹¹⁷ – are actively involved in the decision of whether or not to take up arms.

117 Structural violence is a form of violence wherein some social structure or institution prevents people from meeting their needs for survival and basic human rights. It is a term commonly credited to Johan Galtung, from his article 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', Journal of Peace Research, Vol 6, No. 3 (1969), pp 167-191.

I have faced this dilemma for decades when I joined a movement that decided to take up arms against the oppressive regime of Idi Amin who, as analysed earlier, was backed by imperial interests. I was not averse to the movement's decision; but I had two conditions – one personal and the other collective. The personal was that I would not take up a gun myself, preferring to take the path of 'active nonviolent resistance' against the oppressive state.¹¹⁸ And my second condition was collective – that the movement should take up arms provided the masses join in.¹¹⁹ I must add that this was not then so expressly stated as I now explain, but my concerns were fully understood by my comrades.

This is my perspective. In the following chapters, I draw mostly from my own experiences over the last nearly sixty years of engagement in these issues – both at an intellectual level and in practice. This implies, of course, that I have no intention of persuading the reader to agree with me. That only he or she must decide drawing from his or her own experiences.

¹¹⁸ My adoption of the active non-violent resistance comes from the lessons I have drawn from Mahatma Gandhi's theory and practice of 'Satyagraha'

¹¹⁹ Here I learnt from the theory and practice of revolution from MaoTse-tung

CHAPTER NINE

Imperial reckoning

Fascism is born from the incompatibility between democracy and capitalism in a fully developed industrial society. Either capitalism or democracy must therefore disappear. Fascism constitutes the solution to this deadlock by allowing capitalism to persist.

Systemic and the civilizational disorder

Here I focus on the chaotic global order in which we live. Earlier I made reference to the concept of ‘structured violence’. Egregious violence in our times is one aspect of it, but whereas some people may justify violence on certain grounds, what the contemporary world is living through cannot be justified – it is simply madness. This madness has two sources: one is the steady deterioration of the finer aspects of western civilization, and the other is the capitalist system of production. The latter (the capitalist system) has corrupted the former (western civilization). And now the two are so entangled that it is difficult to separate them. They have become parts of the contemporary imperial system. I will try and disentangle the two – the systemic and the civilizational – in order that whilst we fight for the elimination of capitalism, we try and preserve the enlightenment values of western civilization as part of our global heritage. But before I come to that, we look at some of the manifestations of structured madness.

Structured Madness

Science and technology has reached such a high level of sophistication and application that there is no reason why anybody should die of starvation or be without water, food, shelter, good health and education. And yet, millions of people leave the global south for the global north seeking refuge from hunger, persecution and violence. The causes of these are rooted in the global system of production and distribution, and the incessant wars inflicted on the people. There is an underlying structure in this madness.

Systemic violence and global disorder

The 9/11 event and its aftermath

We begin with 9/11. On 11 September 2001, a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks hit the USA. The attacks killed 2,996 people, injured over 6,000 others. There is fresh evidence that Saudi Arabia was involved in the attacks.¹²⁰

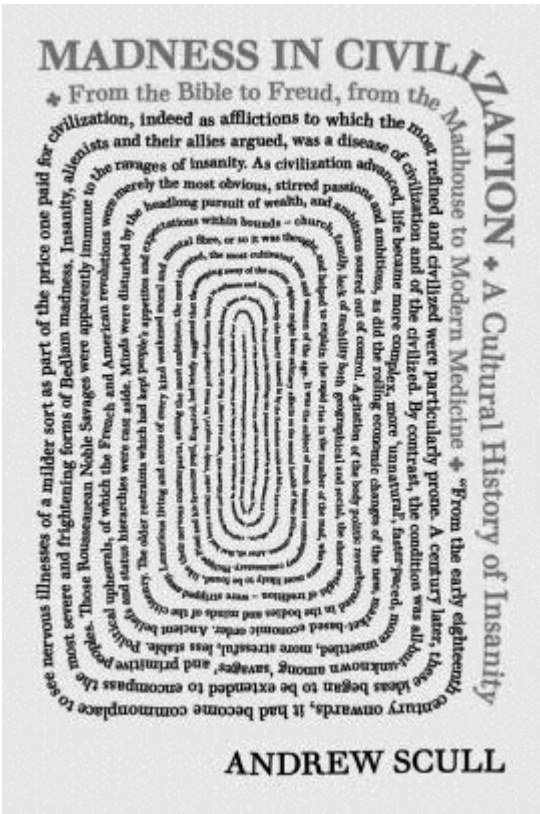
At the time Al-Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden, claimed responsibility. Looking back, it was a kind of blowback – chickens come home to roost. Today's generation of young people might not know, but bin Laden and Al-Qaeda were creations of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). After the 9/11 attack, the International Editor of the American broadcast network NBC News, Michael Moran, wrote on how the CIA created the Al-Qaeda in the 1970s: 'Given that context, a decision was made to provide America's potential enemies with the arms, money – and most importantly – the knowledge of how to run a war of attrition violent and well-organized enough to humble a superpower. That decision is coming home to roost'.¹²¹ Whistle-blower Edward Snowden (the former employee at US National Security Agency), has revealed that the British and American intelligence and Israel's Mossad worked together to create the ISIS – the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.¹²² This is nothing new; it is a deeply ingrained axiom of Anglo-American foreign policy – create one devil to fight another; then fight with the devil you created once the first devil is routed.

120 Two former U S senators, co-chairmen of the Congressional Inquiry into the attacks, told CBS in April 2016 that the redacted pages of the Congressional Inquiry's report refer to evidence of Saudi Arabia's substantial involvement in the execution of the attacks.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alleged_Saudi_role_in_September_11_attacks

121 <http://www.nbcnews.com/id/3340101/t/bin-laden-comes-home-roost/#.WSIQMevyviU>.

122 <http://www.globalresearch.ca/isis-leader-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-trained-byisraeli-mossad-nsa-documents-reveal/5391593>

During the cold war (1947-1990), bin Laden, along with a group of Islamic militants from Egypt, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestinian refugee camps all over the Middle East, became the American front-line partners in their war against the Soviet Union. Afghanistan had become a major flash point in the 1980s, where the Soviet occupation had triggered opposition by the people. In 1989 the Soviets were defeated and pushed out of Afghanistan.



Systemic Crises of Western Civilisation

9/11 was the first time in history for the people of America to experience a direct hit. And the result has been catastrophic not only for the US but for the rest of the world. First, the sense of outrage and insecurity felt by the Americans has become almost pathological. The US is no longer the same after 9/11. Nearly a decade after the attacks, the Americans have still not recovered from the shock. 9/11 and the 'war on terror' have become part of the new vocabulary in international relations. The US and Europe have reacted to 9/11 by taking the war to the terrorists in the South 'so we don't fight over here' in America or Europe. Since then, the terrorists have taken the wars and violence to the streets of America and Europe. It is a blowback.

At the time of writing these words, on 22 May 2017, an Al-Qaida suicide bomber detonated himself in Manchester at a concert as concertgoers were leaving. 23 died instantly, and 116 were injured, some critically. Let me add that we cannot condone such an act of sheer brutality. But the tragic irony of this is that whilst we can feel for them, there is no reciprocal sensitivity on the part of the Europeans and the Americans to feel for the human and material carnage they are inflicting on the rest of the world, especially in

Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. They sanitise these atrocities by simply calling it ‘collateral damage’. So they do not weep for dead Palestinians as we weep, with them, for the dead Europeans and Americans.

Also there is no analysis in western circles of why the jihadists (many of them citizens of Europe and America) are attacking civilians in the west with a vengeance. It takes a daring politician like Jeremy Corbyn in the UK to say this: ‘The attack on Manchester was shocking, appalling, indefensible, wrong in every possible way,’ the Labour leader said. ‘The parallel I was drawing this morning’, he went on, ‘was that a number of people ever since the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq have drawn attention to the links with foreign policy, including Boris Johnson in 2005, two former heads of MI5, and of course the foreign affairs select committee.’ Corbyn added that he had been making a point that UK interventions have created ‘huge ungoverned spaces’ in places such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, when he was pressed by Andrew Neil in a BBC1 interview about whether the Manchester attack was the result of UK foreign policy.¹²³

The tragedy in the Middle East

The situation in North Africa the Middle East is one of the grimmest tragedies of our time triggered by western policy of ‘regime changes’. I will not go into detail here. But take the case of Iraq, for instance. The US and the UK invaded Iraq in 2003 totally without any justification. We have the authority of a British judicial inquiry on it. On 6 July 2016, the long-awaited Chilcot Report on UK’s involvement in the Iraq War was published with 6,000 pages of evidence. The report fell short of using the word ‘lying’ in condemning Britain’s Prime Minister Blair, but the evidence of his lying to the British parliament was very clear. In no uncertain term, the Report condemned Blair’s decision to join forces with the United States to invade Iraq. The war was a clear violation of international law under the United Nations Charter; the Report says it was ‘without support for an authorising resolution in the UN Security Council’. And yet, Blair is enjoying impunity where no dictator or human rights violator in Africa would

¹²³ *Guardian*, 26 May, 2017

have escaped from being hurled before the International Criminal Court

(ICC).¹²⁴

War casualties¹²⁵ Look at war casualties over the last few years.

Conflict

War in Afghanistan

(2015–present)

Iraqi Civil War (2014–present) Mexican Drug War

Syrian Civil War

Boko Haram insurgency

Libyan Civil War

Yemeni Civil War (2015–present) Sinai insurgency

South Kordofan conflict

South Sudanese Civil War

Here are some more figures. **Conflict**

Kurdish–Turkish conflict (2015–present) War in Somalia

Communal conflicts in Nigeria War in Darfur

Cumulative fatalities Fatalities in 2016 1,240,000–2,000,000 23,539+

268,000 23,898+ 98,000–138,000+ 12,224

312,000–470,000 49,742–60,000

47,700

14,382

24,900

4,544+ 7,000+ 50,000+

Cumulative fatalities upto end of 2016 45,000

500,000

17,156

178,363

As you can see, even from this incomplete picture, most of the casualties of wars are in the global South. One might argue that the war in Somalia – which has taken the heaviest toll in the above list – is caused by internal forces. Of course, we cannot rule these out. But, as

we argued earlier, the conflict in Somalia cuts across colonial history, culture and emerging geopolitics. It is so little understood.

124 <http://www.globalresearch.ca/isis-leader-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-trained-byisraeli-mossad-nsa-documents-reveal/5391593>

12 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ongoing_armed_conflicts

Also, like in the case of the Birmingham carnage, we would argue, like Corbyn, that the root cause of war in Somalia lies with the seriously flawed foreign policies of the West (see chapter 7 on Uganda's involvement in Somalia). I've argued that the West and their allies – Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda – have no business interfering in Somalia; they had no right to forcibly remove the Union of Islamic Courts that for a period brought some peace to Somalia in 2011-12.

Refugees and asylum seekers

The UNHCR estimated that by the end of 2015 there were 59.5 million people displaced worldwide. According to more recent figures, at least 64 million have been forced to flee their home, and more than 152 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance globally.¹²⁶ The West complains about refugees' influx into Europe and America, when in fact it is the wars the West has fuelled in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America that are the main cause of this exodus. Also, it is important for us to note that despite the West's complaint about refugee influx, 86% of the world's refugees are hosted by the developing countries. At the end of 2015, Uganda had a refugee population of 509,000, of whom the biggest number came from South Sudan followed by the DRA and Somalia.¹²⁷ The secretary-general of the Norwegian Refugee Council, Jan Egeland, pointed out that according to the UN Uganda took in 489,000 refugees from neighbouring South Sudan in 2016, as well as steady flows from Congo and Burundi. By contrast, 362,000 people crossed into Europe via the Mediterranean Sea that year.¹²⁸

The UNHCR reported in 2017 that since April 2015, some 410,000 refugees and asylum seekers have been forced to flee from Burundi. Tanzania gave refuge to the majority with some 249,000 already accommodated in three overcrowded camps. Rwanda hosts some 84,000 refugees with another 45,000 in Uganda and some 41,000 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.¹²⁹

126 <https://www.oxfam.org/international/blog/world-refugee-day-facts/>

127 Uganda Government, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Refugee Information Management System (RIMS)

128 <http://www.newsweek.com/uganda-took-more-refugees-crossed-mediterranean2016-aid-agency>

An alarming number of refugees and asylum seekers die in the Mediterranean trying to cross from Africa and the Middle East. ‘From one death for every 269 arrivals last year, in 2016 the likelihood of dying has spiralled to one in 88.’ Between Libya and Italy, ‘the likelihood of dying is even higher, at one death for every 47 arrivals’.¹³⁰

Growing inequality

The world’s 1% now own more than the rest of us combined, says Oxfam in its report.¹³¹ The wealth of the poorest half of the world’s population – that’s 3.6 billion people – has fallen by a trillion dollars since 2010. This 38% drop has occurred despite the global population increasing by around 400 million people during that period. The forces that create wealth on one side and poverty on the other has created a world where 62 people own as much as the poorest half of the world’s population.

Capitalist crisis is structural

The capitalist disorder is structural. That’s why we describe its predations, its destructive effects on society and peace, as ‘structured madness’.

Neoliberal policy makers all over the world – including in Uganda - are in denial about two things. One is a reluctance to look at capitalism in the face, and understand that *the capitalist system of production and wealth distribution is inherently and fundamentally flawed*. And the second is the belief that left to the free market system the problems will sort out themselves. Not so. In fact, they will get worse.

129 <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/briefing/2017/5/5923f1004/unhcr-renewswarning-burundi-situation-funding-dries-trickle.html>

130 <http://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/latest/2016/10/580f3e684/mediterranean-death-toll-soars-2016-deadliest-year.html>

131 <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2017/01/eight-people-own-same-wealth-as-half-the-world>

The system not only divides people into the rich and the poor but further compounds this division over time because the market rewards the rich and

penalises the poor several times over.

From Greece to Uganda this predatory system takes its toll. The global banks profit, the poor pay the price. This is structurally inherent in the system. It is within the capitalist system's DNA; conflicts are endemic to the system, and will be increasingly severe with intensified class struggle which manifests itself at many levels – ethnic, gender, village, national, regional and global.

The rise and fall of capitalism

Capitalism has become a retrogressive force

Capitalism was a progressive force in earlier times. Karl Marx saw capitalism as a progressive historical stage, in spite of the fact that the workers were exploited by the owners of capital. Under capitalism, the productive forces expanded faster than at any other period in the past. However, Marx argued, capitalism would eventually collapse due to its internal contradictions. This will create the social conditions for a revolution leading to socialism.

Today, Capitalism is in deep systemic crisis. However, this is not to say it will collapse tomorrow.

Reformist palliatives offered by neo-Keynesians

Some reformist economists – following Keynes – argue that capitalism's problems are temporary, and can be resolved through correct state policies. For example, recessions and stagnation arise due to inadequate consumer demand relative to the amount produced (the so-called 'under-consumption theory'), and can be addressed through, for example, deficit financing and increase of state expenditure. This is the essence of Keynesian development economics.

Marxist economists, on the other hand, argue that at the root of capitalism's economic crisis lies not under-consumption, but the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. Simply explained, this means the more the capitalists use machine tools (fixed costs) to replace labour-power (variable costs) changing what Marx called the '*organic composition of capital*' the more pressure it puts on profits. One of the ways in which the capitalists fight against this tendency is to colonise lands outside the centres of capital to

procure cheaper raw materials. But the tendency remains inherent in the system.

My own position is closer to Marx's, but I don't wish to go into this debate here.

In my view neo-Keynesians like Nobel laureates Joseph E Stiglitz and Paul Krugman, and the Cambridge economist, Ha-Joon Chang, offer only palliatives.¹³² They recommend, for example 'deficit financing', but this aggravates the crisis over time. Again, I do not wish to go into debate with them here. My only reason to mention them is that they are popular in academic circles and policy-making institutions, and I want to add my note of caution to policy makers in Uganda who use the writings of these neo-Keynesians to think again. This said, I should add that I am not against deficit financing as a short term palliative. But this and other similar palliatives do not address the structural problems that lie deeper in the unresolvable contradiction within capitalism between productive forces and production relations. (See Chapter 5: The Base and the Superstructure)

However, at this stage of our argument, I need to make three points: 1. Unless it is a revolutionary state, the policies advocated by the neo- Keynesians are simply reformist adjustments to the capitalist system..¹³³

2. The bigger issue than economics is social – what Marx called the 'production relations' under capitalism, and the struggle of

132 See, for example: Stiglitz, Joseph E (1989). The Economic Role of the State. Oxford, UK Cambridge, Massachusetts; Paul Krugman, Paul (2012), End This Depression Now! W W Norton & Company; and Chang, Ha-Joon (2002), Kicking Away the Ladder, Anthem Press

133 Later, in chapter 10, I discuss the debates at the Dar es Salaam University in the 1970s. The debates were reproduced in a book. In it there is a piece I wrote, titled 'Whose Capital and Whose State?' where I go deeper into this issue

the working classes against exploitation and oppression by the owners of capital.

3. To Marx's analysis I would add the crisis of Western civilization, and the increasing resistance against the global imperial system, to which I now come.

The rise and fall of Western Civilization

Civilizational shift

We are witnessing a major civilizational shift the like of which we have not seen in the last 500 years. One can write a whole book on this, but for purposes of this book let me list only two aspects of this shift. One is the challenge posed by the resurgence of Islam, a historical boomerang of the Christian Crusades of the middle ages. And the second is the challenge posed by Russia and China. It should surprise nobody that the Western media is targeting Islam, Russia and China. Of course, not all that goes in the Islamic world or in China are good or positive. The essential point is that these civilizations are resurgent despite massive internal and external contradictions. The West is in a defensive mode – to protect its borders and its values. It sees China as a threat, but worse, it tries to understand China from a West-centric knowledge system, and hopelessly failing to understand the dynamics of Chinese domestic and foreign policies. Let me give you a simple anecdote, which is quite telling. When asked what he thought of Western Civilization, Mao is reported to have replied that it was too early to say. Gandhi put it differently: he said that Western civilization was a ‘good idea’.

The West need not fear the rise of a new global civilization The people in the West live in palpable fear of Islamic attacks within western cities and the immigrants pouring in from Africa and the Middle East – consequences, as we analysed earlier, – of western foreign policy of egregious interventions in the south. Therefore, it is important for those of us who come from the South to engage in two parallel debates:

1. Correct the western narrative about the superiority of western civilization;
2. Encourage our western brethren that their enlightenment civilisation had left behind a heritage that is now part of global civilization, and they should accept the emerging global civilization with values of Ubuntu, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and other eastern and global cultures as we from the South value the heritage left by the European period of the Enlightenment.

Correcting the western narrative about civilizations

Western narratives about other civilizations and cultures need to change. In our times, because of institutionalised racism and Islamophobia, barring the more enlightened individuals, people in the West are socio-psychologically tuned to a certain hubris about the ‘higher’ quality of Western civilization as opposed to the ‘lower’ civilizations of Africa and the Orient. There is a commonly held perception (often because of trashy journalism) that the life or the human rights of an ordinary African, Afghan, Palestinian or Muslim is worth nothing compared to the life or rights of an ordinary ‘white’ person. This hubris – ‘The West rules; the Rest don’t matter’ syndrome – poisons ordinary relations between the West and the Rest. This is the stark – and sad – reality of the contemporary world. If this is not understood, then nothing is understood about the reawakening of Islam or the rise of China.

It is usual in the western narrative to contrast ‘western civilization’ to supposedly barbarian or primitive cultures, such as those of huntergatherers and nomadic pastoralists. The word ‘primitive’ is highly pejorative and demeans many cultures – such as the Karamojong of Uganda, among whom I grew up as a child – that, before being colonised, in many ways had a higher culture (in the sense of social bonding and peaceful means of internal conflict resolution) than our ‘modern’ civilization.

Similarly, more recent research has solved the so-called ‘Mystery of the ancient Rapa Nui culture and civilization’ of Easter Island in the Pacific. The old thesis that the Island natives had committed ecocide by cutting down trees and the vegetation no longer holds. Recent research shows that Rapa Nui people were smart agricultural engineers: for example, they fertilized volcanic rock by digging holes and growing food in the holes that collected soil and rain water. The Island’s insularity and self-sufficiency was broken by the invasion of the white man, who killed the people of Rapa Nui and enslaved them for plantations in America. In 1914 a woman led a rebellion, but it was crushed. Now there are only 1500 Rapa Nui original people left on the island, which is converted into a tourist resort. What happened to this island was not ecocide but genocide.¹³⁴

There is one more misunderstanding that needs to be corrected. Most people in the West do not know that ‘European’ science was built upon the

foundation of ancient Egyptian, Meso-American, Chinese, Indian, Greek, Roman/Byzantine and medieval Islamic sciences. The European medieval period (from about 500 to 1100 AD) is often described as the ‘dark ages’ – a setback from the more progressive antecedent periods of the Roman and Greek empires. When Enlightenment came to Europe it was as a result of complex processes. Islamic science played a role in re-linking Europe with Greek classical writings, and with the sciences, during the period of the Enlightenment.

Nonetheless, whilst we correct the Eurocentric distortions of past civilizations, we must acknowledge the liberal values of the European Enlightenment.

Liberal values of the Enlightenment versus Neoliberalism The Enlightenment was an intellectual and philosophical movement in Europe during the 18th century. It is usually identified with a range of ideas centred on reason as the primary source of authority and legitimacy, and came to advance the ideals of individual liberty and

134 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapa_Nui_people. See also: Diop, Cheikh Anta. 1955. African Origin of Civilisation: Myth or Reality. Translated by Mercer Cook, 1989

religious tolerance, fraternity, constitutional government, a separation of church and state, and an emphasis on the scientific method.

The liberal values of this enlightened period must not be confused with neoliberalism which is a more current economic orthodoxy connected with the so-called ‘Washington Consensus’ associated with the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO and western neo-colonial policies in the former colonies.

Moral decay of Western civilization

This moral decay of western civilization began with the slave trade 500 years ago. Slavery as a system has existed for thousands of years, but the ‘slave trade’ – treating human beings as ‘commodities’ – began in the period of Capitalism’s ‘primitive accumulation’. The Capitalist ‘civilization’ has brought havoc to two-thirds of humanity, and to the environment. This civilization is in profound crisis. Africa is the birth place of Homo sapiens. The Mediterranean Sea was a cradle of Civilization;

now it is a graveyard of African migrants, who are caught up between death and permanent limbo if they manage to come to Europe and survive the racist culture and xenophobia of ordinary Europeans.

The ‘refugees crisis’ is an example of the moral decay of Western civilization.

Jean Ziegler, a former professor of sociology at the University of Geneva and the Sorbonne, Paris, was the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food from 2000 to 2008. In 2005 he wrote a book titled *The Empire of Shame*. He also wrote a preface for my book *Trade is War* with the title ‘The abysmal hypocrisy of the West’, where he quoted Edgar Morin, French philosopher and sociologist: ‘The domination of the West is the worst in human history, in its duration and in its planetary extension.’

In an interview Ziegler gave to a French paper, *The Crisis Papers*, on 27 March 2005, he was asked: ‘Your book is entitled Empire of Shame. What is this empire? Why “shame”? What is this “shame”?’ To which Ziegler replied ‘In the *favelas* (shantytowns) in the north of Brazil, some mothers may, in the evening, put water in a pot and then put stones in it. They explain to their children who are crying because of hunger that “soon the meal will be ready...”, while hoping that meanwhile the children will fall asleep. Can one measure the shame felt by a mother facing her children who are tortured by hunger and whom she is unable to feed? ... [T]he murderous order of the world

– which kills 100,000 people every day from hunger and epidemics – does not only make the victims feel ashamed, but also us, Westerners, Whites, rulers, who are accomplices of this massacre, aware, informed and nevertheless silent, cowardly and paralyzed’.¹³⁵

In his *The Dark Side of Liberalism: Unchaining the Truth* Phil Kent cites the English historian Arnold Toynbee: ‘Of the 22 civilizations that have appeared in history, 19 of them collapsed when they reached the moral state America is in now.’ Phil Kent, former president of South-Eastern Legal Foundation, is an American media and public relations consultant. In his book, among other things, he talks about race relations, political correctness, immigration, the media, the runaway court system, and the war on terror. As

for ‘liberalism’, he says: ‘I prefer to call it a conspiracy of freedom’ – an outdated, negative, anti-American gospel that mockingly undermines the values that made this country great. ‘It is time’ he writes, ‘for all Americans to step up to the plate ... The fate of our civilization, our way of life, hangs in the balance.’¹³⁶

The moral decay of Western civilization reminds me of the 1998 Film ‘*The Truman Show*’. Truman Burbank is an orphan raised by a corporation inside a simulated television show revolving around his life. Angered and frustrated that his life was a lie he decides to escape from the town in a small boat ... but the boat is going nowhere. He cannot escape.

¹³⁵ <http://www.crisispapers.org/guests/ziegler.htm>

¹³⁶ Kent, Phil, 2003. *The Dark Side of Liberalism: Unchaining the Truth*, Harbor House. Arnold Toynbee is a famous English historian who wrote 12 volumes of ancient history. Toynbee, Arnold, (1934-1961), *A Study of History*, Oxford University Press, 12 volumes

There is no escape except resistance against the moral bankruptcy of capitalism and of European civilization. Enter the age of rage. ¹³⁷

Four levels of resistance against capitalism-imperialism Capitalism-imperialism has given rise to resistance at various levels. 1. At the most basic, or primordial level, resistance comes from the

working classes within both the heartland of capitalism (the US, Europe and Japan, and now increasingly China and Russia) and the peripheries (the rest of the world). Indeed, in the peripheries the exploitation of the workers is even more intense and brutal (including, for example, child labour).

2. When capital was forced to colonise (in order to recover their declining profits at home), it gave rise to national resistance. The first to resist the empire (the British Empire) were the 13 colonies in America fighting for their independence (1775-1783). This gave birth to a new ‘nation’ called the United States. Ironically, the US is now the biggest capitalist empire.

3. And now we face civilizational resistance against the whole system of capitalist-imperialist predation and the tendency of the hegemonic Judaic-Christian culture to try and homogenize all cultures, Islamic, pre-Columbian,

indigenous peoples (or peoples of first nations) to conform to their norms and cultural practices.

4. The system has also generated what might be called the ‘everyday forms of resistance’ – protests, petitions, rallies, peaceful marches, protest voting – on a whole range of issues such as gender, environmental, spiritual, and so on.

The myth of western democracy

Western democracy is a sham. Don’t take my word for it. The economic historian Karl Polanyi, author of the classic, *The Great Transformation* (1944), argued that democracy and capitalism were

137 <https://www.youtube.com/user/VremyaGneva>

at odds with each other. Under capitalism there can be no democracy, there can only be fascism. This is what he wrote:

*Fascism is born from the incompatibility between democracy and capitalism in a fully developed industrial society. Either capitalism or democracy must therefore disappear. Fascism constitutes the solution to this deadlock by allowing capitalism to persist.*¹³⁸

Polanyi was right about the incompatibility between capitalism and democracy. Eighty years later, on July 22, 2015, the British Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond, told members of British Parliament that democracy was ‘cumbersome’ for the pursuit of foreign military objectives. He said democracy puts Western governments at a disadvantage in confronting Russia and other threats: ‘*We as a nation and as part of an alliance in NATO must think about how we deal with the challenge of our relatively cumbersome decision-making processes.*’¹³⁹

In his essay, ‘*The Essence of Fascism*’ (1935), Karl Polanyi wrote: *Victorious Fascism is not only the downfall of the Socialist Movement; it is the end of Christianity in all but its most debased forms. The common attack of German Fascism on both the organisations of the working-class movement and the Churches is not a mere coincidence. It is a symbolic expression of that hidden philosophical essence of Fascism which makes it the common enemy of Socialism and Christianity alike.*¹⁴⁰

Way before the rest of us began to talk about ‘globalisation’ in the post-1980s era, Polanyi described the link between global capital

138 See: https://www.researchgate.net/.../305418782_Sustaining_Democracy_

139 <https://www.rt.com/uk/310448-cumbersome-democracy-russia-isis/> ... Queen Elizabeth’s uncle, who became King Edward VIII, travelled to Nazi Germany in 1937 following his abdication. He was not only filmed giving Nazi salutes to Hitler, he also plotted with the Third Reich to form a Nazi-collaborationist regime in England

140 You can get access to this essay in: kpolanyi.scoolaid.net:8080/xmlui/bitstream/.../Con_13_Fol_06%20REVISED.pdf

and state power as ‘Globalised Fascism’. Polanyi defined the ‘fascist project’ as capitalism’s complete takeover of the political sphere. Only with complete control of the political sphere, he said, will capitalism do away with limits imposed for instance by labour and environmental protection laws.¹⁴¹

Systemic and Civilizational Resistance

Workers against capitalism

This is a subject well covered in literature since Marx’s writings and so I will not go into this. The political slogan ‘*Workers of the world, unite for we have nothing to lose but our chains!*’ is one of the most famous rallying cries from the Communist Manifesto (1848), by *Marx* and Engels. The International Workingmen’s Association was created in 1864, and since then there is a plethora of international workers’ organisations all over the world.

The one point I do want to mention is the slogan of the 2nd Comintern congress in 1920, which brought to the fore the anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist agenda of the Comintern. This leads to the discussion below.

The west in denial of imperialism and the resistance against it

Imperialism is an existential reality in our times. Western denial of it arises out of what I call the Intransigent Imperialism Denial Syndrome (IIDS). Today imperialism exists in its sanitised version – it is called ‘Free Trade Globalisation’ (FTG). In *Trade is War: The West’s War Against the World*, I have given a blow by blow account of how FTGs have brought havoc to Africa – as also in most of Asia and Latin America. The global South is resisting this economic war by the West. I have been involved in trade

negotiations at the international level – both at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and with the European Union on the issue of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) – and I can say without hesitation that there is nothing called

11 Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Beacon Press Boston, 2001

‘free trade’; it is simply an ideology of the empire to continue the exploitation of the natural and human resources of the global south.

National Resistance

Introduction

Nation-states were created during a certain period in history – in particular in Europe after the Thirty Years War and the Treaty of Westphalia. Europe is now moving towards ‘European Union’, and indeed European nation-states have allowed considerable erosion of their sovereignty towards making the EU a reality. But it is still a dream not a reality. As I write this, this dream is now under question. Nationalism still remains a force in Europe.

Good nationalism, Bad nationalism

Nationalism is not too much of a problem in the United States, where they celebrate it with passion. In 1776, the thirteen American colonies declared independence from England – an event celebrated on July 4th every year. But, in America too, nationalism is acceptable for the white Americans, not for the (coloured) Latinos, Africans and Asians. Nationalism is unacceptable for the countries of the global South. It is bad for them, they say.

In Europe nationalism became a dirty word ever since it was identified with ‘national socialism’ under Hitler in Germany. Since then socialism was acceptable, but not nationalism. As I write this, there is a palpable alarm in ‘left’ circles about nationalism’s resurgence, often equated with ‘neo-fascism’ or ‘populism’ – or both. Among these are: the National Front in France, the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, the Danish People’s Party in Denmark, the Progress Party in Norway, and the UK Independence Party (UKIP). Many of these rejoiced at the UK’s Brexit vote, hailing it as a triumph for their own nationalist positions. But it is not just the ‘neo-fascists’ that claim the nationalist ground. ‘Nations’ such as the Scots and the Catalonians are aspiring towards national self-determination. There is yet

another dimension on ‘bad nationalism’. Increasingly, there is alarm both in the United States and in Europe about the threat of Russian nationalism. For example, on 20 November 2014 the (London) *Economist* carried an article entitled: ‘Nationalism is back’. It said: ‘The most serious threat to the stability of Europe ... remains Russian nationalism. The biggest security question facing Europe – and perhaps the world – will be whether President Putin rides the nationalist wave he has helped to create, and continues to threaten Ukraine and even the Baltic states.’¹⁴²

The National Question (NQ)

I have written extensively on the NQ in other publications. In *Trade is War* (2015) I wrote:

The Communist Manifesto is dead. It is now the spectre of the oppressed nations of the world (most significantly, the nationalism of the countries of the South) that is ‘haunting Europe’. And to be sure, all the powers of old Europe – led by the United States – have entered into an unholy alliance to ‘exorcise this spectre’. This now is the new manifesto of our time: the Manifesto of the Oppressed Nations and Exploited Peoples of the World.¹⁴³

Even those on the ‘left’ in Europe and America that recognise imperialism do not recognise, or understand, the National Question. It is missing, for example, in an otherwise excellent study of ‘*The Communist Manifesto: A Weapon of War*’ by Doug Enaa Greene. He says: ‘Despite being written over 160 years ago, the Communist Manifesto remains as relevant as ever.’¹⁴⁴ However, there is no mention of nationalism or the National Question that goes back (under various formulations) in the writings of Marx, Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Mao, Castro, Dani Nabudere, Samir Amin and other Marxist revolutionaries.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² <https://www.google.co.uk/#q=economist+20+november+2014+nationalism+is+back>

¹⁴³ andon, Yash. 2015. *Trade is War*, OR-Books, p 150

¹⁴⁴ <http://links.org.au/communist-manifesto-marx-engels-weapon-war-greene>

Islamic resistance against western civilization

The Islamic resistance against western civilization is an even more complex phenomenon than the anti-colonial resistance. I would argue that the

foundations of this resurgence go back to the meteoric rise of Islam in the mid-seventh to mid-eleventh centuries, Islam's contribution to the European Enlightenment and Renaissance. Enlightenment writers like Edward Gibbon, the author of the classic *The Decline and fall of the Roman Empire*, and the English historian Arnold Toynbee, had a very balanced view of Islam. These and many historians have written that after the Prophet's death in AD 632, Islam spread to all surrounding areas, bringing lands from Persia to Spain under its control. From the seventh century to about the beginning of the Crusades – for some five hundred years – Islam was not only a formidable force but culturally, scientifically and intellectually progressive. The Caliphates encouraged merchants and scholars to travel through Western Eurasia, bringing goods and knowledge to Europe. In 751, for example, paper-making from China made its way to Europe through Muslim traders. Future states of the region, such as the Safavid, Seljuk, Ottoman and Mughal in India, were all Islamic. This was followed by the Crusades from 1095 to 1487, where the West fought Islam and recovered most of its lost territories in Europe.

Today the empire has unleashed a relentless war against the Islamic nations, whilst some of the most backward atavistic sects have fought back with the dream of restoring the Caliphate. There appears to be no end to this war in – among other – Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Libya, Mali, Congo, the Sudan and Somalia. Uganda has got itself involved in some of these wars. The massive influx of refugees from these countries into Europe and the USA is a result of this onslaught by the West on these ancient lands of the Middle East and Africa.

145 See also: Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Fenix Ndhlovu eds. 2013. Nationalism and National Projects in Southern Africa: New Critical Reflections, South Africa: AISA. Part four on 'National Question, Ethnicity and Citizenship.'

Everyday forms of resistance

This concept was popularised by James Scott in his book *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance* (2008). It is an important addition to our classification of various forms of resistance against the system. In a journal article Scott cites Bishop Trelawney's *The Hidden Realm of Political Conflict* (1717) to highlight forms of resistance by the

common people that are often hidden from public knowledge. It is worth quoting Scott to understand what this generally unrecognised phenomenon is.

Everyday Forms of Resistance ... Some of the most telling analyses of conflict are in fact designed precisely to explain under what circumstances groups in conflict resort to one or another kind of open political action. Thus, why some groups under certain conditions are likely to employ violent forms of political action

– e.g. riots, rebellion, revolutionary movements – rather than less violent forms such as petitions, rallies, peaceful marches, protest voting, strikes, boycotts – has occupied centre stage. As a result of careful historical comparisons social scientists have begun to grasp how certain social structures, state systems, cultural values, and historical practices help shape political action. The undeniable advances made along these lines, however, are fatally compromised by a damagingly narrow and poverty-stricken view of political action. There is a vast realm of political action, described below, that is almost habitually overlooked. It is ignored for at least two reasons. First, it is not openly declared in the usually understood sense of ‘politics’. Second, neither is it group action in the usually understood sense of collective action.¹⁴⁶

Today, the everyday forms of resistance against the colonial and neo-colonial states take place in practically all sectors of production (farms, factories, restaurants, etc.) and governance (government, the judiciary, elections, etc.). An increasing number of peasant and indigenous peoples’ movements have organised civil resistance

146 James C Scott - The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies, 200 <https://rauli.cbs.dk/index.php/cjas/article/viewFile/1765/1785>

(mostly non-violent) to protect their lands and livelihoods against encroachments by global and local capitalist barons. They fight not only on their lands but also in the parliaments, the courts and during election campaigns.

Take Brazil, for example. Here the Landless Workers’ Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra*, MST) have been fighting since its creation in the 1980s. It has an estimated 1.5 million members. They fight

not only against land dispossession but also social issues such as racism, and sexism in order to achieve a self-sustainable way of life for the poor in rural areas.¹⁴⁷

Or take India. Ekta Parishad (*Unity Forum*) is an Indian activist movement founded in 1991 by P V Rajagopal, son of a Gandhian worker. It is a federation of approximately 11,000 community-based organisations and thousands of individual members spread over 11 Indian states. It is worth quoting from their vision statement in order to understand the deeply humanist, egalitarian, and nonviolent character of the movement. This is what it says: ‘We believe in India where:

- Each one could benefit from equal and guaranteed access to land,

forest and water, and the whole population – regardless of the origin or cast – could live with dignity.

- A land reform and a development model would take into account the poorest so that the rights of all citizens would be fairly protected.
- The application of the Gandhian principles of non-violence would ensure respect for the fundamental rights of the vulnerable and respect for the fundamental rights of the vulnerable and marginalized communities.’¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Angus Wright and Wendy Wolford, 2003. *To Inherit the Earth: The Landless Movement and the Struggle for a new Brazil, USA: Food First Books* [https:// foodfirst.org/product/to-inherit-the-earth- the-landless-movement-and-the-struggle-for-a-new-brazil/](https://foodfirst.org/product/to-inherit-the-earth-the-landless-movement-and-the-struggle-for-a-new-brazil/)

Also see: *The Landless Workers Movement – UK: Global Justice Now* [https:// www.globaljustice.org.uk/sites/default/.../report_back_from_mst_web_0.pdf](https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/sites/default/.../report_back_from_mst_web_0.pdf)

¹⁴⁸ <http://ektaparishad.com/en-us/about/vision.aspx>

Mackenzie, A F D in his *Land, ecology and resistance in Kenya, 1880-1952*, gives a good picture of the gender and class dimensions of resistance against the colonial rule in the Murang’a District during that period. He shows how both public and everyday forms of resistance were an integral part of the politics of resistance which the colonial state attempted to remove from the realm of politics by recasting these in what was claimed to be the neutral language of legal regimes and of western science and technology.¹⁴⁹

QUESTIONS

1. There are two sources of what the book calls ‘systemic madness’: one is the steady deterioration of the finer aspects of western civilization, and the other is the capitalist system of production. Discuss.
2. Whistle-blower Edward Snowden (the former employee at US National Security Agency), has revealed that the British and American intelligence and Israel’s Mossad worked together to create the ISIS - the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. This is nothing new; it is a deeply ingrained axiom of Anglo-American foreign policy – create one devil to fight another; then fight with the devil you created once the first devil is routed. Discuss in relation to your knowledge of contemporary international relations.
3. How did the ‘war on terror’ become part of the new vocabulary in international relations?
4. Why is it that people in the West do not weep for Palestinians and Africans killed by ‘terrorists’ as they do for European and American victims? (‘The West rules; the Rest don’t matter’ syndrome).
5. Uganda has no business interfering in Somalia. Does it?
6. The West complains about the refugees’ influx into Europe and America, when in fact it is the wars the West has fuelled in the
149 <http://www.cabdirect.org/cabdirect/abstract/20016784461>
Middle East, Africa and Latin America that are the main cause of this exodus. Would you agree that Western foreign policy is the root cause of the instability in these countries?
7. Uganda has a refugee population of 509,000, of whom the biggest number has come from South Sudan followed by the Congo and Somalia. Explain the political, military and moral dimensions of this tragedy.
8. According to the 2016 Oxfam report, the wealth of the poorest half of the world’s population - 3.6 billion people - has fallen by a trillion dollars (a

38% drop) since 2010, and the world's 1% now own more than the rest of us combined. How do you explain this 'madness'?

9. Discuss the proposition that capitalism, a progressive force at one time, has become retrogressive in our time.

10. Some reformist economists – following Keynes – argue that capitalism's problems are temporary, and can be resolved through correct state policies. Do you agree?

11. Deficit financing is a good policy as a short term palliative. But this and other similar palliatives do not address the structural problems that lie deeper in the unresolvable contradiction within capitalism between productive forces and production relations. Discuss.

12. We are witnessing a major civilizational shift the like of which we have not seen in the last 500 years. Elaborate or challenge this proposition.

13. When Enlightenment came to Europe it was as a result of complex processes. Islamic science played a role in re-linking Europe with Greek classical writings, and with the sciences, during the period of the Enlightenment. Why is this narrative missing in the dominant western discourse?

14. We need to encourage our western friends that the West's

Enlightenment civilisation had left behind a heritage that is now part of global civilization, and they should accept the emerging global civilization with values of Ubuntu, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and other eastern and global cultures without feeling threatened. Discuss.

15. Explain the difference between liberal values of the Enlightenment and Neoliberalism as an ideological economic doctrine of our times.

16. The English historian Arnold Toynbee said that of the 22 civilizations that have appeared in history, 19 of them collapsed when they reached the moral state America is in now. Do you also think that the US empire is in moral decay? How do you know?

17. Our times are often described as ‘the age of rage’. Would you accept this characterisation of our times?

18. The book describes four levels of resistance against the capitalism-imperialist system. What are these, and with which of these would you associate most closely?

19. Today, the ‘everyday forms of resistance’ against the colonial and neo-colonial states take place in practically all sectors of production (farms, factories, restaurants, etc.) and governance (government, the judiciary, elections, etc.) Illustrate this from your experience in Uganda or East Africa.

20. The non-Marxist economic historian Karl Polanyi, author of the classic, *The Great Transformation* (1944), argued that democracy and capitalism were at odds with each other. Under capitalism there can be no democracy, there can only be fascism. Do you agree?

21. Is nationalism good or bad?

22. What do you understand by the ‘National Question’?

What is the role of University students in confronting the major political and economic challenges facing Africa?

CHAPTER TEN

The Dar es Salaam debates

What is the role of University students in confronting the major political and economic challenges facing Africa?

Four parallel debates

I need to explain to those not born at the time of the Dar es Salaam Debates in the 1970s the significance of these debates and their continuing relevance today – nearly 50 years down the road. It is for this reason, and because I would be referring to these in the last chapter on ‘Rebooting the Revolution in Uganda’ that I decided to summarise these in a chapter on its own.

In the 1960s and 1970s Tanzania attracted a host of people – refugees, freedom fighters and academics:

- Liberation movements from Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia),

Mozambique, Angola, and South Africa; Angola, and South Africa;

- Ugandans fleeing from Amin’s persecution;
- Africans from the continent and the diaspora - mainly academics

from Kenya, West Africa and the Caribbean;

- Radical socialists-communists (mostly academic) from Europe, Canada and the United States.

Probably no other country in Africa gathered together such a medley of freedom fighters and academics at the time ... and since then. Tanzania’s attraction owed itself largely to the personality of Nyerere, his experiment with a new form of socialism – Ujamaa; and an atmosphere of security and freedom to debate. Dar es Salaam thus became a focal point of debates about liberation strategies (between, for example, the contending forces of the ANC and the PAC from South Africa); East African debates (not only Ugandans but also Kenyans); and debates between various ‘socialist’ tendencies across the world.

To enable us to understand the dizzy mixture (a jumble), of these debates at various levels and layers, let me try and classify them. I will not go into the internal debates between the liberation movements – between, for example, the ANC and the PAC from South Africa; or between ZANU and ZAPU from Zimbabwe. Leaving these, there were, broadly speaking, four politically and pedagogically significant debates in Dar es Salaam in the late 1960s and the decade of the 1970s, running concurrently. Being concurrent, they obviously influenced one another, but it is important to understand that each had its own historical and contemporary peculiarities. The debates were a complex maze, but I will try my best to lead through these so that we understand them separately and collectively.

1. The first debate was about Tanzania, the direction it was going and how it might show the way for the rest of Africa towards the ultimate goal of socialism. It was mainly a debate amongst Tanzanians – broadly between Nyerere's Party (TANU) on one side, and the on the other some University of Dar es Salaam radicals, sometimes joined in by others from outside Tanzania.

2. The second was a debate among primarily the Ugandans living in exile in Dar es Salaam on the character of the regime in Uganda, and what they could do in order to face the challenges posed by the tyranny of Idi Amin. Not surprisingly, there were several political tendencies amongst the Ugandans – the most important among these were: the UPC led by Obote; Front for National Salvation (FRONASA) led by Museveni; and the tendency that followed the John Kakonge radical group led by Nabudere.

3. The third was a debate among mainly the African members of the teaching staff of the University, in particular in the Faculty of Social Sciences, on how the prevailing pedagogy of their disciplines might be challenged and changed to reflect the African context and conditions. This debate led to the formation of the African Association of Political Science (AAPS) in 1973.

4. The fourth blended all the above three in a polemical debate amongst mostly the radical members of the academic staff and students, joined often by radicals from across the world. This debate was then put together in 32 chapters in a book titled '*The University of Dar es Salaam Debate on Class, State & Imperialism*' edited by me, with an introduction by the veteran Zanzibar Marxist politician, Mohamed Babu.

Although I will go through these one by one, my objective is to provide a window to the rich tapestry of political and ideological landscape and overall context which shaped the events in Southern Africa, but more specifically in Uganda.

Nyerere, Ujamaa and the debate on socialism

University Students African Revolutionary Front (USARF) From 1967 to 1970 Yoweri Museveni was a student at the University of Dar es Salaam. He has been Uganda's president now for 32 years. On 30 July 2015, he was awarded a certificate of Doctor of Literature *Honoris Causa* by the University. How much was Museveni a product of what took place in Tanzania and in Southern Africa, and the ideological debates on the campus in the late 1960s and 1970's? This is a question not limited to Museveni. Some of us – including Dani Nabudere, Mahmood Mamdani, Omwony Ojwok and I (all from Uganda) – had also been part of that debate. One of the luminaries at the campus, then, was Walter Rodney from Guyana, who wrote his influential book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), whilst at the University.¹⁵⁰

A group of students from Tanzania joined by those from other parts of Africa – Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Malawi among others – had formed a 'Socialist Club' which was transformed into the

¹⁵⁰ It was published by Pambazuka Press in 2012, ISBN: 190638794X

University Students African Revolutionary Front (USARF). This was founded and led by Yoweri Museveni. In 1968, the USARF created a cyclostyled publication called *Cheche*. *Cheche* is Kiswahili for 'spark', which was Nkrumah's journal; Spark itself was a translation from *Iskra*, Lenin's journal. In *Cheche*, the students and some faculty members debated questions on class struggles and the building of socialism.

This is what Karim Hirji, at the time a lecturer at the University, says about Museveni's leadership role in the formation of the USARF:

A group of thirty or so students keenly listen to one articulate comrade....Yoweri Museveni talks with a twinge of a smile on his lips, but

the topic of his oration is far from frivolous: ‘What is the role of University students in confronting the major political and economic challenges facing Africa?’... Echoing an often noted theme, he says that students have a critical role in the fight for African liberation. To play it effectively, they must, first and foremost, liberate themselves mentally. Museveni is a charismatic and inspirational speaker.¹⁵¹

Museveni had gone to the University in July 1967 (five months after the Arusha Declaration), but soon he was disillusioned. ‘I was, almost immediately, disappointed. I found the students lacking in militancy.’ (*Cheche*, p 13) He goes on to say that he wanted to, ‘transform the college from being a centre of reaction to a hotbed of revolutionary cadres that would dedicate themselves, unto death, to the cause of the African revolution.’ (*Cheche*, p 14) In *Cheche*’s first issue (November, 1969), Museveni writes a piece on ‘*Why We Should Take up Rifles.*’

In February 1967 the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) launched the Arusha Declaration and *Ujamaa* as the basis of socialism and self-reliance. Following this, the Government nationalised some

151 Hirji, Karim F (ed.) 2010. *Cheche: Reminiscences of a Radical Magazine*, Dar es Salaam, Mkuki na Nyota, pp 18-19

of the commanding heights of the economy. This sparked a debate on the campus. In his *Sowing the Mustard Seed* (1997), Museveni says: ‘My problem with the concept of *ujamaa* was that Nyerere was using his tribe as a model for the rest of Tanzania.’¹⁵² In one of its early issues, Rodney criticised *Ujamaa*, whereupon the government banned *Cheche*, arguing that Tanzania did not need to import a foreign ideology; it was building its own model of socialism.¹⁵³

The question of socialism that was hotly debated in Dar es Salaam continues to remain a relevant issue for us in Uganda and East Africa.

Nyerere the man and his philosophy

When you meet with the Mwalimu (teacher) – also known as *Baba wa Taifa* for the first time, you are struck by his modest, humble and

unassuming demeanor, but soon, in conversation with him, you get captivated by his hidden charisma and sharp intellect. I had known him for a long time, but I have never had an opportunity to ever had an opportunity to talk with him eye to eye. However, I have been in many meetings with him together with others, especially in the 1970s during my time at the University of Dar es Salaam, and especially during Tanzania's involvement in Uganda in 1979-80.

The *Baba wa Taifa* (Father of the Nation) was not a Platonic philosopher conjecturing in abstractions, but a philosopher king in the truest sense of the phrase. This is how incisively he blended African with European moral and political philosophy. This is what he wrote:

There must be equality because only on this basis will men work cooperatively. There must be freedom because every individual is

152 Y K Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, p 27

153 Later, Rodney wrote a piece for the journal *African Review*, reviewing his assessment arguing that Ujamaa was a 'localized manifestation of the principles underlying scientific socialism.' Quoted in Hirji, Cheche, *op.cit.* p 149

*not served by the society unless it is his. And there must be unity, because only when the society is united can its members live and work in peace, security and well-being. Society must have institutions which safeguard and promote both unity and freedom and it must be permeated by an attitude – a society ethic – which ensures that these institutions remain true to their purpose, and are adapted as need arises.*¹⁵⁴

When Nyerere talked about 'Ujamaa' (derived from roots in family and community) as his understanding of 'socialism' you can be sure that it had a more African than European pedigree. Nyerere's nationalism was grounded in Pan-Africanism. He ridiculed African countries as 'vinchi' – artificial 'statelets' – that were carved out by imperial powers in Berlin in 1884/85. He dreamt of Africa as a united, one continent. The Arusha Declaration of 1967 captured his pan-African sentiment:

We have been oppressed a great deal, we have been exploited a great deal and we have been disregarded a great deal. It is our weakness that has led to our being oppressed, exploited and disregarded. Now we want a

*revolution - a revolution which brings to an end our weakness, so that we are never again exploited, oppressed, or humiliated.*¹⁵⁵

Ujamaa Socialism

One of Mwalimu's lasting contributions to the debate on socialism was his own version of it. Earlier we saw how *Cheche* and Museveni had serious misgivings about Ujamaa. Here is my assessment – not from hindsight, but even whilst I was at the University. In my view, both *Cheche* and Museveni were off-track. Of course, up to a point it is legitimate to assess Ujamaa from the generally accepted notion of 'socialism'. But this concept is itself grounded in the debate that has gone on in the West for a long, long time. In the 1840s Marx derided previous conceptions of socialism as 'utopian', and offered a more

154 Quoted in Tandon, Yash (2014), *Nyerere*, Geneva: CETIM

155 Ibid

'scientific' definition, one that would eventually put the working classes in power leading, ultimately, to a 'stateless society'.

Nyerere never claimed to be a Marxist. And yet, in the 1970s he was often criticised for not pursuing the Marxist line of 'scientific' socialism. Nyerere initiated a document called *Mwongozo* that put forward the idea of the working class at the helm of change. But it is important to understand that whilst *Mwongozo* put the workers on the front, Nyerere had in mind a community that went beyond the narrow class concept of 'the proletariat'. After all, nearly 80 - 90 percent of the population comprised of the peasantry scattered over literally thousands of villages which did not have the basic facilities of health, education, transport and other services. For Nyerere 'Ujamaa socialism' meant, first and foremost, bringing the village communities together into 'Ujamaa villages' and help them to build these basic social and infrastructural facilities as a first step towards building genuine socialism – one that would fit African (not European, American, Soviet or Chinese) realities.

Did Nyerere succeed in this? Yes and No. No, because in some areas the state went beyond methods of persuasion and political education and so the peasants reacted against this and did not embrace the collectivisation of agriculture enthusiastically. This was counterproductive, and contrary to Nyerere's own moral philosophy. Yes, because the experiment did bring

people together into Ujamaa villages that enabled the state to provide infrastructural and social amenities. In 1990, I toured around a number of regions in Tanzania for several weeks to assess self-development projects on behalf of a development NGO. I found that the situation, in general, had improved compared to the period of the 1970s when I was a teacher at the University. People told me over and over ‘Mwalimu gave us dignity; we were disregarded and oppressed under the colonial times; Nyerere gave us voice.’

Nonetheless, I found that the people were still too poor to meet the high cost of agricultural production that came with the wake of the introduction of hybrid seeds and fertilizers by global corporations. Nyerere had not foreseen this in the 1970s, but during his latter days he was obliged to recognise the force of the empire, and was very critical of the role the World Bank and the IMF were playing in Africa.

On 24 October 1990, after Nyerere had left his presidency, he addressed journalists at the United Nations. He is reported to have said that he was ‘unapologetic’ about introducing Ujamaa. ‘If I had my time over again, I would do it much the same way’, he said. The journalist who summarised the meeting wrote: ‘Nyerere rails against the austerity programs that the West is imposing on developing countries these days through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in exchange for loans. As budget deficits are cut in an effort to reduce inflation, he complains that social progress is being reversed and poverty increased as the promised speed-up in economic growth fails to materialize. Not just in Tanzania.’¹⁵⁶

I would say that Nyerere’s attempt at Ujamaa Socialism was a bold innovation, and a verdict on it is still an open question – as indeed, for that matter, the verdict on socialism in the Soviet Union and China. Why was it that the radical members of the USARF – Museveni, Shivji, Hirji, Henry Mapolu, Zakia Meghji, Ramadhan Meghji, and many others – could not distinguish between *ujamaa* and their brand of scientific socialism? Let me address this question briefly.

Dar young radicals the cognoscenti, and Nyerere the confused idealist
Hirji had written in his diary:

Mwalimu Nyerere is a brilliant idealist dwelling in utter confusion and utopian expectations. Whether he is aware of it or not, effectively, he is entrenching neo-colonialism in Tanzania.¹⁵⁷ If there is anything in Hirji's book of reminiscences that reveals the hopelessly idealist character of the founders of USARF and *Cheche*, this is it. It would appear that twenty-to-twenty-five years old youthful 'vanguard' at the DSU had hoped to clear the 'brilliant' Nyerere of his 'utter confusion' and through the agencies of the USARF and *Cheche* bring Nyerere on their side and transform 'utopian socialism' to 'scientific socialism'. It is clear that it was not Nyerere who was nursing utopian illusions but these youngsters. This is indeed ironical, and I write this not in a sarcastic spirit. I will let Hirji explain: 'We were impelled by love for humanity... Humanity for us was a single family'.¹⁵⁸ It is beautiful to read this, and I do not mean to be patronising; for the young not to have visions or dreams – even hopelessly illusionary dreams – for a better world for humanity would be really sad.

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/10/24/world/nyerere-and-tanzania-no-regrets-at-socialism.html>

¹⁵⁷ Hirji, *Cheche*, loc.cit. italics in the original. p 43

What I need, to add, however, is that these young minds were led to their idealistic dreams by mature ideologists of 'scientific socialism' who came, mostly, from Europe, Canada and the United States – among them John Saul and Lionel Cliffe, who imported the writings of Euro-American Marxists, especially Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy. Baran and Sweezy were the real 'gurus' most cherished by the USARF and *Cheche* in their 'ideological classes'. In Hirji's *Cheche*, in appendix D¹⁵⁹, he gives 'The first syllabus for USARF ideological classes – 1969', in which he has a long list of readings, which ends with five special references with a note: 'The following are a must reading for all comrades. They will facilitate the formulation of an overall perspective on relevant issues. These are: Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*; Baran's *The Political Economy of Growth*; Baran & Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital*; Nkrumah's *Neo-colonialism*; and Engel's *Socialism, Scientific and Utopian*.' The young, idealistic, impressionable students (barely in their twenties) were misled, and lived in some other world – abstracted from the hard realities on the African ground.¹⁶⁰ The fate of peoples and nations is not decided in

158 Ibid, p 175

159 Ibid, p 206

160 In Hirji's Cheche, one of the most beautifully written and candid narratives is George G Hajivayanis's 'Night-Shift Comrades'. pp 83-98

books but in the daily struggles of the people and the historical and contemporary circumstances that define those struggles.

The Ugandan internal party debate

Introduction

The debate at Dar es Salaam amongst Ugandans goes back to the 1964 UPC Gulu Conference where its radical youth wing led by John Kakonge was effectively crushed.¹⁶¹ Following this, Nabudere and others had gone underground and worked through organisations like the Lumumba Progressive Bookshop and the Uganda-Vietnam Solidarity Group. On 15 November 1985, Nabudere talked at great length to a comrade from Liberia, Togba-Nah Tipoteh (founder of the Movement for Justice in Africa – MOJA). I was the only other person present. Nabudere referred to the Gulu conference. And then he said:

In 1965/66 the Party founded the Lumumba Progressive Bookshop, and the Lumumba Research Bureau, using my income as lawyer. These were identified as 'the Mbale Group'. They provided political meeting points with the objective of raising cadres. Through Kakonge, we got a car. Natoro had just got back from study in USSR and travelled around organising study groups. Lumumba's last testament to Pauline Lumumba¹⁶² was our main document, along with Nkrumah's writings. We did that for 3/4 years. In 1967/68, we formed the Uganda-Vietnam Solidarity Group – still fighting for poor peasants in their struggle over land.... Our ideological link-up now was not with UPC, but the old UNC which was nationalist and anti-imperialist.¹⁶³

¹¹ For an account of this, see Chapter 4: Neo-colonialism and Resistance

¹⁶² <http://www.blackpast.org/patrice-lumumbas-letter-pauline-lumumba-1960>. From: Jean Van Lierde ed., *Lumumba Speaks: The Speeches and Writings of Patrice Lumumba, 1958-1961* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972)

¹⁶³ This quote and following quotes on this conversation are from my notes taken at the time.

My introduction to the Party

I had known Nabudere from our days as students in London in late 1950's

and early 1960's as members of the Uganda Students' Association, and later in Uganda when I joined Makerere as a lecturer in 1964. At the time I had no idea of the existence of the 'Party' Nabudere referred to in his conversation with Tipoteh. It was not until I came to the Dar es Salaam University that I was told about it by Nabudere; and that was in 1974 when I was enlisted into the Party. It is then that I understood why the Party had to go underground. Parties with a revolutionary program were either infiltrated by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) or – like the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) – compromised.

So whilst there were other debates going on in parallel amongst the left at the University, amongst the Ugandan Party members the debate was focused on the strategy of combatting against the Amin regime to which, among others – the debate to which neither Museveni nor Mamdani was privy. 'In the early days of Amin' Nabudere told Tipoteh, 'Museveni approached me to join FRONASA, but I refused because I said we have to study the situation and organise the cadres still inside the country. But Museveni went on and took adventurist militarist actions from 1973 on ... Our attempt to link with Obote to form a broad-based group – Uganda Liberation Movement (UGALIMO) – failed because Obote wanted to front only his UPC. So at Dar es Salaam we organised study groups, and training of cadres. Some of them are still leaders in the country.'

Thus, even before 'The Dar Debate' had started in the latter years of the 1970s, (which I edited as the book titled '*The University of Dar es Salaam Debate on Class, State & Imperialism*') there was already an ongoing debate amongst members of the communist party of Uganda (what we called the '*Soko*' – Swahili for market) on how to handle the situation created by the Amin coup in 1971. The 'Dar Debate' – at least as far as the '*Soko*' was concerned – was an added, a complementary, attempt by us to clear our minds on a number of theoretical and strategic questions that the Uganda situation posed us. It is important to understand this because Hirji, Shivji, Mamdani and others who joined in the 'Dar Debate' were not part of this internal debate within '*Soko*'.

The debates within 'Soko'

In Dar es Salaam the '*Soko*' focused on study groups and training cadres. We

tried to draw lessons mostly from Africa – Ghana, the Congo, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Egypt, South Africa, and others – but also from Asia and Latin America. One of the issues we discussed, for example, was Che Guevara’s ‘foco theory’ – the theory that creating liberated zones (‘focos’) provides focal points for the peasants to carry through the revolution – a theory that Museveni was advocating. We analysed why revolution succeeded in Cuba but failed in Bolivia? Che had tried to repeat the success of Cuba in Bolivia but was betrayed by the peasants to the state security, and killed. We concluded that the foco theory worked only if people are ready for revolution, and this requires the mobilisation of the peasants and this takes time and struggle – like the 1934-1935 historic 6,000 miles ‘long march’ of the Communist Party in China under Mao’s leadership.

With the benefit of hindsight I dare say that Museveni did not really succeed in laying down the basis for revolution in Uganda. Museveni was undoubtedly a brilliant military strategist. Kirunda-Kivejinja, in his *Uganda: the Crisis of Confidence* (1995), describes Museveni as ‘perhaps the most- gifted commander Uganda has ever produced.’¹⁶⁴ Indeed, during the guerrilla war against Obote (1980-1985), he was able to mobilise the peasants in, for example, the Luwero Triangle. But this was a far cry from the long struggle that is needed for the masses to really understand why they have to sacrifice their lives and to what end.

We will come to the causes and consequences of this failure later, but let us, for now, return to the ‘Soko’ debate in Dar es Salaam in the 1970’s.

¹⁶⁴ Kirunda-Kivejinja, A M (1995) *Uganda: the Crisis of Confidence*, Kampala: Progressive Publishing House, p 278

We discussed Chile in our study groups. In September, General Pinochet, backed by the CIA and large American corporations, had overthrown Salvador Allende soon after he had nationalised copper, banks and other assets – much like Obote was overthrown by the British-inspired coup of Amin following his attempts to implement his ‘Move to the Left’ strategy. Pinochet adopted the IMF-WB- backed strategy guided by the well-known and influential Milton Friedman’s Chicago School of Economics. Of course, Amin had no clue about Friedman or the Chicago School, but, at the behest of

the IMF and the World Bank, Amin was doing what Pinochet was doing in Chile. Uganda and Chile were two countries over two continents with a similar history and identical experience in the struggle against the empire – both doomed, as opposed to the successful heroic struggles of the people of Cuba and China.

In our study groups, we discussed how Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966 by lower-ranking military officers and police officials with the direct assistance and coordination of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the State Department. This was preceded by the corporate-manipulated slump of the cocoa market that created a crisis for Ghana's finances, which the military blamed on Nkrumah's radical policies. Just before the coup, Nkrumah had written his famous and still relevant thesis on *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of imperialism (1965)*.¹⁶⁵

We discussed about how in the Congo the revolution led by Patrice Lumumba was betrayed by forces backed by the US and Belgium, and Moïse Tshombe, 'President' of the province of Katanga. Tshombe was financed and supported by the Belgian mining company, the Minière du Haut-Katanga. This is what Lumumba wrote to his wife from the prison.

They have corrupted some of our countrymen; they have bought others; they have done their part to distort the truth and defiledone their part to distort the truth and defile 165 Kwame Nkrumah (1965), *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of imperialism*, London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd.

*our independence. What else can I say? That whether dead or I say? That whether dead or alive, free or in prison by order of the colonialists, it is not my person that is important. What is important is the Congo, our poor people whose independence has been turned into a cage ... But my faith will remain unshakable. I know and feel in my very heart of hearts that sooner or later my people will rid themselves of all their enemies, foreign and domestic, that they will rise up as one to say no to the shame and degradation of colonialism and regain their dignity in the pure light of day.*¹⁶⁶

And so, at Dar University in our study groups we discussed the failures of our leaders in Africa betrayed by those who were corrupted by the empire,

and compared these with the revolutions in China and Cuba. It was clear that Uganda needed a vanguard party with a clear ideology and cadres who would mobilise the masses to fight for their liberation from the empire.

AAPS and the pedagogy of social sciences

A tribute to Justinian Rweyemamu

Before I proceed with the African Association of Political Science, I wish to remember Justinian Rweyemamu and recognise the contribution he made to the pedagogy of research and teaching of economics. When I was teaching at the London School of Economics in 1971-72, he came to see me to persuade me to come back to East Africa and join the Social Sciences Faculty at the University of Dar es Salaam. He was then the Dean of the Faculty.

Surprisingly, he never participated in the various Dar debates, focusing on restructuring the social sciences curriculum. One of his innovations was the creation of a three-year course for all Social Science students. It was called *East African Society and Environment* (EASE) and I was appointed as its head, with Mahmood Mamdani as my deputy.

[166 http://www.blackpast.org/patrice-lumumbas-letter-pauline-lumumba1960#sthash.IUVUAuww.dpuf](http://www.blackpast.org/patrice-lumumbas-letter-pauline-lumumba1960#sthash.IUVUAuww.dpuf)

His *Underdevelopment and Industrialization in Tanzania: a study of perverse capitalist industrial development* (1974)¹⁶⁷ is one of the best books I have read on the Tanzanian economy. The book goes into Tanzania's economic history, and charts out a way forward on the road to economic development through industrialisation, and value addition through the establishment of machine tool industries. Again, surprisingly, it never featured among the books prescribed for reading in the study groups of USARF and *Cheche*. Nor did it feature Rweyemamu's '*Towards Socialist Planning*'.¹⁶⁸ These study groups favoured European Marxists to a home-grown Marxist like Justinian. In 1977 President Nyerere sent him to Geneva to work with the Brandt Commission, chaired by Willy Brandt. Its aim was to study 'the grave global issues arising from the economic and social disparities of the world community and to suggest ways of promoting adequate solutions to the problems involved in development and in attacking absolute poverty'.¹⁶⁹

In 1980, Rweyemamu joined the United Nations in New York as the principal officer for development and international cooperation in the office of the Deputy Secretary-General. In this capacity, he assisted the countries from the global South in their attempt to create a ‘New International Economic Order’ (NEIO)¹⁷⁰ – a challenging mission that the World Bank and the empire finally killed with their ‘globalisation’ strategy.

Rweyemamu died of cancer at the age of 40.

Others ignored by the USARF-Cheche radicals

Other Tanzanian scholars in the Marxist tradition that were ignored

167 Rweyemamu, Justinian (1974), *Underdevelopment and Industrialization in Tanzania: A Study of Perverse Capitalist Industrial Development*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press

168 Rweyemamu, Justinian (1972), *Towards Socialist Planning*, Tanzania Publishing House.

169 Rweyemamu, Justinian (1972), *Towards Socialist Planning*, Tanzania Publishing House.

170 <https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=New+International+Economic+Order&oq=New+International+Economic+Order>

by the USARF included Mohamed Babu and Haroub Othman. Babu’s *African socialism or socialist Africa? (1981)* made a critical analysis of Africa’s conditions of dependence on imperialism, and proposed a way forward through a socialist revolutionary movement.¹⁷¹ He died in 1996.

Haroub, like Babu, was also from Zanzibar. He had his education in the Soviet Union, and had spent many years at the University of Dar es Salaam as an activist academic. I knew him both at the University, and in Zanzibar where I visited the ‘Legal Services Centre’ that he had set up to train people for advocacy work on human rights. He was a gentle person, who had strong views on socialism and defended the union of Zanzibar and Tanganyika, but he never forced his views on others. He wrote profusely, but always as a Pan-African nationalist, never siding with any particular position in the various debates at the Campus.¹⁷²

Haroub died in July 2009, too early for his age. He was in the middle of writing a biography of Nyerere.

One of the sorely missing pages in Hirji’s *Cheche* is a consideration of the contributions of great Tanzanian scholars in the Marxist tradition such as

Justinian Rweyemamu, Mohamed Babu and Haroub Othman.

Importance of the AAPS debate

This debate on how the prevailing pedagogy, teaching and research in the social sciences might be challenged and changed to reflect the African context and conditions was as important as the debate about socialism in Tanzania. As I said, it led to the founding of the AAPS in 1973 at the initiative of Anthony Rweyemamu, who was then head of the Department of Political Science at the University (Anthony and

171 Babu, Abdurrahman Mohamed (1981), *African socialism or socialist Africa?* Tanzania Publishing House; London, Zed Press

172 Yahya-Othman, Saida (ed), 2014, *Selected Works of Haroub Othman*, Dar es Salaam, Mkuki na Nyota

Justinian Rweyemamu were unrelated). Many of the leading members of the AAPS were scholars from other parts of Africa such as Nathan Shamuyarira and Ibbo Mandaza (from Zimbabwe), Okwudiba Nnoli, Claude Ake and Adele Jinadu (from Nigeria), Emmanuel Hansen (from Ghana), Nabudere, Mamdani and myself (from Uganda), Amedee Darga (from Mauritius), and Moeletsi Mbeki (from South Africa), among others.

The AAPS was not a Marxist organisation; it was a Pan-African organisation, and admitted a variety of views from a Pan-African perspective. It also tried to reach out to Africans in the Diaspora. What it achieved or did not achieve is another story. What is relevant here is the connection and contradiction between the *AAPS PanAfrican storyline* and the *Cheche's socialist storyline*. Among AAPS were members (such as Anthony) who were regarded as 'reactionary' by the '*Cheche* socialists'. For many of us, including Nabudere and I, on the other hand, (whilst we had some differences with him) Anthony was a strong nationalist and Pan-Africanist, and we could work with him, as with other nationalists in the Association, such as, significantly Nathan Shamuyarira who was a major figure in the struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe.

For us the struggle for national liberation was part of the struggle against imperialism. As a nationalist, Rweyemamu and other 'petty bourgeois reactionaries' (as the Cheche's 'radical Marxist leftists' called them) tried to challenge the hegemony of Western scholars and researchers in the social

sciences from an African perspective. By the same token, from the other end of the spectrum, people like Nabudere tried to challenge the hegemony of Western Marxists using Marxist categories but from the specificities of Africa, still in the phase of liberation from imperialism. Among the writings Nabudere wrote in the context of the AAPS is *'Imperialism, the Social Sciences and the National Question'*, which, in my view, is one of the best writings on the subject.¹⁷³

173 Nabudere, D Wadada, (1977). *Imperialism: The Social Sciences and the*

National Question (Dar Es Salaam 1977) pp 48

The Debate on Class, State and Imperialism

Introduction

Finally, we come down to the University of *Dar es Salaam Debate on Class, State & Imperialism* (shortened, in the following pages, to 'the Dar Debate'). The debate was edited by me and published by Walter Bgoya in 1982 with an Introduction by Mohamed Babu.¹⁷⁴ It also invited broader participation, including students and comrades from outside East Africa, such as Sipula Kabanje from Zambia, Takyiwaa Manuh from Ghana, and Rohini Banaji from India.

The debate started with the appearance of Issa Shivji's *The Silent Class Struggle in Tanzania*¹⁷⁵, initially as a paper for *Cheche*. It unleashed an intense, often passionate, argument amongst revolutionaries and Marxists on the campus and outside the continent. The passion was a reflection of the times we lived in but, looking back, I think the tone could have been less polemical, less passionate. This said, I must add that the argument and the issues raised by the debate remain significant to this day.

I have no desire to either open or prolong old debates; it is time that those differences that go back almost generation ago are put past us. What might be useful, however, is to put a context to that debate and draw out its significance for our own times. The question I ask is: Does the debate have anything to offer by way of lessons for contemporary struggles for democracy and against imperialism?

The purpose of the debate

I could do no better than quote Babu in answer to his question: '... what is

the purpose of these essays?’ This is what Babu says:

They originate in response to the publication of three most important books to come Out of East Africa. One of these is Issa

174 Tandon, Yash (ed.) 1982, University of Dar es Salaam Debate on Class, State & Imperialism, Tanzania Publishing House

175 Shivji I G (1976) *Class Struggles in Tanzania*, London: Heinemann

Shivji’s *Class Struggles in Tanzania*, second is Dan Nabudere’s *The Political Economy of Imperialism*, and third is *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* by Mahmood Mamdani.... The purpose of these essays is obvious; Marxists do not engage in debates just for the fun of it as in school debates. Their principal task is to change the world. Their debates are about the correct understanding of the world around us. Once this world is understood then the task is to outline policies which will guide their struggle - to draw up the general line. This is arrived at by concrete analysis of the concrete situation in any given area. To do this they use the dialectical methodology which is universally applicable and they relate it to their concrete situation. The second point in Marxist debate is about state power: who controls it, what class interests does it serve, what is the role of the proletariat, and so on. If the state is the most important instrument in the class struggle how can the proletariat achieve state power – spontaneously, or through conscious, organized leadership?¹⁷⁶

Some snippets from the Dar debate

Shivji’s Class Struggles in Tanzania

In his *Class Struggles in Tanzania*, Shivji argued that during the colonial period, whilst the peasants were engaged in production (of, for example, sisal and coffee), the British encouraged immigrants from India to provide the ‘middle stratum’ as traders, clerks and artisans. Over time, many of them accumulated capital and became the ‘commercial bourgeoisie’. But they could not become a ‘ruling class’. So what happened? The state stepped in; a new class was formed from the state level downward – the ‘bureaucratic bourgeoisie’. This new class first took over state power and then tried to develop an economic base through their control of economic enterprises – construction industries, manufacturing, transport and communication, banks,

and so on. Shivji argued that historically the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' had played a progressive role. The class struggle between the

176 Tandon, Yash (ed), loc. cit. p 10

'petty bourgeoisie' (led by the bureaucratic bourgeoisie) and the 'commercial bourgeoisie' was not only inevitable but historically necessary as much as political independence was necessary. Political independence cleared the way for further struggles unencumbered by the complication of racial divisions. Thus the liquidation of the inherited *racial* structures, Shivji argued, was *conditio sine qua non* for 'purifying' the class struggles. The 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' made a progressive breakthrough by putting socialism on the agenda; it marked the beginning of class struggles for socialism and the discussions of the proletarian ideology. *Mwongozo* marked the beginning of the proletarian line. The road to socialism is a long one of continuing class struggles.

Critique of Shivji by Meyns, Mamdani and Bhagat

The first comment was by a German Marxist scholar, Peter Meyns. He argued that *Mwongozo* had not opened the road to socialism; Tanzania was still in the stage of consolidating its national independence.

At this juncture in Tanzania's development Shivji is very detailed in historical description, but rather vague in theoretical conclusions.... What are the progressive characteristics of Tanzanian reality today? They are not that Tanzania has reached the first phase of socialism. They are that Tanzania is in the forefront of those countries in Africa engaged in serious endeavours to defend and strengthen its national independence, both internally and externally.¹⁷⁷

This was followed by Mamdani and Harko Bhagat. They said that Shivji had based his concept of classes 'as income groups, not in their relation to the process of production'; that 'the book slavishly capitulates to the dominant ideology'; that the book offered a 'mechanistic approach'; and that 'the concept of "bureaucratic bourgeoisie" has been used most unscientifically'. Nonetheless, they welcomed the book, despite its shortcomings, as a 'step forward'.¹⁷⁸

177 Ibid, p 27

178 Ibid, pp 36-40

Mamdani and Bhagat's critique of Nabudere

The Political Economy of Imperialism

Mamdani and Bhagat then critiqued Nabudere's manuscript on *The Political Economy of Imperialism*.¹⁷⁹ They said Nabudere was 'perilously close' to the position of 'ultra-imperialism' taken by Kautsky; 'the absence of any critique of social imperialism'; and 'an extremely one-sided conception of the objective tendency of imperialism to block the development of the productive forces in the semi-colonies'. They said Nabudere's analysis leaves 'no room for the peoples' democratic revolution'. As opposed to Nabudere's super-imperialism, they argued that: '*We would emphasise that in a semi-colony the ruling class must be seen as situated within the social formation.*'¹⁸⁰

Nabudere's critique of Shivji

Shivji did not respond to the critiques by Meyns, Mamdani and Bhagat. But Nabudere then wrote a critique of Shivji's book under the title: '*Imperialism, State, Class and Race*', in which he argued that Shivji's book drew its theoretical framework from neo-Marxist and neo-Trotskyite writings. He traced this orientation of the book to the 'deformed way' in which Marxism had been introduced at the University by neo-Marxist thinking – being a by-product of neo-Trotskyism in Western Europe, the USA and Latin-America. Nabudere argued that Shivji's book had 'little understanding of the workings of capitalism and imperialism'. That is why he came to regard the petty-bourgeoisie in the Tanzanian State as the 'ruling class', which he referred to as the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie'. Nabudere concluded his critique by calling Shivji's book 'very bad' because his analysis was 'abstracted from the real movement of history', and hence it had given an incorrect position on Tanzania.¹⁸¹

Hirji's critique of Nabudere

Shivji did not respond to Nabudere's critique. Instead it was Karim Hirji who came to Shivji's defence. He started with 'Progressive circles in Tanzania have recently been surprised to learn that Shivji's (book) ... has nothing in common with the Marxist-Leninist method.' He charged Nabudere

of ‘economism’, and of lapsing into Kauskyist formulations on super-imperialism. ‘One is left with the impression,’ Hirji wrote, ‘that he is talking about a single ruling class controlling many states!’ In contrast, Hirji took the position that ‘*To a single ruling class there corresponds a single state. A separate state implies a separate ruling class.*’¹⁸²

179 Nabudere, D W (1997), *The Political Economy of Imperialism*, London: Zed Press

180 *Tandon, loc cit*, p 48 (italics added)

181 *Ibid*, p 66

Nabudere’s response to Hirji

Nabudere responded to Hirji under the title ‘*A Caricature of MarxismLeninism*’ in which he defended himself against Hirji’s accusation that he was a Kauskyist. He said he shared Lenin’s view of Kautsky, quoting Lenin: ‘The essence of the matter is that Kautsky detaches the politics of imperialism from its economics’.¹⁸³ In the process, Nabudere also challenged not only Kautsky but also Kievsky, and Rosa Luxemburg, going on to contemporary ‘neo-Marxists’ like Baran, Sweezy, and Andre Gundar Frank who were popular with *Cheche* radicals. As for Hirji’s critique that Nabudere ‘abstracted’ the centralisation of capital into a ‘World finance Capital’, he said that the dominance of global finance capital was a reality. It is, he argued, ‘the total finance capital of the total financial oligarchies ... exploiting the total working class of the entire world under their hegemony’.¹⁸⁴

The above are only a few snippets from the book on the *Dar es Salaam Debate*. The debate is still relevant, and interested readers might like to peruse through the whole book.

Mamdani’s book on Uganda and Nabudere’s critique of it came after the Dar Debate had ended (these are not found in the book I edited). So we now move outside the Dar debate.

182 *Ibid*, p 71. Italics added

183 See Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/prrk/>

184 *Tandon, loc. cit.* p 134

Nabudere's critique of Mamdani's Politics and Class Formation in Uganda

In 1976, Mamdani's book *'Politics and Class Formation in Uganda'* was published.¹⁸⁵ In his *Imperialism and Revolution in Uganda*¹⁸⁶ Nabudere argued that despite Mamdani's critique of Shivji, he was essentially on the same line as Shivji. Shivji had argued that a progressive 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' had put socialism on the agenda in Tanzania.

In the case of Uganda, we are made to understand by Mamdani that a bureaucratic bourgeoisie did not emerge because the 'governing bureaucracy' [under Obote] made an alliance with the Asian 'commercial bourgeoisie' and therefore failed to emerge as the 'bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie'. Thus an African 'bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie' which was on the verge of emerging out of this 'governing bureaucracy' when the [Amin] coup occurred, was eliminated and its leadership 'took refuge in Dar es Salaam'. Instead, in the wake of the economic war 'a nascent commercial bourgeoisie' emerged and became the 'ruling class' in 1972 ...through 'the personalized rule of Amin' and is the 'immediate enemy' since imperialism is 'external' to Uganda.¹⁸⁷

Reading through Mamdani's book, I too found that his class analysis of Uganda is mind-boggling. Various kinds of 'bourgeoisies' emerge in and out of Uganda's body politic – 'commercial', 'petty', 'bureaucratic', 'governing' – metamorphosing from one to the other, until, under Amin's 'economic war', 'a nascent commercial bourgeoisie' emerges as the 'ruling class', which therefore makes Amin the 'immediate enemy'! What, then, of imperialism? Well, according to Mamdani, it is 'external' to Uganda.

¹⁸⁵ Mahmood, Mamdani. 1976. *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*, Monthly Review Press

¹⁸⁶ Nabudere, D W *Imperialism and Revolution in Uganda*, 1980. London: Onyx Press; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Publishing House

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p 328

Learning from Nyerere, Uganda's Soko debate, and the Dar es Salaam debate

I come back to the question I had asked earlier: Do the experiences of Uganda and Tanzania and the Dar es Salaam Debate have anything to offer by way of lessons that might be helpful for contemporary struggles for

consolidating our national independence and the struggle against imperialism?

Here is my short answer:

1. We must move away from any predetermined dogmatic conception of 'socialism'. There is no one single road to socialism. Socialism cannot be built without struggle. And class struggle is not the only struggle even though it is probably the most significant. There are many struggles in the course of the development of history. There is, for example, the national struggle for independence from imperial control or domination; there is religious struggle between different faiths; there is gender struggle for equality and fairness; there is democratic struggle for the voices of all peoples to be involved in the building of socialism. In other words, there are struggles within struggles – nothing is as simple and straightforward as often made out by the ideologues.

2. It is important to build socialism from where you are. And where you are is a matter of both history and geography. Tanzania came out of colonial experience and was part of the African soil and ambience. You cannot create socialism by importing either the western European model or the Soviet or Chinese model, although you can learn lessons – good and bad – from them.

3. People -- all people – must be involved in the struggle against imperialism and the building of socialism. This does not mean that there are no contradictions amongst the people. The way China and Cuba handled what Mao called the 'secondary contradictions' is something to learn from. In our epoch, for the peoples of the global South the imperial structure which manifests itself at the economic level as the dominance of finance capital still remains the 'primary contradiction' for the people.

4. These struggles must be waged through non-violent means. Violence is sometimes an unintended outcome of the struggles. But, as the life of Nyerere demonstrates, this must be avoided at all cost. Conflicts are endemic in all societies, but there must be serious attempts at peaceful resolution of conflicts. Violence is almost always at the cost of the common people.

5. And finally, the question of ideology and leadership. The world is full of information, but it does not often translate into knowledge. There is knowledge, too, but that does not automatically translate into wisdom. Leadership requires wisdom. This is what Nyerere provided the people of Tanzania and Africa. This requires a special kind of discipline, a certain

kind of what I call (for lack of a better term) spiritual consciousness – not in the religious sense, but in the sense that the ‘material’ world is not everything. There is something beyond the material.

However, as the narrative below will show, we are all, alas, human and subject to human frailties and subject to forces beyond our comprehension.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Tanzania attract refugees, freedom fighters and academics in the 1960s and 1970s from Africa and other parts of the world?
2. This book describes four parallel debates going on at the University of Dar es Salaam. What are these, and what is their significance for our times?
3. How much is Museveni a product of what took place in Tanzania and in Southern Africa, and the ideological debates on the campus in the late 1960s and 1970’s?
4. What do you know about Nyerere’s concept of ‘Ujamaa’? How different is it from the European concept of ‘socialism’?
5. In his *Sowing the Mustard Seed* (1997), Museveni says: ‘My problem with the concept of *ujamma* was that Nyerere was using his tribe as a model for the rest of Tanzania.’ The founders of University Students African Revolutionary Front (USARF) and *Cheche*, among them Yoweri Museveni, dreamt of persuading Nyerere to abandon ‘Ujamaa’ and come over to their side and transform ‘utopian socialism’ to ‘scientific socialism.’ Why did they fail?
6. How did the UPC’s radical youth wing survive underground following the 1964 Gulu Conference? What role did Nabudere play in this?
7. What were the main issues of contention in the internal debate within the ‘Soko’ in Dar es Salaam in the 1970’s?
8. Discuss the continuing relevance of Justinian Rweyemamu’s books ‘*Towards Socialist Planning*’ (1972), and ‘*Underdevelopment and Industrialization in Tanzania: a study of perverse capitalist industrial development*’ (1974); and Dani Nabudere’s ‘*Imperialism, the Social Sciences and the National Question*’ (1977).

9. Does the 'Dar Debate' have anything to offer by way of lessons for contemporary struggles for consolidating our national independence and democracy and against imperialism?
10. Summarise the main points of the critique of Shivji's '*Class Struggles in Tanzania*' by various people (Meyns, Mamdani & Bhagat, and Nabudere).
11. Summarise the main points of Mamdani and Bhagat's critique of Nabudere's '*The Political Economy of Imperialism*', Hirji's defence of Shivji and critique of Nabudere, and Nabudere's response to Hirji.
12. Summarise the main points of Nabudere's critique of Mamdani's '*Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*'. What is your response to this?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Rebooting the revolution in Uganda

We realised that it was going to be a long struggle, but we had to be part of it. There were many contradictions among our people, but we had to resolve these and not let these divide us, or else the agents of the empire would take advantage of these divisions.

This is a very big question: how do the common people in Uganda reboot the revolutionary project started back in the 1930s that is all but lost in our times? Whose responsibility is this? Where do we begin? It is clear that what is needed is a nation-wide debate, not only for a general discussion but also to work towards an action plan. This chapter is only a preliminary effort. *The debate must go on as theory and practice interact towards a living strategy that is concretely related to the Ugandan, and African, historical and contemporary circumstances.*

Let me step back a bit to grasp the last point.

Theory & Practice

Nyerere's dilemma

In 1979, after Tanzania repelled Amin's invasion, Nyerere had tried to bring Obote and Museveni together to form the new government. This failed. At the time, the *Ad Hoc Committee for the Promotion of Unity among Ugandans* under Nabudere's leadership was organising a coalition of some thirty-five anti-Amin resistance movements to meet at Moshi. Nyerere had at first disregarded the *Ad Hoc Committee*, but when he found that Obote and Museveni had taken uncompromising positions towards each other, he turned to the Ad Hoc Committee. He accepted to support our effort to bring together all anti-Amin nationalist forces. The Moshi Conference¹⁸⁸ gave birth to the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF).¹⁸⁹

But the UNLF lasted only one year. It was a difficult year not just for us in the UNLF but also for Nyerere. He had made an agreement with us that the Tanzanian forces (TPDF) would defend the UNLF against internal upheaval

or external aggression until UNLF's interim government had held elections and put in power a government according to the wishes of the people. But Nyerere did not know how to handle his old friend Obote who was still a political refugee in Dar es Salaam. Every effort on his part to persuade first the Lule and the Binaisa governments to facilitate Obote's return to Uganda under some political compromise had failed. I was not privy to these negotiations.

But I think the problem was both from the side of Lule and Binaisa and from Obote's side – neither would compromise. I knew from my interaction with Obote that he wanted to take over power as if nothing had happened over the last five years. Eventually, when UPC's militia (*Kikoosi Maalum*) plotted to stage a coup, Nyerere – keen to get Obote back into Uganda as he was – it would seem had little choice but to side with the coup, hoping probably that Obote would be able form a government of reconciliation. He, too, (like Obote) had not expected that after the rigged elections of December 1980, Museveni would go back to fight a guerrilla war. The rest of the story is well known. In fact, ironically, towards the end of the guerrilla war Nyerere provided arms to Museveni against the *Kikoosi Maalum*.

Soko's dilemma

Earlier I explained that 'Soko' was the radical underground movement created after the 1964 UPC Gulu conference led among others by Raiti Omongin and Dani Nabudere. Omongin got killed in a hurriedly ill-prepared attack against Amin's forces in 1972.¹⁹⁰ Nabudere took refuge in Dar es Salaam. He had advised against the 1972 attack, knowing it was adventurous, and he lamented the loss of Raiti, a Soko comrade.

188 The Moshi conference was opened by the then Foreign Minister, Benjamin Mkapa, whom I met almost 25 years later – in 2006 - when I was the Executive Director of the South Centre (which Nyerere, among other leaders of the South, had created), and Mkapa became the chairman of its Board

189 See Chapter 4, Phase three: The UNLF (April 1979 - April 1980)

It is about this time that 'Soko' had decided to carry out its own study groups and training of cadres in Uganda and in Tanzania whilst, also, participating in other parallel debates in Dar es Salaam. For us, the debates were not a mere academic or intellectual exercise. It was an exercise to clear our thinking on the strategic questions of defining exactly what we were fighting against, and

how we go about building the right alliances to achieve that end and with whom. The debate helped clarify our thinking on strategy and tactics of the struggle ahead. I said ‘thinking’ – because practice is a bigger mountain to climb.

We realised that it was going to be a long struggle, but we had to be part of it. There were many contradictions among our people, but we had to resolve these and not let these divide us, or else the agents of the empire would take advantage of these divisions. The British were watching developments in Uganda like a hawk. When the Tanzanian forces repelled Amin and entered Uganda, Britain threatened to bring the matter to the UN Security Council, and Nyerere had to fend them off by accepting to bringing in Lule to head the UNLF government.

‘Soko’ was also clear that whilst we must resolve what we called (following Mao) ‘secondary contradictions’ amongst the people, we must deal with a determined will to tackle ideological obfuscations brought into our discussions. There could be no compromise on this, because these could feed into the contradictions amongst the people. That is why Nabudere was unrelenting in his critique of Shivji, Hirji and Mamdani. Before he wrote the critique he would spend a lot of time doing research (for example, into history and

190 For more details on the 1972 misadventure, see: Museveni. Loc. cit. pp 63-76

the Marxist literature), and consult with us. We could not accept Mamdani’s analysis about various kinds of ‘bourgeoisies’ in Uganda metamorphosing from one to another, and his view that imperialism was ‘external’ to Uganda. I repeat this point because after Amin’s invasion and repulsion by Tanzania, this became a contentious issue within the *Ad Hoc Committee for the Unification of Uganda* which the ‘Soko’ had setup, but into which we had invited Museveni andup, but into which we had invited Museveni and Mamdani and the people who supported them. They parted ways from us on the eve of the Moshi conference on the grounds, they argued, that we were aligning with ‘reactionary’ groups in Uganda – such as the Kabaka Yekka.

Nonetheless, we went ahead with the Moshi Conference. Uganda was liberated mainly by the Tanzanian forces, but the UNLF provided political legitimacy, and an opportunity for all nationalist forces to work in unity. Following the military coup against the UNLF government in May 1980, Soko reconstituted the UNLF as UNLF (Anti-Dictatorship). In 1981, the UNLF launched a guerrilla war in the area of Mount Elgon bordering Uganda and Kenya, and in the Ruwenzori mountains bordering the DRC. But it did not last more than a year. Why not? We dismantled our small guerrilla army for several reasons but mainly because we faced another dilemma. We discovered that the masses were not ready to support our military action: their oppression and exploitation was a reality, but their consciousness about the need for a revolutionary change lagged behind (much as Guevara must have found in Bolivia). We realised that we needed to spend more time and effort to raise this consciousness, and adopted what we called the ‘grassrooting strategy’; in other words to go back to the grassroots to carry out more political work.

Learning from other revolutionary movements

I could give examples of successful revolutions from other parts of the global South. Unfortunately, there are more failures than successes in the application of theory to practice. Of course, we can learn as much from failures as from successes. In Asia, besides China and Vietnam, it has generally been a story of failures – Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and India (the struggles led by the Naxalites). In Nepal the Maoist guerrillas have sustained a struggle for a very long time, but in recent years there has appeared a split among their forces, a section of which took to electoral politics in conjunction with bourgeois parties (and in 2011, a Maoist became the Prime Minister of Nepal).

In Latin America, we have already mentioned Bolivia and Chile. Indeed, most other countries in that part of the world – Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, and the Tupamaros in Uruguay – have gone through revolutionary struggles which have ended in only partial successes but mostly in defeats largely because of internal contradictions (and the power of the United States). What Venezuela started under Hugo Chávez is a different kind of revolution from Cuba; it is based on electoral politics (like in Nepal). According to Chávez, and now Nicolás Maduro, the Bolivarian Revolution

seeks to build a mass movement to implement popular democracy, a state-led economy with a view to economic independence from the empire, control of local resources (primarily oil), and social justice. It also seeks to build an inter-American coalition on the principles of nationalism, and the Bolivarian Revolution. The struggle against the empire and local comprador forces is still going on as I write these lines.

Before I go back to writing about Uganda, let me raise some important issues of revolutionary theory. After all, Uganda's struggles are not unique; they are part of larger world-wide struggles of the common people, and there is much to learn from those who have reflected on these larger issues.

Contradictions and revolutionary ruptures

I have borrowed the phrase 'revolutionary ruptures' from Louis Althusser, but I will come later to him. First let us be clear on the concept of 'contradictions'.

Mao on contradictions

Before I go into this, let me make it clear that China was never a colony, only the coastal areas got colonised following the Opium Wars (1839 – 1860). China's vast hinterlands remained independent of the empire and under a feudal system. Lenin, in his *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, described China, Turkey and Iran as semi-colonial countries. So the struggle of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was both against the feudal system in the hinterlands, and in the coastal areas under the control of the empire.

Those who know the history of the struggle of the people of China would remember that MaoTse-tung wrote his famous pamphlet '*On Contradiction*' (1937) based on his experience during the 1920s and 1930s ideological battle against dogmatism in the CPC.¹⁹¹ In this essay, Mao makes a distinction between principal and secondary contradiction; principal and secondary aspects of a contradiction; antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradiction; and the law of uneven development of a contradiction. These distinctions sound somewhat prosaic and mechanistic, but they were critical in designing the strategies that led the CPC under Mao's leadership to make historic decisions in the 'long march' and in the Chinese civil war, as well as during and after the Second World War.

I will give one instance from Chinese history to show that the above ‘theory’ (whilst it may sound a bit mechanistic) had profound influence on Mao’s and CPS’s political practice. The Chinese Civil War was fought between the forces loyal to the Kuomintang (KMT)led government of the Republic of China under Chiang Kai-shek, and the forces loyal to the CPC under Mao. In 1931-33 Japan attacked and occupied Manchuria in China; the Kuomintang government was too weak to repulse the attack. Then in 1937 Japan attacked Shanghai. This time Chiang Kai-shek put up resistance against Japan. By this time, Mao’s ‘long march’ had traversed through large parts of Chinese hinterland and captured these under an alliance of workers and peasants guided by the CPC. At a critical moment in the 1940s, the CPC decided that it was strategically important to make an alliance with the Kuomintang and to join all ‘national’ forces to combat against the then ‘principal contradiction’ with the Japanese imperial forces. Once the Second World War was over, the CPC continued with its war against the armies of Chiang Kai-shek until they were defeated, and the CPC seized power. This is what Mao meant by ‘the law of uneven development of a contradiction’.

191 https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_17.htm

I have found the theory of contradictions a very good analytical tool to understand the successes and failures of revolutionary movements in Asia and Latin America that I mentioned above, and also in understanding our failure (overall) to raise the level of mass consciousness in Uganda to enable a revolutionary transformation to this day.

And here is where Althusser may, also, help us understand the dynamics of revolutionary struggles in our epoch.

Althusser on ‘revolutionary ruptures’

Louis Althusser (1918-1990) was a French Marxist philosopher. He was a near contemporary of Frantz Fanon (1925-1961). He was born in Algeria of French settler parentage, and like Fanon did some brilliant innovative work on Marxism. Althusser’s main objective was to defend the theoretical foundations of Marxism against various misrepresentations that had reduced Marxism to simple historicism, idealism or economism. Althusser argued that Marx’s thought contained a radical ‘*epistemological break*’ from all previous modes of thought best encapsulated in the then prevailing German

philosophical idealism and English classical political economy. Marx, Althusser argued, rejected the distinction between subject and object, and in opposition to empiricism, Marx's philosophy of dialectical materialism countered the theory of knowledge as production.¹⁹² Althusser himself made some interesting epistemological breaks by combining the concept of 'overdetermination' (borrowed from Freudian psychology) with Mao Tse-tung's equally innovative use of the concept of 'contradictions' making a brilliant philosophical synthesis that added a new dimension to our understanding of the way the popular democratic struggles evolve in reality. On revolutions in general, Althusser introduced the innovative concepts of 'revolutionary rupture' and 'fusing ruptural unity' that enable us to understand the evolving struggle of popular democratic forces against imperialism and dictatorship in our own times. The contradiction between capital and labour, Althusser argues, '... cannot of its own simple, direct power induce a "revolutionary situation", nor a situation of revolutionary rupture and the triumph of the revolution'. He continues:

¹⁹² Althusser, Louis (1966, 1969), *For Marx*, Penguin Books. All references to Althusser here are from the 1969 edition

If this contradiction is to become 'active' in the strongest sense, to become a ruptural principle, there must be an accumulation of 'circumstances' and 'currents' so that whatever their origin and sense,... they 'fuse' into a ruptural unity: when they produce the result of the immense majority of the popular masses grouped in an assault on a regime which its ruling classes are unable to defend. Such a situation presupposes not only the 'fusion' of the two basic conditions into a 'single national crisis', but each condition considered (abstractly) by itself presupposes the 'fusion' of an 'accumulation' of contradictions. How else could the class-divided popular masses (proletarians, peasants, petty bourgeois) throw themselves together, consciously or unconsciously, into a general assault on the existing regime? And how else could the ruling classes (aristocrats, big bourgeois, industrial bourgeois, finance bourgeois, etc.) ... findfinance bourgeois, etc.) ... find themselves reduced to impotence, divided at the decisive moment, withdecisive moment, with neither new political solutions nor new political leaders, deprived of foreign class support, disarmed in the very citadel of their State machine, and suddenly

overwhelmed by the people they have so long kept in leash and respectful by exploitation, violence and deceit? ¹⁹³

193 Althusser, op.cit. pp 99-100

I must admit that I had to read the above passage several times in order to really grasp its significance, and relevance to understanding our own situation in Uganda. To use Althusser's concepts, how do the various contradictions fuse '*into a ruptural unity*' enabling the '*the popular masses grouped in an assault on a regime which its ruling classes are unable to defend*' ?

What have Althusser and Mao have to do with Uganda's revolution?

You may ask what Althusser, Frantz Fanon and Mao have to do with Uganda's revolution. It is a fair question that is not easy to answer. All I can say, speaking for myself, is that theorists like Althusser and Frantz Fanon have provided us with perceptive insights into the circumstances and obstacles to revolutionary change in their times. And the same answer goes for learning from revolutionaries like Lenin and Mao. Understanding how the present came from the past is not just useful; it is essential.

Why the Arab Spring failed, and lessons to draw from it The Arab Spring had started in Tunisia in 2011 and spread within weeks to Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya and Syria. Protesters took to the streets across the Arab world, pushing for the end of decades of oppression. On 25 February, 2011, the protesters were able to overthrow 30 years of Hosni Mubarak's rule. Then a reaction set in. Mubarak's popularly elected successor, Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi, was removed from office in a military coup by Field Marshal Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. Al-Sisi won a second four-year term in March 2018 against a sole minor opposition candidate. Today, as we write these lines, Egypt is in the grip of a military dictatorship that has aligned itself with the United States in practically all political and military matters, including the question of Palestine.

You may ask, has the 'Arab Spring' really failed? Aren't all the uprisings in Sudan, Algeria, Tunisia a continuation of the Arab Spring? Haven't the Algerians learnt from the Egyptian betrayal? And didn't it shake up the Middle East dictators and give hope to millions of ordinary people?

These are important questions. To really understand their significance we need, once again, to return to the distinction between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ contradictions. I ask myself if the masses in Egypt (and the Arab world generally) have reached the moment of ‘revolutionary rupture’. Are the revolutionary social forces in the Arab world able to bury the ‘secondary contradictions’ among the people in order to confront the combined forces of imperialism and the comprador regimes that are in power? And here is where I draw the line: as long as there is no vanguard political party that lays out the strategy and tactics of resolving the secondary contradictions amongst the masses, their common enemy – the Empire – will continue to divide them and control not only their economies (especially, oil) but also their politics. This is the important lesson that revolutionary forces in Uganda – and Africa – must draw from the failed ‘Arab Spring’.¹⁹⁴

Gramsci on ‘hegemonic culture’

Let me introduce another Marxist thinker who had great influence both during his time and since. This is the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) who was more a contemporary of Mao than of Fanon or Althusser. Gramsci is well known for the invaluable insights he offered in his 3,000 pages of Prison Notebooks,¹⁹⁵ especially his use of the concept of ‘hegemony’. Like Althusser, he rejected economic determinism, arguing that ideology has an independent role to play. The concept of hegemony, however, was not new. Lenin and later Mao had used it to argue the need for the political leadership (hegemony) of the working class in a democratic revolution. Gramsci, in his attempt to explain why the predicted socialist revolutions had not taken place in Western Europe towards the turn into the twentieth century, argued that the role of ideology had been underestimated.

194 See: Tandon, Yash (2014) ‘The situation in Egypt: five questions to our Egyptian friends’, Blog posted on 20 January, 2014. <http://yashtandon.com/the-situationin-egypt-five-questions-to-our-egyptian-friends/>

195 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prison_Notebooks

Capitalism and the bourgeoisie maintained control not just through violence and political and economic coercion, but also ideologically, through a ‘hegemonic culture’ in which the values of the bourgeoisie became the accepted values of all, including the working classes. In other

words, there was more work that needed to be done at the level of ideology than was earlier thought.

Gramsci was right. The hegemonic capitalist ideology trumped the socialist ideology except where capitalism was not deeply rooted in the production system as in Russia and China.

Question of ideology

I will start with a simple dictionary definition of ideology. It is a body of doctrine, myth, belief, values, etc., that guides an individual, social movement, institution, class, or large group, along with the means for putting it into operation.

The question of ideology is so significant that although this book is meant for a general readership, it is important that I spend some time in going a bit deeper into this question. That would help us discuss matters of Uganda government policies and projects (for example the monetary and taxation policy, or the 'Vision 2040' project) with enough knowledge of the underlying theories and concepts.

Putting a more philosophical (and political-sociological) sophistication to the definition of ideology, the German philosopher Karl Mannheim defined it as 'the total system of thought held by society's ruling groups that obscure the real conditions and thereby preserve the *status quo*'. In his classic *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* he analysed the relationship between sociology and social policy, and the role of intelligentsia. Borrowing from Marx, Mannheim argued that the 'ideological structure of thought is conditioned by the class structure of society'. He went on to say that in class-divided societies a special stratum of individuals 'whose only capital consisted in their education', develop their ideas to advance the interests of different classes. Amongst them are those that serve the ruling classes; they provide the knowledge that forms the kernel of the ruling ideology, the dominant '*Weltanschauung*'. These are opposed by another stratum that challenges the ruling orthodoxy, including the production of knowledge. Mannheim argued that the prevailing ideology makes the ruling groups opposed to knowledge that would threaten their continued domination.¹⁹⁶

I am trained as a ‘political economist’, and I can say with some knowledge of some of these ideologies from my life experience that all (yes, all) knowledge in the social sciences (economics, political science, sociology, history, international relations, and humanities generally) is ‘ideological’ in the sense used by Mannheim. Thus,

taking economics as an example, in general terms, the circa 19th

century *classical economics* (Adam Smith, Ricardo, etc.) was the ideology of an emerging capitalist class that was challenging the power of the landlord class; the *neo-classical economics* (circa 20th century and today), including *the myth of ‘free trade’*, is the ideology – the dominant ‘*Weltanschauung*’ as Mannheim would put it – of the global ruling capitalist classes; and *Marxist economics* is the ideology of the working classes.

At the risk of making it a bit more complex, I would say that there are ideologies within ideologies. Thus, for example, *Keynesian economics* (named after John Maynard Keynes who was an influential

British economist during the first half of the 20th Century) is a variant

of neo-classical or ‘free trade’ economics that encourages state intervention to ‘regulate’ the market at the macro-economic level. Thus, this variant forms the basis of most social-democratic capitalist states. Marxist ideology has its own variants, following those who had thought about and put into practice the ideology of ‘socialism’

– such as Marx (who had criticised earlier socialists as ‘utopian’), Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Castro, and others.

196 Mannheim, K (1936) *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* London: Routledge

Earlier, I talked about the different debates at the University of Dar es Salaam in the 1970’s. The *Cheche* young radicals (among them Yoweri Museveni) were challenging Nyerere on the grounds that his ‘Ujamaa socialism’ did not measure up to their (better) ‘knowledge’ of ‘scientific socialism’. On the other hand, some of us (including Anthony Rweyemamu,

Nathan Shamuyarira, Dani Nabudere and me) were arguing that we in Africa need to challenge the way ‘knowledge’ was produced in the West, and in order to produce an alternative knowledge paradigm, we founded the African Association of Political Science.

The ‘ruling ideology’ of our times

One of the ideas we were contesting is the so-called ‘neoliberal economics’ which is the ideology of the dominant capitalist classes, and very influential to this day because it is packaged by global institutions of global economic governance – like the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organisation – as ‘scientific paradigms’ for ‘economic growth’ and ‘development’. These in Mannheim’s language, serve the ruling classes – they ‘provide the knowledge that forms the kernel of the ruling ideology’.

Alan Greenspan is an American economist who served as Chairman of the Federal Reserve of the United States from 1987 to 2006. On retirement, he made a candid assessment of what he had been doing all these years. On close questioning from the US Congressional hearings Greenspan admitted that he found a ‘flaw in the free market theory’. Representative Waxman pursued relentlessly in his questions. You mean, he asked, ‘that your view of the world, your ideology, was not right, it was not working’? Greenspan replied, ‘Absolutely, precisely. You know that’s precisely the reason I was shocked, because I have been going for 40 years or more with the very considerable evidence that it was working exceptionally well.’¹⁹⁷

Greenspan should be commended for his honesty. This is more than one can say for literally hundreds of ideologists, clustered around 197 *International Herald Tribune*, October 24, 2008

some of the best universities in the North and also in the South, and economists in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). From their cloistered and hallowed sanctuaries they design policies for the distressed nations of the South whose leaders rush to them for advice and financial bailouts. They should be warned that in their rush to the IMF/WB they are not necessarily helping their people. These are institutions of ideological obscurantism; they are part of the problem and not part of the solution. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the austerity

measures that come in its package are in large part responsible for poverty in the so-called ‘developing’ countries.

As we argued earlier, the neo-colonial state is a site of contest between the empire and nationalist forces. One of the tools in the hands of the empire is the neoliberal ideology that the policy makers in the neo-colonies have swallowed hook, line and sinker at the behest of these venerable institutions (read preachers). This convoluted dogma of ‘free trade’ and ‘development’ is their self-serving weapon of war against the peoples of the South.

Christopher Hedges is a well-known Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist, professor at Princeton University, and Presbyterian minister. He says:

*The ideological and physical hold of American imperial power, buttressed by the utopian ideology of neoliberalism and global capitalism, is unravelling. Most, including many of those at the heart of the American empire, recognize that every promise made by the proponents of neoliberalism is a lie. Global wealth, rather than being spread equitably, as neoliberal proponents promised, has been funnelled upward into the hands of a rapacious, oligarchic elite, creating vast economic inequality.*¹⁹⁸

198 See: Tandon, Yash (2014) ‘The situation in Egypt: five questions to our Egyptian friends’, Blog posted on 20 January, 2014. <http://yashtandon.com/the-situation-in-egypt-five-questions-to-our-egyptian-friends/>

Challenging the neoliberal dogma

How do we challenge this neoliberal dogma of free trade that has penetrated even Uganda’s vision for 2040? The vision statement is endorsed by President Museveni, but who are the ‘experts’ that he engaged to provide this ‘vision’? Was it debated in the parliament? Was it discussed in the media and among our own intelligentsia?

The American physicist, Thomas Kuhn, argued that science evolves through alternating ‘normal’ and ‘revolutionary’ phases. Normal science is ‘puzzle-solving’. Because its puzzles and their solutions are ‘familiar science’, the theorists seek to solve the puzzles within the existing paradigm – problem

solving ‘from inside the box’. Kuhn argued that change comes only when you begin thinking ‘outside the box’ and provide what he called a ‘paradigm shift’.¹⁹⁹

We are at a crossroad between the neo-classical theory that has ruled Uganda ever since our birth as a nation, and coming up with something that is truly grounded in our own existential reality. It is a challenge to our intelligentsia to produce knowledge – to think ‘outside the box’ – that would liberate our people as well as our political leaders from the prevailing obscurantist mindset.

The truth is that there are many amongst in Uganda’s intellectual community who have thought outside the box, but are overwhelmed by the ‘experts’ from the IMF, the World Bank and the so-called ‘donors’.

Betty Kanya, the founder and president of the Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA) and, earlier, a member of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), has argued that most ideologies have failed in Uganda because they are not ‘locally grown’; if an ideology is to be appealing, it should arise from the social needs or challenges of the community. I think she is right, and this is what Nyerere had tried, and indeed, succeeded in some significant ways. Kanya made

199 Kuhn, Thomas, 1962. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, University of Chicago Press (2nd edition 1970; 3rd edition 1996; 4th edition 2012)

this point at a Makerere Political Science seminar discussion on party ideologies on 12 March, 2015.

At the same seminar, Professor Sabiti Makara argued that parties should not adopt ideologies from the west but rather develop their own. He said political parties need to have nationalism as part of their ideologies and that the latter should be contextualised in a historical perspective. He said most parties are attached to western values that do not add up to the Ugandan systems.

In a paper titled ‘Same Same but Different: Parties, Politics and Ideology in Uganda’, S K Simba made an important point that all political parties are struggling to fit in an ideological framework acceptable by the West. Because

Uganda is dependent on foreign aid, political parties fear to lose assistance from development partners, should they get an opportunity of capturing state power. The other pressing challenge to the ideological framework of most political parties in Uganda is the triumph of liberalism after the collapse of the Soviet Union which has made the socialist ideology less appealing.²⁰⁰

Betty Kamyu, Sabiti Makara and S K Simba are absolutely right. But who listens to them in the face of a torrent of ‘wisdom’ that flows out of the empire packaged along with ‘development aid’?

The Imperial ideology

Let me develop the point. You cannot dismiss the influence of the empire on how you construct your ideology. The imperial ideology did not start with the neoliberal economics. It has an old ancestry, many historical manifestations before now. There was the ideology of the ‘White Man’s Burden’ during the colonial expansion of the British. I learnt about Rudyard Kipling’s (in)famous poem while I was still quite young: ‘Take up the White Man’s burden, Send forth the best ye breed...to serve your captives’ need; Your new-caught, sullen

200 <https://www.google.co.uk#q=same+same+but+different:+parties,+politics+and+ ideology+in+uganda>

peoples, Half-devil and half-child.’ The last five words sums up the imperialist racist ideology. Kipling used to go to South Africa every year during English winter months and stayed at ‘The Woolsack’, a house on Cecil Rhodes’ estate at Groote Schuur. In March 2015 African students protested against the reality of institutional racism at the University of Cape Town (UCT), and demanded the removal of Rhodes’ statue. On April 9, 2015 the statue was removed. In Oxford (where I live), students also demanded the removal Rhodes’ statue. In 1873, whilst at Oxford, Rhodes wrote: ‘The object of which I intend to devote my life is the defence and extension of the British Empire... I contend that we are the first race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race.’ Unlike at the UCT, the Oriel College decided that the statue must stay: ‘Following careful consideration, the college’s governing body has decided that the statue should remain in place and that the college will seek to provide a clear historical context to explain why it is there.’ The college confirmed that it

had been warned of the possibility that it would lose about £100m in gifts should the statue be taken down.

Has anything changed since Rhodes and Kipling's time? What has changed is only the language in which the imperial ideology is clothed. It is now the neoliberal 'free market' ideology, or globalisation, which, like colonialism of yesteryears, they say, is 'good for you'. It is not openly racist any more, but still the death of thousands of Arabs or Africans or Latinos or Asians is worth nothing compared to the life of a single white person. Racism is still alive.

Why does institutionalised racism still form the basis of western culture? Why have our intellectual and political leaders failed to challenge racism and the economic dogma of neoliberalism?

At Dar es Salaam University in our study groups we discussed this. We came to several answers to that, among them:

1. Assassination of our nationalist leaders, or their removal through military coups. African leaders like Nkrumah, Lumumba, Steve Biko and Thomas Sankara were a bit too radical for the empire – Nkrumah was ousted in a military coup and the other three were killed. Mandela and Nyerere sustained their efforts for a while, but they too had to compromise.
2. Our leaders' dependence on aid from the very countries from which they seek liberation.
3. The adoption of neoliberal free trade ideology of the IMF, the World Bank and 'aid donors' not only by our political elite but also by our intellectuals within, for example the academia, the media and the churches.
4. The absence of a mass vanguard party that is able to hold leaders to account (like they do in, for example, China and Cuba) .
5. The class character of most of our leaders.

The class character of African political leaders

In his paper, 'Organisational failure of the Socialist movement and its interventional impotence', Osaze Lanre Nosaze, argues that the Socialist movement in Nigeria has failed due to the organic divorce of the movement

from the struggles of the oppressed. Revolution is no longer seen as a practical necessity, largely because of the movement's petty bourgeoisie class origins. To revive the movement, this class needs a deep and radicalising experience of privation and oppression out of which it can find no escape but revolution.²⁰¹

Frantz Fanon has provided us with sharp insights into the character of the social class that took over power at independence:

The national middle class which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an underdeveloped middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace. In its wilful narcissism, the national middle class is easily convinced that it can advantageously replace the middle class of the mother country. But that same independence which literally drives it into a corner will give rise within its

201 <https://www.pambazuka.org/author/osaze-lanre-nosaze>

ranks to catastrophic reactions, and will oblige it to send out frenzied appeals for help to the former mother country ... The national bourgeoisie of underdeveloped countries is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor in building, nor labour; it is completely canalised into activities of the intermediary type. Its inner most vocation seems to be to keep in the running and to be part of the racket. The psychology of the national bourgeoisie is that of the businessman, not that of a captain of industry; and it is only too true that the greed of the settlers and the system of embargoes set up by colonialism has hardly left them any other choice.

Whilst Fanon is correct in his general description of this class, he is a bit too harsh and one-sided. In 1997, along with other comrades, I founded the Southern and Eastern African Trade and Information Negotiations Institute (SEATINI) in order to build the capacity of African trade negotiators on matters related to trade. Over the period of 20 years, we discovered that many of the people belonging to the 'middle class' are ambivalent; they are nationalist, even patriotic, but they are also afraid of radical ideologies that

are often equated with communism, which during the entire of the Cold War (1948-1991), has been presented by the western ruling elites, the dominant media, and bulk of the academia as 'evil'. We also discovered that when our state officials do dare to challenge the ruling orthodoxy of 'free trade', they are simply ignored by our Ministers of State and higher up. Is it because they are afraid of the imperial might?

Nationalism, Democracy and Socialism

Nationalism

I stated above that the bulk of our people, including the petty bourgeoisie, are nationalist. Nationalism, too, is an ideology; it is the ideology of oppressed peoples seeking to gain their liberation from imperial domination. But like all ideologies, nationalism too is a controversial issue.

The controversy rests essentially on two issues: What is a nation, and against what or whom is it targeted.

In Chapter 2 on 'The Struggle for Independence', we briefly looked at the origin of the nation state in Europe following the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) that ended with the Treaty of Westphalia. Since then, in our time, the idea or ideology of nationalism has fallen on bad days in Europe, particularly among the left intelligentsia. I attributed this partly to the way nationalism was used by Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy: they used it to stir up 'ultra-nationalism' or 'fascism'. Among the left, the aversion to nationalism is also an outcome of its leanings towards internationalism, following Marx. Any yet, Gramsci used the idea of 'populist leftist nationalism' to enable the left to compete with the entrenched ideological and political power of the Catholic Church and its Christian-Democratic representatives in parliament and government. In our time, nationalism still remains a force in Europe, as its resurgence in countries like Poland, Spain and Portugal and the debates on Brexit show.

In western literature, the writer who is most quoted on this subject is the French historian Ernest Renan (1823–1892). In his essay *What is a Nation?* (*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*) he says that there is frequent confusion between nationhood and racial or linguistic groupings. Renan discredited race or religion as the basis for the unification of people, and believed that 'nations'

consisted of different social groups seeking a ‘collective identity’. In sum, Renan saw nationalism as a positive force.

In America, people still celebrate 4th of July – the day when the nation

of the United States got its independence from England. And yet, in America nationalism is acceptable for the white Americans, not for the (coloured) Latinos, Africans and Asians. ‘It is not good for them’, they say. And it is not good for the Russians either. Increasingly – as of writing these lines – there is alarm both in the United States and in Europe about ‘the threat of Russian nationalism’.

Coming to Uganda, we see that there is recurrent tension between nationalism and other forms of identity. For example, on the eve of Uganda’s independence in 1961-62, the Kabaka Yekka made a political demand for the separate recognition of ‘Baganda nationalism’. In the north, until recent times, Kony has been fighting mostly in the Acholi region playing on ‘Acholi nationalism.’ And yet, I think I would be correct to say that although ethnic nationalism is used to promote separatist ideas, the vast majority of the people would not want to split the country. If anything, most of them might cherish the idea of moving towards the East African federation of some kind. Indeed, many, and that includes me, would follow Nkrumah’s vision of a United States of Africa. Even if this is not a practical idea (yet), PanAfricanism has a strong appeal not just among the intelligentsia but also the common people across the continent.

So far so good. But to leave the discussion at a point of recognising that nationalism is a necessary and a positive component of the struggle against imperialism still leaves a lot of questions unanswered, the most significant of which are the content and process of the nationalist struggle: where is it leading to, and by what means?

We now turn to these questions.

Democracy and the New Democratic Revolution

Democracy is one of those concepts where ‘out of the box’ thinking (to use the phrase from Karl Mannheim) is made difficult by the dominance of the so-called ‘liberal democratic’ system that is practiced in most countries of the West and copied in most of the global South. The catch in this concept is

the word 'liberal' which has a positive sound to it being close to the word 'liberty'. Who would want a system of democracy that is 'illiberal' – a system that limits individual liberty? Also, 'liberal democracy' comes with processes like free elections and a representative system of governance. How can one possibly do away with elections (the heart of the democratic system) or with a Parliament or Congress that makes decisions on behalf of peoples' choice of their representatives?

Defying all the 'in the box' thinking, I will attempt to show that the 'liberal' democratic system is not liberal, as it would appear at first sight, and to offer an alternative system borrowed from the practice, generally, of countries professing to be socialist.

The illiberality of the 'liberal democratic' system

This system's origins go back to the early period of bourgeois revolution and to the writings of thinkers like John Locke, Hume, Hobbes and Rousseau. Locke (1632–1704) - who was quite revolutionary for his time - wrote the 'Two Treatises of Government' where he argued that people are by nature free and equal against claims that the monarch was supreme because God willed it so. Locke derived his ideas from the 1688 revolution (also called the Glorious Revolution) in England. Locke's writings led the way to debates joined in by others like Hume, Hobbes and Rousseau leading to what came to be known as 'contract theories' which generally argued that people have an obligation to obey the state because of an electoral or presumed 'social contract' between people and state.

So the 'liberal democratic' system was indeed quite liberal when it was conceived. What has happened since then (like happens to many good ideas) is that liberal democracy turned to its opposite and over time became illiberal. How and why? These good ideas of Locke, Hume and others were taken up by a rising capitalist class who, over time, took over state power and used the 'social contract' arguments to legitimise the rule of capital over the peasants and landless peasants who were getting increasingly proletarianised.

This, in sum, is the basis of 'liberal' democracy. Locke's ideas were skillfully used by the rising capitalist class in America to fight for their independence from England. But here too, over time, these ideas became the

basis of the whole capital class dominating the whole of the rest of the population. Today, in the United States, there is really not much difference between the 'Republican' and the 'Democratic' parties. Like Tweedledum and Tweedledee, they are both the Party of Capital. And today, different segments of the American mega- corporations support either the Republicans or the Democrats.

In Europe, by contrast, and largely as a result of the 1789 French Revolution and the ideas of Marx and Engels, the working classes began to assert their rights. Over time, the workers formed their own political parties (there is no serious equivalent of a 'Labour Party' in the United States), and whatever concessions the workers have been able to secure from the capitalists is as a result of their incessant struggles in factories and in the streets. The Russian and later the Chinese revolutions have changed the course of history, but in Europe, even today, a proletarian revolution is still a distant dream.

Bourgeois democracy's claim to 'liberal' values of freedom for the individual is (to use a contemporary term) 'fake values'. If anything, because of centralisation of capital, its control of the western system of 'democracy' is becoming tighter.

The capitalist class as a whole is expropriating the labour of the entire working class for profits – not just in the US and Europe, but the rest of the world. This class is also appropriating the lands and resources of the people (in the case of America, the lands and resources of the pre-Columbian Indians). The 'green revolution' that we hear about is, in essence, the capitalist green 'revolution' that continues to hoard profits for the mega-corporations. Also, at the global level there is increasing polarisation between the centres of capital in the West and the peripheries of the South.

Here is Samir Amin's verdict:

Besides, at the very best, the proposed 'democratic' formula hardly goes beyond the caricature of 'multi-party elections' that are not only completely alien to the requirements of social progress but that are always – or almost always – associated with the social regression that the domination of actually existing capitalism (that of the oligopolies) demands and produces. The formula has already largely undermined democracy, for which many peoples,

profoundly confused, have now substituted religious and ethnic attachment to the past.²⁰²

Karl Polanyi (who was not a Marxist, and whom I quoted earlier) went so far as to say that democracy and capitalism were incompatible; under capitalism there can only be fascist rule of the owners of capital.

The New Democratic Revolution

In his *The State and Revolution*, Lenin had argued that in the western democratic system the bourgeois ruling classes resolve disputes amongst themselves whilst ignoring the interests of the working classes. Therefore, following the Russian revolution in 1917, Russia established a system based on *soviets* (councils), elected directly by voters organized in basic units – workers in factories, soldiers in the barracks, citizens at the district level, and so on. These sent their delegates at the higher levels up to the highest level of the Congress of Soviets at state level.²⁰³

The Chinese adopted more or less a similar system, but Mao went a step further in defining the character of what he called ‘the New Democratic Revolution’ – meaning that the NDR would lead not to capitalism, not even (at least not immediately) the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’, but to socialism.

Socialism

Socialism is quite a complex economic and social system. In a nutshell, it is based on the social ownership and democratic control of the means of production. But social ownership may take many forms – from direct state ownership, to state ownership in partnership with a section of the private sector, to collective or cooperative ownership, and so on.

²⁰² Amin, Samir (2013), *The implosion of global capitalism*, New York: Monthly Review

²⁰³ We will come to this later, but during the guerrilla war, the NRM established a similar system starting at village level - called The Resistance Councils – reaching to NRM’s top levels of decision-making

Unlike capitalism which is probably in its last stages (though still very much alive and kicking), socialism is still in its early stages. Marx had anticipated

it to be a long journey as the first phase leading eventually to communism. Socialism, thus, is not a utopia. It cannot carry out a one stroke abolition of the capitalist system, and in its long journey it is likely to face a turbulent world.

Transition to socialism

We now have enough knowledge of the functioning of the socialist system since the 1917 revolution a hundred years ago. The owners of capital fight their battle for survival with all means at their disposal – including wars and of course ideology – including, as we saw above, the ideology of ‘liberal democracy’ where it has succeeded astonishingly well among the middle classes and even sections of the working classes.

Nonetheless, Socialism – despite recent reversals – has scored better than made out not only by the capitalist classes and their media, but also a section of the left intelligentsia. Its first major victory was against the ideas of the Second International which argued that there could not be socialism in one country. In particular it could not advance in the peripheries of the capitalist system; they had first to ‘catch up’ with capitalist centres before putting socialism on the agenda.

However, the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam and Cuba showed that capitalism had come to a dead end in their countries and had put socialism on the agenda. Of course, there have been serious reversals in these countries, but this is not surprising since, as Mao had anticipated, the bourgeois tendencies do not wither away overnight, but reside within the very womb of the Communist Party. He called for ‘cultural revolution’, but this did not go along the lines he had expected. Nonetheless, in the earlier period, Mao successfully transformed the agricultural sector, and launched the ‘socialist transformation’ of industry and commerce, in which the government was the major partner.

Today, the Communist Party of China (CPC) talks about ‘Socialism with Chinese characteristics’ – socialism adapted to global developments and Chinese conditions. It is a moot point whether China has become a capitalist country, or it is a passing phase. But the CPC claims that the present system is based on the principles of ‘socialist market economy’ dominated by the public sector and that China is still in the transition to socialism. It has not

abandoned Marxism but has adopted flexible economic policies in order to develop into an industrialised nation. There is no question that China has been enormously successful in its industrialisation strategy (including, and that is important) developing its own science and technology – its own intellectual property – to rival the West.

In the rest of the South, various attempts at socialism have had a mixed record. In Latin America, Cuba was alone fighting the empire for a long time, but in recent years there is increasing resistance from other countries in the region. In December 2006, Hugo Chávez merged several parties that had supported him in the so-called ‘Patriotic Pole’ to create the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV). Interestingly, the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) did not join it. With Chávez’s death the PSUV has weakened, and the empire has mobilised all its resources – including street fights backed by a large section of the middle classes – to stop the Bolivarian Revolution. However, as I write these lines, Nicolás Maduro was returned to power that would enable him to replace the current legislative body – the National Assembly – with the new assembly, made up of 545 members, all nominated by his administration.

In Africa, most of the communist parties have either been infiltrated by the American CIA or (as in the case of the South African Communist Party) compromised. Nyerere in Tanzania adopted ‘Ujamaa socialism’ as an indigenous variant of the classical socialist model. In the 1970s he tried to implement the idea of bringing the village communities together into ‘Ujamaa villages’ and help them to build the basic social and infrastructural facilities as a first step towards moving to higher levels of socialism; but Tanzania suffered a setback with the unleashing of globalisation and the assault of the empire. With President Magufuli in power, it seems the *seeds* Nyerere planted may sprout into a tree and possibly bear Socialist fruits.

Focusing on liberation ideology

Fanon was correct that... ‘The national bourgeoisie of underdeveloped countries is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor in building, nor labour... The psychology of the national bourgeoisie is that of the businessman, not that of a captain of industry.’ This is essentially a descriptive statement. It does not follow from this that national bourgeoisies

are not nationalist. From our experience at SEATINI, we observed that the vast numbers of our 'bourgeoisie' are patriots. The comprador class is rather small. Even those that act as marketing agents of large foreign corporations would welcome an opportunity to become 'captains of industry'.

The fundamental problem is not the class character of our petty bourgeoisie (although that is a strong contributing factor), but the system of imperial domination and the neoliberal ideology that imprisons our mindset (including some of the best economists in our universities), and those in the state who make policies for us. Our states are truly neo-colonial in the way Kwame Nkrumah described them. What follows from this analysis is that we need to liberate ourselves from the oppressive and exploitative system that has outlived our political independence.

And that, I might add, requires a particular kind of political leadership – a revolutionary leadership. And that is why so many of African revolutionaries have been either killed, or thrown out of power ('regime changed'), or forced to compromise because of imperial interventions. We do not have to go far to look for evidence; we have this in Uganda's past.

Learning from Uganda's past

Here I summarise the ground we have covered in detail up to this point.

Pre-colonial Uganda

Before colonialism there were diverse societies in Uganda - some centralised and class-stratified and others segmentary and non-stratified. Generally non-stratified societies predominated in the north and the east (like the Karamojong), and class-stratified societies predominated in the south and west - like the Baganda. Accordingly, there were diverse forms of production and governance. But they had one thing in common: power arose from within and not from outside those 'inchoate nations'. Whatever the contradictions among them, there were institutional and cultural means of resolving these without external interference, which is what happened with the beginning of the colonial conquest of Uganda.

The colonial system destroyed both the base (the economy) and the superstructure (governance) of the pre-colonial era, and created a peasantry

that was integrated into the global capitalist system of production and colonial rules of governance.

The struggles towards independence

Right through the 1930s and 1940s, the common people struggled to secure a measure of control over their productive work, the fruits of which were appropriated by the British empire to service its own industries, to make profit for their companies (including banks), and to earn revenue for its treasury. The empire turned a deaf ear to people's demands, until the latter had to take to the streets to carry out non-violent protests. The peasants and workers formed the major contingent of struggle for national liberation, led and organised by nationalist leaders, among them, I K Musazi. He was a relentless fighter against imperialism, and was behind the formation of the Bana ba Kintu, the Uganda Transport and General Workers' Union, and the Bataka movement. He led the national uprisings of the peasants and workers in 1945 and 1948, until the British banished him into exile.

The emergence of Uganda as a neo-colonial state

On the eve of independence, however, contradictions appeared among the leadership leading to rivalry for power. The UPC under Milton Obote came to power in alliance with the Kabaka Yekka. However, in 1966 the alliance split, and Obote introduced a new constitution in 1967. The nationalist movement that leaders like Musazi had welded together was fragmented.

Under neo-colonialism, the British monopolies continued to exploit the common people (peasants and workers) and to extract surplus value through its control over agriculture, industries, banks and tertiary services like marketing, insurance and shipping. This is the basis of Uganda's underdevelopment – as in all neo-colonies. Under the control of the monopolies, Uganda could not (and cannot) transform into a fully developed capitalist state or economy. The empire cannot allow the emergence of a strong national bourgeoisie. Thus, what emerged was a large number of 'free' peasants who served the interests of global capital.

Putting socialism on Uganda's future agenda

John Kakonge, as far as we know, was the first Ugandan to put socialism on the country's agenda. The 1964 Gulu conference of the UPC was a historic

event where it was laid out as ‘The Fundamental Basis of the Uganda Peoples’ Congress’. Among other things, it declared that ‘... The economic control of our country is not in the hands of our people and continues through the continued exploitation of our people by a handful of comprador capitalists and their agents’. It called for the ‘participation of the workers, farmers and youth in the party’, declaring that ‘we shall do everything in our power to propagate socialism as the ideology of the party’. Note that as early as 1964, the existence of ‘compradors’ was known. Also, as the declaration said, they were only a ‘handful’.

At the 1968 UPC conference Obote introduced a number of documents, among them the ‘*The Common Man’s Charter*’. It declared, among other things, that the resources of the country, material and human, would be exploited for the benefit of all the people of Uganda ‘in accordance with the principles of Socialism’. ‘The move to the Left’, it said, was the creation of ‘a new political culture and a new way of life, whereby the people as a whole – their welfare and their voice in the national government and in other local authorities – are paramount. It is therefore anti-feudal and anti-capitalism.’ Then there was the Nakivubo Pronouncements, made on Labour Day, 1970, nationalising a number of enterprises some of which – the banks, big industries like Kilembe Mines, plantations, insurance and credit institutions – were at the core of the British control of the economy. The British, with the help of Amin, swiftly got Obote out of power.

Then, for nearly ten years (1971-79) Amin ruled, with the British always behind him. The British supplied him with all the small arms that Amin used to kill people. Even when Saudi Arabia and Libya came to finance Amin, the money was used by Amin to purchase arms from British monopolies and the arms industry. In 1979 Amin was finally toppled.

The UNLF government brought the agenda back to the task of transforming the country and to raise cadres under its four principles – Unity, Democracy, National Independence and Social Progress (UDNIS) – that were crafted by the UNLF’s Political Commission headed by Dani Wadada Nabudere. Despite obstacles, UDNIS provided the basis for a socialist revolution, and although the word ‘socialism’ was not used, the four principles – in particular ‘National independence’ and ‘Social Progress’ –

were based on a socialist project.

The May 1980 military coup ousted the UNLF, and brought Obote back to power. But as I pointed out earlier (and I repeat for emphasis), this was the saddest period in Uganda's history – five wasted years of violence, corruption and degeneration.

The NRM and the Ten-Point Programme

In 1966 the NRM took over power after a successful armed struggle under the leadership of Yoweri Museveni. In his *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, Museveni, writes:

By 1966, ... the dominant economic interests in Uganda were imperialist rather than feudal... Therefore, by defining feudalism rather than imperialism as the main problem in 1960s Uganda, Obote was creating artificial divisions among the people. He thus actually served imperialism by emphasising internal differences while neglecting to address the contradictions between the country's national interests on the one hand, and those of imperialism on the other. Without national unity, the different petty bourgeois factions national unity, the different petty bourgeois factions (traditionalists, parvenus and religionists) were all competing for what were in effect imperialist favours. This relegated the evolution relegated the evolution of a national strategy for disengaging from imperialism to the sidelines.²⁰⁴

The last sentence is poignant and significant – returning to ‘the evolution of a national strategy’ and ‘disengaging’ from imperialism – for we shall return to this later.

NRM's Ten Points Programme (which appears as an appendix to *Sowing the Mustard Seed*) includes the main principles of UNLF's UDNIS program.

- Point 1: Restoration of democracy
- Points 3 and 4: Consolidation of national unity
- Point 6: Restoration and improvement of social services.

204 Museveni, loc. cit., pp 43-44

Actually, the Ten Points Programme goes farther than UNLF's UDNIS

- Point 2: Restoration of security of person and property
- Point 5: Building an independent, integrated and self-sustaining national economy
- Point 7: Elimination of corruption and misuse of power
- Point 8: Redressing errors that have resulted in the dislocations of some sections of the population
- Point 9: Cooperation with other African countries
- Point 10: Following an economic strategy of mixed economy.

Interestingly, however, the Ten-Point Programme does not talk about socialism.²⁰⁵ But neither did UNLF's UDNIS. Again, I say this because I want to return to this later.

Conclusion

Under neo-colonial politics, the empire exploited the secondary contradictions among the petty bourgeoisie. And these, in turn, exploited ethnic, religious and regional differences among the masses to vie for power. People demanded a voice – and 'free and fair' elections – but these became exercises in manipulations by the petty bourgeoisie for power. Army interventions in 1966 (against Obote I), 1971 (against the UNLF), and 1976 (against Obote II) confirmed that the resolution of the contradictions among petty bourgeoisie was no longer possible under 'normal' democratic processes. Thus, to this day, the contradiction between people and imperialism remains the main contradiction in Uganda. The only way forward is a democratic revolution led by the working classes and the peasantry as in the three decades before independence.

205 But I know from my knowledge of Yoweri Museveni – from his University days to later when we worked together in President Binaisa's cabinet – that at heart he is a socialist.

NRM's Vision 2040

Introduction

Up to this point we have charted out the past and recent history of Uganda, and we have reached the above conclusion. Now we come down to analysing the nitty-gritty – the strategy and tactics – of the struggle to create a viable, self-reliant, independent, sovereign nation.

All struggles are concrete. Theory is of course very important, since there can be no revolution, no transformation of our nation without revolutionary theory. That said, there is no substitute for putting that theory into action. I have come to the conclusion – based on my close involvement together with many Ugandan nationalists in the struggle for close to 50 years – that the only action forward is through socialism in the full knowledge that the transition to socialism is a very long road. At the minimum we need to have a clear vision.

N RM's Vision 2040 ²⁰⁶

Uganda's vision 2040 starts with the National Anthem 'Oh Uganda! May God uphold thee, We lay our future in thy hand'. This is followed by a foreword from which I quote the first couple of paragraphs which show that the 'future' is placed in the hands of the empire, pretending to be God.²⁰⁷

Over the last 50 years, Uganda has made significant development progress. Since the mid 1980's, the economy has moved from the mid 1980's, the economy has moved from recovery to growth. A number of economic policies and programs such as the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), Economic Recovery Program (ERP), Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) have been successfully implemented leading to a boost in economic growth. Since 2002, the economy grew consistently at an average of 6.4 percent and has since built sufficient momentum for take-off.

206 NPA (2007). Uganda Vision 2040. National Planning Authority, Republic of Uganda, Kampala

207 <https://www.pambazuka.org/author/osaze-lanre-nosaze>

In order to consolidate and accelerate this growth process, Government in 2007 approved the Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework (CNDPF) policy which provides for the development of a 30 year Vision to be implemented through: three 10-year plans; six 5-year National Development Plans (NDPs); Sector Investment Plans (SIPs); Local Government Development Plans (LGDPs), Annual work plans and Budgets. Consequently, Cabinet approved the National Vision Statement, 'A Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years'. The National Planning Authority in consultation with other government institutions and other stakeholders has

thus developed a Uganda Vision 2040 to operationalise this Vision statement.

Uganda Vision 2040 builds on the progress that has been made in addressing the strategic bottlenecks that have constrained Uganda's socio-economic development since her independence, including; ideological disorientation, weak private sector, underdeveloped human resources, inadequate infrastructure, small market, lack of industrialization, underdeveloped services sector, underdevelopment of agriculture, and poor democracy, among others.

The figure of 6.4 percent of development that the preface gives is a statistical gimmick – a camouflage of the harsh reality on the ground. Let us go back to Part II. We provided some figures from a survey done by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBS). The people who paid the price of this ‘development’ were people in the rural areas, women in particular.

- 56.7% of people in the survey could not afford eating their normal food.
- Adult female members bore the brunt of food shortage: 53.1% of them skipped meals; 61.1% ate ‘less preferred food’; 68.3% skipped meals; 61.1% ate ‘less preferred food’; 68.3% reduced size of meals.

We are at this critical moment in Uganda that we need seriously to challenge this dogma of ‘free trade’ and the *neoliberal economic ideology* that even Alan Greenspan, the one-time chairman of the US Federal Reserve, questioned after his retirement. When asked to affirm if ‘[in] your view of the world, your ideology, was not right, it was not working?’ Greenspan replied, ‘Absolutely, precisely’ (see above, p 152).

The current 30-year program is supposed to be implemented in a series of six five-year National Development Plans (NDPs), which began with 2010/11 to 2014/15 under the National Planning Authority (NPA). At the time of writing, we are in the midst of NDPII – the second 5-year plan 2015/16 to 2019/20. Over this period, local-level District Development Plans (DDPs) and, as the Plan says: ‘*Sectoral plans are to be aligned with the NDPs and the overall national vision*’. Policies are essentially initiated and drafted by sector ministries and departments. Local governments also have planning units (councils) with oversight functions, under the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG). Draft policies are subjected to review and input from a variety of

stakeholders, including CSOs and development partners, before being submitted to Cabinet and then Parliament (where required) for approval.

The problem lies not with the mechanics of planning, but with its IMF World Bank directed centralised character whereby the ‘Sectoral plans are to be aligned with the NDPs and the overall national vision’.

An Alternative Vision 2040. The neo-colonial state is a contested site

The first thing we need to keep in mind is that the neo-colonial state is a contested site between the empire and nationalist forces. The problem is that this is usually not fully appreciated, for we are under the illusion of ‘independence’, believing, wrongly, that political independence automatically means economic independence. It does not. Political independence is only the first step towards acquiring economic independence - and that is a very long struggle. In Uganda we have been in this struggle for over 50 years now.

So let us be clear. The state of Uganda, by and large, is dominated by the IMF, the World Bank, the ‘donors’, and the all-consuming neoliberal economic ideology. The tragedy is that this ideology has so deeply penetrated our universities that many of our ‘learned professors’ are its main votaries. But, more to the point, some of the main policy makers – a small minority, mainly at the top of the government hierarchy - are sworn advocates of ‘free trade’ and what is equally harmful, the so-called ‘development aid’. The political elite and the top bureaucracy occasionally consult with certain companies and influential members of the private sector (mainly compradors), but these project their particular interests which are within the general overall ‘vision 2040’.

The vast majority of the common people are effectively excluded from the process of planning. Also excluded are those that articulate their views and concerns – i.e. the trade unions and the nationalist sections of the civil society organisations (CSOs). And, when these are consulted, the exercise is normally to placate these organisations, and get ‘participatory’ legitimacy for a state- structured ‘development plan’. I know this from firsthand experience working not only in Uganda but practically in all the countries in Eastern and Southern Africa. ²⁰⁸ Let me elaborate on this.

In September 1999, the IMF had declared that it had created a new anti-poverty focus for its work in low-income countries like Uganda; that it had terminated its Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) and replaced it with a new lending facility focused on

208 Between 1997 and 2015, I was the Founder Chairman and Director of the Southern and Eastern African Trade Information & Negotiations Institute (SEATINI) with offices in Uganda, Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, and Geneva. Among other activities, SEATINI was engaged with the European Union fighting against the EU's relentless attempt to impose an imperialist Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) on the countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) regions

economic growth and poverty reduction. The new facility, the Fund claimed, would ensure that the lending programs are '*pro-poor and in line with each country's own strategy for reducing poverty.*' In this process, the IMF and the government would consult with all stake holders, including the CSOs, in what were called the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PSRPs).

I must admit that for a while (but not for long), I thought this might be an opportunity for us in the civil society to voice our concerns. The IMF documents said that the 'PRSP should be country-driven, result-oriented, comprehensive, partnership-oriented, and based on a long-term perspective'.²⁰⁹ However, as we started to 'participate' in the PRSPs, we began to see that it was a cleverly constructed hoax whereby we from the civil society would get a hearing but none of our ideas swayed the pre-determined decisions of the IMF and the World Bank. *It turned out that the PRSPs were required before lowincome countries could receive aid from donors and lenders. That was what it really was about.* Hence, SEATINI (the Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute) withdrew from it knowing it was a total waste of time.

But the Government continued with the PRSPs. Here is a report on Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (2004/5-2007/8), August 2005: IMF Country Report No. 05/307 Uganda.²¹⁰ This is what it says in its Introduction: the PRSPs 'are prepared by member countries in broad consultation with stakeholders and development partners, including the staffs of the World Bank and the IMF. Updated every three years with annual progress reports, they describe the country's macroeconomic, structural, and

social policies in support of growth and poverty reduction, as well as associated external financing needs and major sources of financing’.

The Foreword by President Museveni says this:
Over the last 19 years, Government has implemented policies

209 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_Reduction_Strategy_Paper 210
<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05307.pdf>

geared towards eradicating poverty among our people. These policies have led to a substantial reduction in poverty levels from 56% in 1992 to 38% in 2003. More needs to be done to ensure that all Ugandans move and stay out of poverty.

The Foreword goes on to mention a number of challenges Uganda has faced. These are:

- a) to consolidate national security, deal with the consequences of conflict, and improve regional equity;
- b) to restore sustainable growth in the incomes of the poor; c) to build strong social and economic infrastructure;
- d) to enhance human development;
- e) to use public resources more efficiently.

It goes on:

Over the next three years, Government will focus its attention on addressing these challenges. Uganda needs to expand agricultural output through increasing farm productivity and household incomes. Government also needs to strengthen the export sector to be able to access international markets.

The Foreword ends:

I am pleased to note that the PEAP²¹¹ has become an important vehicle for policy coherence. This has been manifested through the wide consultative process that has involved many stakeholders including, development partners and civil society. I wish to express my appreciation to all those who worked tirelessly to produce this document. Finally, I urge all the

citizens of Uganda and development practitioners to use this policy document in steering our efforts toto use this policy document in steering our efforts to eradicate poverty.

Signed: Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA 211 PEAP stands for Poverty Eradication Action Plan

This system of top-down planning under the direction (dictation) of the IMF is quite contrary to the ethos of democracy that the NRM, under Museveni's guidance, had set up during the 1980-85 guerrilla war. So, before I get into our alternative proposal for Vision 2040, it is important to understand the process of defining and implementing this vision, and to borrow from what the NRM had set up during the struggle.

On getting the ideology right

Democracy and Governance

This is what the President had said in his *Sowing the Mustard Seed*:

If people are frozen in their subsistence activities, effectively trying to be jacks of all trades and masters of none, the country cannot grow. all trades and masters of none, the country cannot grow. Lack of action also means lack of entrepreneurship and therefore lack of savings.²¹²

This is sound economic logic. Then the President hit the governance nail on the head. He wrote: '*The over-centralisation of power in the 1960s was another major problem.*'²¹³

To put this right the NRM had put on the ground a bottom-up system of governance described as 'Local government through resistance councils' – or *the RC system*. The system was built upon a pyramidlike structure. It started at the village level where the people elected a committee of nine (RC1). Over the years, and especially since 1993, new responsibilities were added to the local councils. The RC1 then elected representatives at the Parish Resistance Council, (RC2). These then elected people at the sub-county (RC3); and these, in turn, elected representatives to the County District level (RC4).

And what is even more significant is that the *Decentralisation Statute of 1993 gave the RCs power over civil servants by giving them* 212 Museveni, loc. cit. p 191
213 Ibid, p 192

supervisory powers as well as money . There were then about 800 subcounties in Uganda and each covered a radius of four miles (six km) with about 20,000 inhabitants. Previously, when taxes were collected at the sub-county (*gombolola*) level, all the money was taken away by district and central Government. But following the 1993 Statute, 50% of it was left at that RC1 level; a further 10% was taken to the higher county level; and the rest went to the district level. ²¹⁴

One might argue that the RC system was all right during the guerrilla war; it is not possible to go back to it in the now changed circumstances. Admittedly, the system might not be repeated exactly in the same fashion; nonetheless, the principle behind it is sound – grassroots democracy with a bottom-up approach to decision-making. This is the essence of democracy. People’s democracy cannot be reduced to ‘bourgeois democracy’ which is a system (like what is practiced in the United States) where the bourgeois ruling classes resolve disputes amongst themselves whilst ignoring the interests of the working classes. In the U.S. both the Republican and the Democratic parties are in essence only one party – the Party of Capital - that effectively is dictatorship of capital over the masses. In fact, Karl Polanyi, quoted above, described it as ‘fascist’.

Let us be clear. Uganda has had regular elections under the present dispensation, which is more than one can say about either under Obote or Amin. How one can one equate it with a ‘fascist’ system? It is a fair question, and we must deal with it. Our position here is premised on the above argument that as long as we are ruled by a dictatorship of capital, it is an undemocratic, fascist, system. Indeed, in our case it is not just rule of capital, but at a still higher level the rule of imperialism. The ‘Vision 2040’ was crafted by ‘experts’ from the IMF and the World Bank. When the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PSRPs) were introduced by the IMF, the people were duped into ‘participating’ in the process only in order to legitimise the rule of imperial capital. It is in this sense that Uganda is not free from the global fascist system of capitalism and imperialism.

For us in Uganda, therefore, the system of democracy must empower the common people to move towards socialism under a national ethos.

N ationalism and Socialism

Earlier we discussed two ideologies of relevance to Uganda (and not only Uganda). One is nationalism and the other is socialism.

1. Simply expressed, nationalism is the ideology of oppressed peoples seeking to gain their liberation from imperial domination. Of course, nationalism can take ‘sub-nationalist’ forms, such as, for example, Baganda or Acholi nationalism. However, I would contend that the bulk of our people are Ugandan nationalists, generally committed to maintaining the unity of Uganda against forces of division from outside. I also mentioned the debate at Makerere in recent years quoting Professor Sabiti Makara who argued that political parties need to have nationalism as part of their ideologies.
2. As for socialism, it is a complex economic and social system. We must move away from any predetermined dogmatic conception of socialism. In a nutshell, it is based on the social ownership and democratic control of the means of production, an equitable distribution of the wealth of the nation, and the provision of necessary public services (health, food, education, water and sanitation, housing, and basic security) to the entire nation. Social ownership, however, may take many forms – from direct state ownership, to collective or cooperative ownership, and so on.
3. The road to socialism is a long one. It cannot be built without a sustained class struggle. Also, there are struggles within struggles. There is democratic struggle for the voices of the common people to be heard in the building of socialism; there is struggle for gender equality and fairness; there is religious struggle between different faiths; and so on. Although they are what we earlier described as ‘secondary contradictions’ when confronted with the overall domination of the empire, these secondary contradictions cannot be taken lightly; they must be faced even as we, collectively, face the challenge of imperialism.

4. You cannot create socialism by importing either the western European model or the Soviet or Chinese model, although you can learn lessons – good and bad – from them. It is important to build socialism from where you are. And where you are is a matter of both history and geography.

That is why, in my view, what Nyerere was trying to achieve with Ujamaa Socialism in Tanzania deserves our respect. It came out of pre-colonial as well as colonial experience and was part of the African soil and ambience. For Nyerere socialism meant, first and foremost, bringing the village communities together into Ujamaa villages and help them to build these basic social and infrastructural facilities as a first step towards building genuine socialism – one that would fit African (not European, American, Soviet or Chinese) realities. Later Nyerere admitted that he had underestimated the power of imperialism in post-independence Tanzania, which is why Ujamaa socialism was only a partial success.

Unlike capitalism which is probably in its last stages (and therefore all the more dangerous), socialism is still in its early stages.

Economy v/s Economics

Right from the beginning, it is important to understand the difference between economy and economics. The economy is real whereas economics is an ideology. For example, classical economics of Adam Smith and Ricardo was the ideology of a rising bourgeoisie circa 19th century; neo-classical or neoliberal economics is the ideology of globalised imperialist capital; Keynesian economics is the ideology of social democracy that favours state intervention in the economy; and Marxist economics is the ideology of the working classes.

Development v/s growth

Let me come to a difficult concept - 'Development'. I have discussed this at some length in my *Ending Aid Dependence*²¹⁵ and so I shall not belabour the point, except to say that development has essentially two components:

1. Development is self-defined; it cannot be defined by outsiders.

Within the national framework, it is defined in an evolving democratic process as part of the national project. In this long evolutionary development

process, decision making and control over national resources pass into the hands of the population and their democratic institutions.

2. Development is a process of self-empowerment. It is a long process of struggle for liberation from structures of domination and control, including mental constructs and the use of language. This struggle is waged between nations, within nations, and within communities. And it evolves over time.

By contrast, development in the current mainstream dogma of neoliberal globalisation boils down to 'growth', which itself is further reduced to the doctrines of the free market. This scaling down of development is further subjected to the reality on the ground where everything from trade to home mortgages is subjected to the control by banks and financial speculators – what is now in economic parlance as we elsewhere called the 'financialisation of development'. This reductionist logic of financialised capitalism is the fundamental cause of the contemporary almost total breakdown of the global financial system and with it the global system of production and exchange.

On getting the economy right

General: Issues to be seriously considered and debated On the basis of Uganda's 50 years' experience, the following should be seriously considered and debated:

1. Five-year national plans democratically discussed to advance the

national sovereign project.

2. Resist imperial economics and the Capitalist laws of accumulation that puts profit above people.

215 Tandon, Yash (2008) Ending Aid Dependence, Oxford, Pambazuka Press, pp 4-16

3. An alternative economic model that seeks to delink from globalisation in stages, and to relink with the global system when Uganda (and Africa) is strong. This is what China has done, and it is a good challenging model.

4. Ensure social progress for the vast majority of the working classes, including the rural masses (some 70% of the population) and the urban poor.

5. Working towards full employment and minimum income to enable every household to enjoy basic social services, such as access to food and water, housing, education, health, sanitation and other basic amenities.

The private sector has a role to play provided it does not undermine local national entrepreneurs and includes Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs), and the so-called ‘informal economy’ – the worst exploited sector of the economy, run mostly by mothers looking after their families.

Let us read through the above list, and recognise that each of the above is a challenging task, and each would take a chapter to go into a detailed analysis. But this is presented here as an alternative 2040 vision (not a detailed plan). What should be clear is that it is very different from the IMF-engineered vision for Uganda.

The IMF ‘vision’ seeks to embed Uganda even further into the globalised economy on the basis of a complete fiction called ‘free trade’ which would create even more opportunities for imperial capital to exploit Uganda’s human and natural resources for profit. I am aware that we do need capital from outside, but (and this is important), we need it not in the form of money (or so-called ‘development aid’) but in the form of technology, a matter that we’ll address below.

It is the neo-classical economics that is dominant in our times, although Keynesian or neo-Keynesian economics is the ruling ideology of several countries such as Norway, Sweden and Denmark. From our analysis it should be clear that we seek to get out of the clutches of neoliberal economics and move towards Marxist economics that serves the interests of the labouring classes and nations under imperialist domination. Recall, however, that socialism as elaborated in western countries may not be suited for our countries in Africa, although both might use Marxist theories to back their claims. We must find our own model of economic development based on our own particularities, although many of the policies applied in socialist countries may well suit our situation.

Without going too much into detail, it may be useful to elaborate further on point 3 above – delinking or ‘decoupling’ from globalised capital. It is not a mechanical exercise, of course. It has to be a carefully strategised plan of

action. In this plan, the most important ingredient is to get out of aid dependence. I have gone into some detail on this issue in my *Ending Aid Dependence*, from which I summarise the following seven steps to achieving this. These are:

Step 1: Adjusting the mindset – ending the psychology of aid dependence

Step 2: Budgeting for the poor not for the donors

Step 3: Putting employment and decent wages upfront

Step 4: Creating the domestic market and owning domestic resources

Step 5: Plugging the resource gap

Step 6: Creating institutions for investing national savings

Step 7: Limiting aid to national democratic priorities.

Land and the agrarian question

We have gone into this in some detail in Chapter 6: *The 'Base' of Uganda's economy*. It is worth going back to the chapter to refresh our memory on the dire state in which peasants find themselves in Uganda and in Africa generally. I give here only some of the highlights of the earlier analysis. In 2010, the FAO estimated that between 2007 and 2010, foreign corporations acquired 20 million hectares of land in Africa. A reputed international NGO – GRAIN – reported that between 4 and 8 per cent of land in Uganda is under foreign hands, and that means a disproportionately large part of the best agricultural land than the figure of 4-8% would suggest.

Land grabbing has been rampant. The recent (2016) Oxfam Report gives a stark picture of the rich grabbing land from the poor.²¹⁶ It says that land 'giveaways' by powerful politicians have emerged as a major issue. A number of schools and other stakeholders (e.g. Namulonge Agricultural Research Station) have raised serious concerns, but Government has taken no remedial action. There have also been numerous evictions of 'squatters' in districts such as Mukono and Kayunga by absentee landlords, who then sell their mailo land titles to investors been cleared to make way for plantations. Wetlands have been drained, damaging the rich natural biodiversity. Whilst forests have been cleared on the one hand, on the other large estate owners and corporations are replacing native forest with monoculture plantations of non-native species such as eucalyptus and pine in order to earn what is called 'carbon credits'.

There can be only one conclusion one can draw for purposes of our alternative 'Vision 2040'. Land and the agrarian question must be priority number one in our vision. The Friends of the Earth (FoE) has made several recommendations on the land issue (see p 57) that must be put on the agenda, in particular, moving quickly to design, enact and enforce a law to protect citizens who own land under the customary tenure system.

I will add one more recommendation on this issue for our proposed alternative Vision 2040. This relates to the domain of international

216 Mira Nayer's Queen of Katwe about life in the slums of Kampala is highly recommended. It shows the cruelty of life, especially for women, but it has a comforting end to show that with determination and an innovative spirit and support of the community, it is possible to get out of deprecation

trade, and Uganda's membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The WTO is in effect an instrument of the big capitalist players (the US, Europe and Japan), and through them, their agricultural mega-corporations. The third world generally has had a raw deal under WTO's rules of competition in an open 'free trade' market on agriculture, and among those who suffer most are small peasant producers, especially women. The current Uganda representative who negotiates on the agriculture (as on all issues) has been taking a lead on this issue, backed by many countries from the third world. However, it would appear that the Government has a closer ear to the IMF than to its own representative at the WTO.

Industry and capital

In the 1960s, Uganda had gone through an impressive program in mining (such as copper, cobalt, and asbestos), and industrialisation through import substitution (for products such as cement, textiles, tea, sugar, beverages, edible oil, wood, paper and paper products, iron and steel, non-metallic and metallic products). Of course most of these were undertaken with capital from and under the effective control of mainly British monopolies (such as Duncan, Gilby & Matheson, Universal Asbestos Manufacturing, and Chillington Tool). Local enterprises set up by the Mehta and Madhvani groups (mainly sugar) and others too drew the bulk of their capital from Britain or other western countries, but they provided local management and training of engineering skills, which was significant.

Most of these industries were destroyed under Amin's military rule. Some of the industries were restored under the UNLF period (for example, the Madhvani group of companies, some textile mills and cement), but the process had just begun when a second military coup in May 1980 interrupted progress. Then followed five years of mayhem. Since the NRM took over power in 1996, the government has made heroic attempts to reconstruct the economy. The share of manufacturing in GDP grew over the next 30 years, but industrial development was generally unimpressive mostly consisting of low value-added manufacturing.

For example, at one time Uganda had several textile mills with vertical integration – from spinning, weaving, the production of fabric, and clothing. These included Nyanza Textile Industries Ltd and Mulco Textiles in Jinja; African Textile Mills in Mbale; Lira Spinning Mill in Lira; and others. Uganda now has only two. Most mills such as Mulco, African Textile, Rayon Textiles, and Lira Spinning are closed. At its peak in 1972/3 the textile industry consumed approximately 400,000 bales of cotton per year; now it is down to 15,000 bales (barely 3.8% of earlier times). This has virtually destroyed cotton production and the livelihood of thousands of peasant-farmers. Supermarkets in the bigger cities sell imported clothing, and the 'informal sector' provides second hand clothes for the poor and lower middle class families.

We have earlier analysed the reasons behind the decline of industry in Uganda. Of course, the semi-anarchy between 1971 and 1985 explains a lot. But then why has industry not picked up in the last 30 years under the NRM? The problems of lack of implementation and corruption are serious, and have to be addressed. But even more serious is the corruption of state policy by so-called 'aid'; the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) forced by the IMF, the WB and the 'donors'; and government's commitment to 'free trade globalisation'. Industries in Uganda have almost zero protection against imports from countries like the European Union and China. We have seen a rapid increase in the information and communications sectors, but these, whilst providing employment to local people, are effectively controlled by big transnationals, such as MTN, Orange, Warid, and Airtel.

For Uganda to industrialise, it must, in our view, do the following:

1. At the risk of repeating, let me reiterate that Uganda must decouple from free trade globalisation, and its dependence on ‘development aid’. Aid is not charity; it is an imperial stranglehold over Uganda’s independent path to development.
2. There is no way Uganda can compete in the so-called ‘global value chain’. We must create productive assets starting with the base (the people, the community), then at the national level, then EAC regional level, then – when we have achieved competitiveness – the global.
3. There has to be integration between agriculture and industry – agricultural raw materials feeding industry, and industry supplying technology to agriculture.
4. Uganda’s negotiators must ‘unpack’ foreign direct investments (FDIs). What we need is technology, but the FDI package contains things like foreign management, supplies from investment providers, but most dangerously the system of Inter State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) that totally robs us of our sovereignty. Negotiate your BITS. Be tough even with the Chinese.

The working classes

Economy is part of society. At the end of the day, the struggle of the working classes against exploitation and oppression by the owners of capital is a political issue at the level of what Marx called the ‘production relations’. The capitalist class as a whole is expropriating the labour of the entire working class for profits all over the world. But in our times, we live under a system of capitalism which is daily losing the legitimacy that it had at its birth. Monopoly financialised capitalism has reached a point where a couple of thousand people own more wealth than the rest of the world put together. It is war. The owners of capital fight their battle for survival with all means at their disposal. Among these is the ideology of ‘liberal democracy’ which has succeeded astonishingly well among the middle class and even sections of the working class.

Capitalism-imperialism has given rise to resistance at various levels. At the most basic, or primordial, level, resistance comes from the working classes within both the heartland of capitalism (the US, Europe and Japan) and now

increasingly China, Russia and the rest of the world. Indeed, in the peripheries the exploitation of the workers is even more intense and brutal (including, for example, child labour), and so also the resistance. In Uganda, the first trade union – the Uganda African Motor Drivers' Association (UAMDA) – was registered in 1939. It took its inspiration from Kenya, where Makhan Singh had established the Indian Trade Union in February 1935, which mutated into the Labour Trade Union of East Africa and extended to Tanganyika and Uganda and opened to all races.²¹⁷ The UAMDA was not limited to economic struggles; it was also political. In 1945 and then again in 1948 the workers rioted for increased wages and improvement in their work conditions. Led by the Bana ba Kintu, the peasantry also demanded democratic as well as economic rights. In other words, the workers were at the heart of the agitation not only for their economic interests but also democratic rights that the British government had suppressed.

As we saw earlier, the national struggle was hijacked by the middle classes who having come to power sought to control the workers and their unions in the interest of appeasing imperial capital. Under Obote I, the Government banned the formation of independent workers' unions. But its initial effort to break the Trade Union Congress (TUC) by creating a rival union – the Federation of Uganda Trade Unions (FUTU) – failed. So it created another union – the Uganda Labour Congress (ULC) as the sole organ of the workers. But the workers' agitation continued. Obote appointed a one-man commission under Godfrey Binaisa to look into union affairs. Binaisa recommended, among others things, that the Government should increase the power of Minister of Labour over the union. That was in 1968.

Fifty years down the road, the government subjugation of the trade union continues unabated. This is what John-Jean Barya says:

The period 1986 to 2006 saw great changes in the environment in which trade unions operate. Although they were able to maintain relative autonomy during the UPC – Obote II regime, the period in question saw a further emasculation of the trade unions.

217 For an excellent biography of Makhan Singh and the struggles of the working classes in East Africa prior to independence, see: Zarina Patel, Unquiet: The Life and Times of Makhan Singh, 2006, Nairobi:

*Trade unions have essentially taken an apolitical stand, which has greatly undermined their ability to operate. When leaders in NOTU or COFTU do become political, most enter a client-patron relationship with the regime. Today, the trade union leadership has been thoroughly incorporated into the NRM-regime structures, both in the party and in Parliament, although indirectly in the latter. It is now unlikely that trade unions will take an independent and pro-worker stand as they will be forced by the NRM whip to toe the government line. At the same time, NOTU has no control over its MPs despite being their constituencies.*²¹⁸

Vincent Nuwagaba concurs with the above evaluation. He writes: ‘If there’s any constituency that is less prioritised in Uganda, it is the workers. Yet workers have five members of parliament thanks to affirmative action. What’s disappointing, though, is the manner in which the workers’ MPs are elected. Bribery, co- option, intimidation and manipulation – tools that the NRM machinery has used for the past 26 years have not spared the trade unions.... While the trade union leaders – who evidently represent a tiny minority of workers – are driven in vehicles, attend national, regional and international seminars and conferences with handsome per diems, the rank and file unionised workers and all non-unionised workers are disillusioned, disappointed and see only betrayal in the trade union leaders and workers’ MPs’.²¹⁹

In the meantime, trade union leaders vying for the ‘special’ seats in parliament battle with one another. ‘National Trade Union leaders under the two national centres’, wrote Cecilia Okoth, ‘have expressed displeasure over the manner in which the Electoral Commission (EC) has failed to carry out their elections in parliament and have threatened to call for industrial action. The leaders under their umbrellas include, National Organisation of Trade Unions, Central Organisations of Free Trade Unions in Uganda and the Independent Unions’.²²⁰

²¹⁸ ohn-Jean Barya, ‘Trade unions, liberalisation and politics in Uganda’, in Bjorn Beckman , Sakhela Buhlungu, Lloyd Sachikonye (eds).2010, Trade Unions and Party Politics Labour movements in Africa, HSRC Press

219 See Vincent Nuwagaba <https://www.pambazuka.org/activism/uganda%E2%80%99s-labour-unions-threat-workers%E2%80%99-rights>

It is clear that their threat ‘to call for industrial action’ is empty since they do not enjoy the workers’ confidence. Gone are the days of the riots of 1945 and 1949 when the workers came to the streets to make their political demands.

In the light of this, the alternative Vision 2040 must entail the following on the worker-state relations:

1. 78 subsection 1 clause c of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda that provides the procedure for the ‘special’ seats in the parliament should be reworked to allow for direct elections by workers of their representatives in the parliament.
2. Workers should create their own trade unions independent of the Party or the Government. They must, of course, push for their legitimate demands on wages and working conditions, but besides these economic issues, they should participate in the politics of the country under a united working class trade union, directly elected by the workers.
3. The workers’ wages must be sufficient to provide for their ability to provide a decent standard of living for their families including education of their children.

Money and Finance

The centrality of the money system

One of the first things Britain did after colonising Uganda was to control the money system. Money is, as it were, the heart of the system – with veins and arteries supplying blood (money and capital) to the entire economy. The empire brought the Rupee from India (another part of the empire) which was a legal tender in Uganda until 1921. Money must be distinguished from capital. Money is simply a means

220 Cecilia Okoth, ‘Trade Unions, EC duel over representation in parliament’, Sunday Vision, March 01, 2016

of exchange or savings. When it goes into production, it is capital. That is when capital exploits labour and natural resources and creates profit for the capitalists and wages for the workers.

Once the British put the money and banking system in place, the capital for increased production came entirely from the surplus (profits) that came from wage labour. This capital was collected from the peasants in the form of taxes. One, therefore, has to understand this nexus between money, capital and taxes to understand how the system functions. The banking system is simply the edifice, a structured system of circulating money and capital.

So one of the first things the alternative Vision 2040 has to do is to create the necessary institutions of finance capital – including a monetary system, currency and banking – that is in control of the people and the government elected by the people.

Uganda does not have an independent banking system Most people in Uganda probably do not know that over 50 years since Uganda's independence, it has no control over money or banking. This may come to them as a surprise. How can this be the case, they may well ask, when the Central Bank (the Bank of Uganda) is created by the government?

Turn back the pages to chapter 6 where I describe the system in detail. I will summarise a few important points from it in order for us to understand why it is so important for Uganda to create its own finance and banking system that is independent of the World Bank and the IMF, for right now that is not the case.

It is true that the government has set up the Central Bank, and this may come as a surprise to you, that although the governor and the Board of Directors are appointed by the minister of finance, it is not part of the Ministry of Finance! The Bank of Uganda Act was designed on the basis of advice from the IMF that the Bank must be 'independent' from government. The Governor and the Board must be able to make decisions 'independently' of the government. What is lying under this amazing conundrum is that although the Central Bank is independent of government, it may not act independently of the IMF. The IMF is invisible in the system, but it is there for those who

know better, like for example, Ezra Suruma who experienced first-hand the manipulations of the IMF from behind the scene. (See chapter 6 above).

The hand of the IMF reaches beyond the Central Bank. In 1993 Suruma was appointed by the President as the head of the state-owned Uganda Commercial Bank. Very soon he discovered that the UCB was actually run by ‘expatriate consultants’ appointed by the World Bank, ‘paid by the World Bank and therefore answerable to it’. He found it making losses, worked hard to make it viable, and then when it became profitable, he was fired by the President because he took a stand against the IMF who proposed to the President that the bank should be privatised!

Nationalise the Central Bank

The global capitalist banking and money system of which the banking structure in Uganda is a part is predatory, anti-people and anti-democratic.

This is Suruma’s recommendation, which I fully support. He says: ‘In the future, the law should be amended so that the central bank is more specifically answerable to the minister of finance, the president, or parliament or to some other public body.’²²¹

The Central Bank should be nationalised, and Government should create its own money system over which it has full control.

Micro-finance credit

Another important aspect to understand the banking system is that the commercial banks collect money (as savings) of the ordinary people,

²²¹ Suruma, loc.cit. p 54

and then lends the money to others on a higher interest rate making a profit for itself. When they provide so-called ‘credit’ to the borrowers, it demands some kind of ‘collateral’ from the borrower (such as land titles or personal valuables) in order to secure that the money is returned to the bank with the added interest. But poor people, even those in lower middle class, do not have such collaterals. These people are then forced to borrow from micro-finance institutions (MFIs), many of which are owned and financed from outside. Typically MFIs charge an interest rate of 30% or more. They might

help the poor in the short run, but in the long run the poor borrowers become enslaved by the system earning enormous profits for themselves.

Government should create thousands of post offices in the rural areas in order for the farmers to deposit their savings, and also encourage the peasants and farmers to create their own cooperative banks. Foreign micro-finance credit institutions should be asked to go back where they came from.

National Budget, taxation and public expenditure

Smoke and mirrors created by the capitalist system

Let us first look at the biggest tax payers in Uganda. Here are the top 40 out of a list of 100 released by President Museveni in February 2016.²²²

Company Nationality Industry 1 MTN Uganda Limited South Africa
Telecommunications 2 Nile Breweries Ltd South Africa Consumer Goods 3
Airtel Uganda Limited India Telecommunications 4 Uganda Breweries Ltd
Kenya Consumer Goods

*222 For the full list of 100 and also the amount of taxes these companies pay, see:
<http://ugbusiness.com/list-ugandas-top-100-taxpayers>*

5 Stanbic Bank (U) Ltd Uganda Financials 6 Tororo Cement Ltd Uganda
Construction Materials

7 Century Bottling Co. Ltd United States Consumer Goods

8 Bujagali Energy Ltd Switzerland Utilities 9 Kakira Sugar Limited Uganda
Consumer Goods 10 Umeme Limited Uganda Utilities 11 Kinyara Sugar Ltd
Uganda Consumer Goods

12

Centenary Rural Development Bank Ltd

Sugar Corporation of ¹³ Uganda Ltd

Uganda Financials

Uganda Consumer Goods

14 Standard Chartered Bank Ltd United Kingdom Financials

15 Hima Cement Ltd Switzerland

16 Civil Aviation Authority Uganda

17 Total E&P Uganda B.V. France Construction Materials Transportation &
Logistics

Oil & Gas

18 Crown Beverages Ltd United States Consumer Goods

19 British American Tobacco Uganda Consumer Goods

20 National Social Security Fund Uganda Public Sector

21 Uganda Revenue Authority Uganda Public Sector

22 Bidco Uganda Limited Kenya Consumer Goods 23

National Water & Sewerage Corporation

Uganda Utilities

24 Barclays Bank (U) Ltd United Kingdom Financials

25 CNOOC Uganda Ltd China Oil & Gas

26 DFCU Bank Limited Uganda Financials

27 Africell Uganda Limited Lebanon Telecommunications

28 Total Uganda Limited France Oil & Gas & Fuels

29 Crane Bank Limited Uganda Financials

30

New Vision Printing &

Publishing Corp

Tullow Uganda Operations PTY³¹ Limited

Diamond Trust Bank Uganda ³² Limited

Uganda Media

United Kingdom Oil & Gas

Uganda Financials

33 MultiChoice Uganda Limited South Africa Media

34

Leaf Tobacco & Commodities (U) Ltd

Uganda Electricity Transmission ³⁵ Co. Ltd

Uganda Consumer Goods

Uganda Utilities

36 Madhvani Group Limited Uganda Conglomerate

37 Bank of Baroda (U) Limited Uganda Financials

38 Vivo Energy Uganda Netherlands Oil, Gas & Fuels 39 Toyota Uganda

Limited Japan Automotive

40 The Jubilee Insurance Co Ltd Kenya Insurance

A few observations are in order.

- The list is a good indication of the almost dominant presence of foreign private companies in Uganda. Indeed, some companies listed as ‘Ugandan’ could, in fact, be foreign owned and controlled – such as British American Tobacco (BAT), which was founded in 1902 and is a leading British company that operates in more than 200 countries.²²³
- The list released by the President gives the amount of taxes the companies paid in 2016 (which I have not put in the above table), but in my view the companies probably owe Uganda much more than the figures indicate. We know that these companies, especially multinationals, employ smart accounting firms such as Deloitte, Ernest and Young, and KPMG who manipulate figures to enable their clients to pay as little tax as possible. This is called ‘massaging the figures’.²²⁴ As well as hiding the true income the companies earn, they also manipulate figures of imports and exports overpricing imports and underpricing exports which enable them to earn a lot of profit at the cost of Uganda. This is called ‘transfer mispricing’.²²⁵
- Going beyond accounting, if one analyses the real economy – that of production and exchange – it is beyond question that the bulk of production and exchange – it is beyond question that the bulk of the real wealth is created by the working people (peasant farmers and workers) which is appropriated by owners of capital (national as well as foreign). In order to appreciate this, we need to see through the smoke and mirrors created by the capitalist system.

²²³ <http://www.bat.com/group/sites/UK>

²²⁴ The business dictionary defines it as ‘processing and presenting accounting data in a manner that gives a misleading impression of a firm’s financial position, but falls just short of outright fraud’. See: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/massaging-the-figures.html>

²²⁵ See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transfer_mispricing

On 1 May, 2018, at NOTU Workers’ Day, President Museveni is reported to have said that he is one of the least paid employees, and yet he has never complained.²²⁶ What is significant, however, is that his ‘net worth’ is reported to be US\$ 4 billion.²²⁷

National budgeting: income and expenditure

The other side of taxes is the national budget on public expenditure. The figures are easily available from the ministry of finance. I will not go into it here; this is a complex system of balancing the demands of various ministries and local councils with the available income. However, I will make the following recommendations as part of the Alternative Vision 2040.

One, the taxation system should aim towards national financial selfreliance. Uganda creates enough wealth to enable this to happen. We need some experts to work on how this can be done.

Two, prioritise public expenditure on infrastructural projects (such as roads and energy) in order to facilitate industrialisation. Three, at all cost avoid foreign debt. In the 2017/18 budget Shs 725.6 billion will be spent on interest on external debt, which is about 12 per cent of the budget, more than what is allocated to key sectors such as education, health, and agriculture.

Four, drastically cut down on military expenditure, and spend money on the provision of social services to the common people – such as food and water, housing, education, health and sanitation. Here I would give priority to education. Parents make enormous sacrifices in order that their children get education. Education is the ladder for future generations to earn a dignified place in society.

226 [https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1476726/paid-employeesmuseveni]

227 [<https://constative.com/celebrity/yoweri-museveni-net-worth-and-biography>]-

The ecological question

Confusing wealth with value

The first thing is to acknowledge the problem as real. It was not acknowledged for a long time because of the logic of capital accumulation. Marx, using the distinction between ‘value’ and ‘wealth’, had already seen the problem as early as the 1860s when he said that capitalist accumulation rests on: one, the exploitation of labour; and two on the exploitation of natural resources.

Political ecology was first founded by the European political left. Then the 'centre left' and the 'green' movements took over and created 'Green' parties. The Stockholm Conference of 1972 was the first serious attempt to put the environment on the agenda. However, the world has not moved much since then – now nearly past half a century. At the latest COP21 UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in December 2015, President Trump withdrew the United States from the Agreement on climate change.

'Green capitalism' is the current mantra. Free trade economists, using cost/benefit analysis, consider the 'ecological cost' as 'externalities', and the UN has fallen for this bogus concept. It has invented a new concept called 'carbon credits'. If a corporation's 'carbon footprint' is too heavy, it can buy 'carbon credits' in the open market where the countries that have light 'footprints' can redeem their under-utilised carbon by selling the balance in the market. The accounting method of cost/benefit analysis ignores the 'wealth' that is stored in, for example, forests with exchange value or market price, thus arriving at a 'fair price' for carbon credits.

Global corporations have thus gone on opening up new lands (including in Uganda) in their destructive quest for profit.

What should Uganda do?

Here are my suggestions:

1. Continue with the principled position that nature is not there to earn profit for the corporations.
2. Refuse to sell land and forests to corporations, even as 'carbon credits'. We have seen that this has led not only to the destruction of forests but also displacement of the common people from their lands.
3. If Uganda has accumulated 'carbon credits', these should be swapped with the purchase of needed technology from outside for rural development.

Towards East African Integration and African Unity

A large regional group with great potential

When Amin came to power and began his rule of terror and torture, thousands of Ugandans fled from the country, and the first countries that

welcomed them were Kenya and Tanzania. Some fled farther afield, but it was the historical closeness of Uganda with its two neighbours that made Kenya and Tanzania the chosen countries to take refuge. In 1978 after Amin invaded Tanzania, the latter fought back and helped free Uganda. It is this history that makes the cause of East African integration bigger than just a shared economy.

In 2009 Rwanda and Burundi joined the East African Community (EAC), and the following year the EAC created a common market enabling free movement of people, goods and capital. The five countries share a common East African passport to enable free movement of people. In 2013, members signed a protocol to enter into a monetary union by 2023. In 2016 South Sudan officially joined the EAC. With a combined population of about 170 million, it is one of the largest regional groupings in Africa.

The biggest economic threat to the EAC comes from the European Union's unrelenting efforts to get East Africa to sign the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU.

EAC and the European Union

Following decolonisation, Europe has continued to maintain its economic stronghold in East Africa. This went through several phases – from the Yaoundé Agreement signed in 1963 to the ongoing negotiations under the Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000. The Agreement is supposed to be finalised soon for it to come into operation by 2020.²²⁸

The Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (*SEATINI*) has carried out a systematic analysis of the consequences of signing the EPA, and in general, of extensive liberalization. Here I summarise some of the main points.

1. Loss of revenue: The EPA will result into revenue shortfalls estimated at US \$ 32,490,659 for Tanzania; \$ 9,458,170 for Uganda; \$ 5,622,946 for Rwanda; \$ 107,281,328 for Kenya and \$ 7,664,911 for Burundi. This will have serious implications on the EAC partner states' ability to mobilize resources for their development. It would lead to EAC's continued reliance on aid and hence increased indebtedness estimated by the IMF (as a

proportion of GDP) to be 55.4% for Kenya, 42.4% for Tanzania, 41.5% for Rwanda and 37.9% for Uganda.

2. EAC Industrialisation at risk: The majority of EAC partner states currently produce and export on 983 tariff lines. If the EPA is implemented, 335 products would be protected in the EPA's 'sensitive list', but 648 tariff lines would be made duty-free. In other words, the existing industries on these 648 tariff lines would have to compete with EU's imports without tariff protection. This would jeopardise EAC's existing local industries and the development of new and infant industries.

3. EAC Agricultural production at risk: The EAC economies will be more exposed to EU's dumping of subsidised agricultural products. The 82.6% liberalization under the EPA will affect Uganda's agriculture including key starch products, such as maize, potato and manioc (cassava). Domestic starch manufactures, for example, would have to compete with high quality goods from Europe.

228 For a detailed analysis of the EAC-EU relations, See: Tandon, Trade is War, chapter 3

4. Undermining South-South Cooperation: Article 15 of the EACEU EPA obliges the EAC to extend to the EU any more favourable treatment resulting from a preferential trade agreement with other countries. This will not only circumscribe the EAC's external trade relations but will also undermine the prospects of SouthSouth trade which the EAC is aspiring to promote. In addition, the clause is contrary to the spirit of the WTO's Enabling Clause that promotes Special and Differential Treatment for developing countries and South- South cooperation.

5. Threatening of regional integration in Africa: There are parallel ongoing regional integration processes in Africa under various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as the EACSADC-COMESA Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), and the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA). These efforts would be compromised since African countries might end up granting more favourable treatment to a number of EU-originating imports, than to similar African products originating within Africa.

The European Commission is using all kinds of pressure tactics – including threats, lure of ‘aid’, fake news, and divisive tactics – to get the EPA signed. For example, just prior to the EAC Summit on 8 September 2016 to discuss whether to sign the EPA, a Kenyan newspaper (the *East African*), reported that on 1 September Kenya and Rwanda had already signed the EPA.²²⁹ The next day, the same paper reported that Uganda’s trade minister Amelia Kyambadde said the government was ready to sign the deal ‘irrespective of whether all the other regional countries are on board or not’.²³⁰ However, as at the time of writing this, Uganda had not yet signed the agreement. If Kenya and Rwanda had indeed signed the agreement, it would be contrary to the Cotonou provision that the EAC could sign the EPA only as a regional body.

²²⁹ The business dictionary defines it as ‘processing and presenting accounting data in a manner that gives a misleading impression of a firm’s financial position, but falls just short of outright fraud’. See: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/massaging-the-figures.html>

²³⁰ The East African, September 2, 2016. Report by Dorothy Nakaweesi

Paradoxically, it is the EU which is divided, and may be on the verge of collapse after BREXIT is followed by other countries (especially in Central Europe) to move out of the EU. Indeed, the European Commission is desperate to get the EAC to sign the EPA. After Brexit, the EAC countries might have to review their relationship with the EU, and not just the EPA.²³¹

Uganda and the African Union

The African Union is the embodiment of the wish of its founders – among them Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Milton Obote and Muammar Gaddafi – for Africa to be a fully liberated and united continent. Nkrumah, Obote and Gaddafi were in favour of a rapid dissolution of the colonially created boundaries and for integrating into the United States of Africa, just like the United States of America was created out of the thirteen colonies. In theory, I would support this, but the American and African situations are not comparable. I would prefer Nyerere’s advice in favour of a phased regionalist road to creating the Union. In 1980 the AU adopted the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), also endorsed in the 1991 Abuja Treaty. It was an African challenge to the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) imposed on Africa by the IMF and the World Bank. In the event, however, largely because of weakness of African leaders, the LPA was sabotaged by the 1981

World Bank's Berg report which forcefully argued for Africa to carry on with SAPs, if Africa wanted aid and investments from the Bank and the 'donor' community.

At the July 2007 AU summit in Accra, Ghana, the member countries adopted a resolution to complete the 'African Union project'. The resolution also emphasised the 'importance of involving the African peoples, including Africans in the Diaspora, in the processes leading to the formation of the Union Government.' In my view, this adds strength to not only unite Africa but also give recognition to the enormous contribution that Diasporan Africans have made to Africa in word and deed.

231 For a more detailed analysis, see Tandon, 'Brexit and the future of EPA', Pambazuka News, July, 07, 2016. <https://www.pambazuka.org/economics/brexitand-future-epa>

Towards creating a Continental Free Trade Area

At the January, 2012 AU Summit, the Heads of States decided 'to establish the Continental Free Trade Area by 2017, in an attempt to fast-track the continental trade integration process as set out in the 1991 Abuja Treaty'. It is aimed at creating 'a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Customs Union. It will also expand intra-African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation and instruments across the regions and across Africa in general. The CFTA is also expected to enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through scaling up production, continental market access and better allocation of resources'.

This is all fine. But we have known from our past experience that these declarations remain just declarations, and there is rarely a strong follow-up action. The 2012 declaration had set out a specific timetable: '*Full negotiations to this end were launched in January 2015 and were expected to come to a conclusion by June 2017.*' The deadline has already passed.

In April 2016, The Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI) and Third World Network (TWN – Africa, based in Accra), in partnership with Regions Refocus of Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and funding from Friedrich-EbertStiftung, organised a three-day

meeting in Kampala called '*Towards an Equitable and Transformative Continental Free Trade Area: A Heterodox and Feminist Approach*'. About 25 academics, trade justice activists, feminist and youth organizers, and policy makers were invited to help develop concrete policy proposals to guide the CFTA negotiations towards structural economic transformation. It was an intensive and inclusive exercise, ending on the last day with an open public discussion. The outcome of the symposium was publicised and conveyed to the AU Secretariat.

QUESTIONS

1. What can we learn from revolutionary struggles from other parts of the global South? What is the difference between the Cuban revolution under Fidel Castro in 1964-65, and the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela under Hugo Chávez and now (2016 onwards) under Nicolás Maduro?
2. During resistance against British occupation, King Kabarega of Bunyoro fought a guerrilla war (1891-1899) joined by his erstwhile enemy, King Muwanga of Buganda. During the Second World War Mao, the leader of the Communist Party in China, made an alliance with his erstwhile enemy, the Kuomintang, to fight against Japanese occupation. From these two historical experiences what lessons do we draw for our struggle today?
3. The 2040 Uganda's vision is endorsed by President Museveni. Who are the 'experts' that drafted this 'vision'? Was it debated in the parliament? Was it discussed in the media and among Uganda's own intelligentsia? If not, why not?
4. Define 'liberal democracy' and the 'New Democratic Revolution'. What is the difference?
5. Define 'comprador'. The comprador class in Uganda is small, but it is significant enough to run errands for imperialism. The bulk of our state officials are nationalist; they do dare to challenge the ruling orthodoxy of 'free trade', but they are simply overruled by our political leaders. What strategy would you suggest to counter the compradors?

6. In his *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, Museveni, writes: ‘By 1966 ... the dominant economic interests in Uganda were imperialist ... Obote was creating artificial divisions among the people... by emphasising internal differences while neglecting to address the contradictions between the country’s national interests on the one hand, and those of imperialism on the other. Without national unity, the different petty bourgeois factions ... were all competing for what were in effect imperialist favours. This relegated the evolution of a national strategy for disengaging from imperialism to the sidelines’. Comment on the relevance of this in present day Uganda.

7. In his *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, Museveni writes: ‘The overcentralisation of power in the 1960s was another major problem’. In the first few years in power, President Museveni decentralised the power structure, but we are back to overcentralisation of power. Do you agree? If you do, explain why this has happened?

8. The neo-colonial state is a contested site between the empire and nationalist forces. The resolution of the contradictions among petty bourgeoisie is no longer possible under ‘normal’ democratic processes. The only way forward is a new democratic revolution led by the working classes. Do you agree, and if so, why?

9. Uganda needs not the IMF-engineered ‘Vision 2040’ but an alternative model that delinks the economy from globalisation in stages, and relinks with the global system when Uganda is strong. What are your views on this proposition, and explain why?

10. In my ‘Ending Aid Dependence’, I have suggested seven steps to get out of the ‘aid dependent syndrome’. What are these?

11. In Uganda, the first trade union, the Uganda African Motor Drivers’ Association, was registered in 1939. In 1945 and again in 1948 the workers rioted to demand increased wages and improvement in their work conditions joined by peasants led by the Bana ba Kintu. At the heart of the agitation were not only economic but also democratic rights that the British had suppressed. What is the role of trade unions and peasant movements in present-day Uganda?

12. In his semi-autobiographical book, *Advancing the Ugandan Economy: A Personal Account*, Ezra Sabiti Suruma says: 'In the future, the law should be amended so that the central bank is more specifically answerable to the minister of finance, the president, or parliament or to some other public body.' Do you agree? If so, why?

13. The government should drastically cut down on military expenditure, and spend money on the provision of social services to the common people. Do you agree? Or would you say that national security trumps over the provision of social services?

14. Uganda should not sign the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union. Why not?

CHAPTER TWELVE

Some Concluding Thoughts

‘When your strategy is deep and far-reaching you can win before you even fight. It is best to win a battle without having to fight; a victorious army first wins and then seeks battle’. *Sun Tzu*

Question of Strategy Tactics and Leadership

The Art of War

In his classic *The Art of War* the Chinese sage and military strategist Sun Tzu (544-496 BC) gave timeless advice on how to fight an adversary far superior in strength to your own. He talks about nine kinds of terrain in fighting wars, including guerrilla wars. I have discussed these in my *Trade is War*. But three of his more general prescriptions I find most challenging. I have adapted Tzu’s wisdom and our experience in Uganda to three basic principles or guidelines.

1. Know what your vision is for the future.
2. Those who do not know the plans of the adversary cannot prepare a winning strategy.
3. When your strategy is deep and far-reaching you can win before you even fight. It is best to win a battle without having to fight; a victorious army first wins and then seeks battle.

We have already gone in considerable detail in proposing an Alternative 2040 vision to the vision crafted for Uganda by the IMF/ World Bank duo. So we come to the second guideline.

Know the adversary and the strategy to defeat it

From the evidence we have it is clear that Uganda is still a neo-colony of the empire; it is still subject to the laws of multilateral imperialism exercised through the agencies of the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. The Vision 2040 for Uganda is their creation, not a democratic creation of the common people of Uganda.

How then do we prepare ourselves for a ‘winning strategy’ to defeat the empire? We do so by continuing the struggle for our national self-determination. The ‘national question’ (see chapter 2) is not yet resolved. And yet, our neo-colonial condition is at a heightened level of contradictions between Imperialism and the people. The empire is still a reality, but it is not having an easy time. It has to rule Uganda indirectly through its comprador and state agents. Furthermore, political independence creates an opening, a space, for the people to take the new democratic revolution one step further to achieving socialism. That goal of socialism was set in long time ago – at the 1964 UPC Gulu conference by the youth wing, led by Kakonge. It was reaffirmed by Obote in his ‘Common Man’s Charter’, and although the NRM does not mention socialism in its original ‘Ten Points Programme’, we know that a significant leadership of the NRM subscribes to the principles and values of socialism. A socialist revolution with justice for the common people is a long term vision, but that does not mean that nothing can be done in the immediate to short term to raise popular consciousness and give a platform to those who have a different perspective from that projected by the government lured by the so-called ‘development aid’.

Let us now go to the third guideline: ‘When your strategy is deep and far-reaching you can win before you even fight. It is best to win a battle without having to fight; a victorious army first wins and then seeks battle’.

Here we need to spend more time to reflect and strategise.

Resolving secondary contradictions among the people The first, and the main, aspect of this strategy is to unify the nation and learn from Uganda’s past leaders such as I K Musazi the ways of *resolving secondary contradictions among the people*. Differences in religion, region, language, and cultural practices are a natural part of the social map of any nation, and these, actually, enrich the nation. These differences become problematic when they divide the people and create an opening for the empire to divide and rule Uganda. This is what happened just before independence when new parties – UPC, DP, KY – emerged. They played on the ‘secondary contradictions’ among the people – based on ethnicity, region, religion, and language.

These secondary contradictions have fragmented Ugandan nationalism to this day. For a short while, at the Moshi Conference in March 1979, these

differences amongst us were put aside in what came to be known as the '*Moshi Spirit*', but they were still lying under the surface and they re-emerged. These secondary contradictions cannot be taken lightly; they must be faced even as we, collectively, face the challenge of imperialism. During his guerrilla days Museveni had described imperialism as the main enemy, denouncing Obote for 'emphasising internal differences while neglecting to address the contradictions between the country's national interests on the one hand, and those of imperialism on the other'.

Win the battle without having to fight a war

We must know from Uganda's 50 years of independence that the battle against the empire is a long and protracted struggle. It is an epochal struggle that began with the Russian Revolution in 1917, if not even earlier. It is not a one-day wonder. When we face a long protracted struggle the question of ends and means comes to the fore. Do ends justify the means? Does the quest for independence justify violence?

My own study of history teaches me that it is the poor and the weak that end up paying the price of violence. Look at Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan – even Uganda. I agree that Idi Amin could not have been ousted without Tanzania taking up arms to fight a war that Amin started. But Nyerere used diplomacy and tactical alliances with the people of Uganda who had organised themselves to fight Amin. So the question of ends and means is a complex question. Leaders like Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nyerere were practicing politicians as well as deeply humanist.

The Dar es Salaam debates had provided indispensable and rich insights in shaping the general thinking, alliance strategies, and tactics used by the UNLF in its formative years. After the May 1980 military coup, the UNLF-AD took to the mountains to fight a guerrilla war, but soon discovered that the masses were not ready. The UNLF-AD might have captured state power, but it would not have translated into getting the people out of poverty. The objective conditions for revolution in Uganda had matured long ago, but the consciousness of the people – bogged down with the struggle for daily survival – had not caught up with the demands of revolution - like the masses did in Russia, China, and Cuba.

Vanguard party, leadership and training of cadres

Uganda is missing a vanguard party rooted among the people. This remains a challenge for the left in Uganda. The beginning of such a party was killed at the UPC Gulu conference in 1964. A Vanguard party has three functions:

1. To provide a clear ideology – in terms that we have analysed earlier;
2. To hold leaders to account not only to the stated ideology but also to the party members;
3. To train cadres.

The NRM's National Leadership Institute at Kyankwanzi is an effort in the right direction, but its ideology, its vision and its objectives (from what I can make out) are not clear, nor is its function of holding leaders to account. Definitely more work needs to be done at the level of ideology and accountability. This is an essential prerequisite for revolution.

Political space opened by the current geopolitical shift

Uganda in the middle of a system in deep structural crisis The West is in a state of denial that its system of production and trade is in the middle of a deep crisis, worse than the crisis of the 1930s. It is not a crisis that can be explained in the mainstream economic concept of 'cyclical' ups and downs of the economy. The crisis (as we explained in Chapter 6: 'Finance Capital and the Role of Transnationals') is structural and systemic.

On the other hand, policy makers in Uganda are in denial that this system which is structurally flawed is the root cause of the division of the people of Uganda between a tiny minority of the rich and the incomparably vast majority of the poor. They and their IMF experts talk in terms of 'increasing growth' as a measurement of Uganda's 'development'. This is 'fake economics'.

The transnational corporations show 'fake earnings' based on a collateralised bond bubble worth over \$555 trillion in a market that does not even exist for purposes of real trading. It is a purely speculative market whose equity value is not even one per cent of the bubble. In 2007 corporate equity bonds were worth \$3.5 trillion... today they are \$7 trillion, an amount equal to nearly 50% of the entire gross domestic product of the United States. And yet the bubble is worth nearly a hundred-fold. Those who are at the centre of this

financial madness (like for example, the Chairmen of the Board of Governors of the US Federal Reserve System) do not know how to get out of this crisis. So what do they do? They print money (deceptively called ‘quantitative easing’) to bail out the banks. Yes, they bail out the banks, not the people.

And it is this system in which the Ugandan financial system is embedded, a system graphically and critically analysed by Ezra Suruma in his *Advancing the Ugandan Economy: A Personal Account*. For his pains trying to reform the system and to make banking truly national, he was removed as head of the Uganda Commercial Bank. Uganda today is under stronger control of multilateral finance capital than at independence. Government should listen to Ezra Suruma’s advice and make the Central Bank answerable to the President and the Parliament and not to the IMF. I put it differently – i.e. the Central Bank should be nationalised.

I go further: Government should create an independent monetary system and currency. To start with, it should take the initiative and encourage the 20-member Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to restore the UAPTA (Unit of Account for Preferential Trade Area), which was created in 1988 to use in an institutional Clearance House to deal with the shortages of foreign currency among the PTA countries. The *UAPTA* was then equivalent to one Special Drawing Right of the IMF. Government should also initiate/ negotiate to re-create the PTA travellers’ cheques that enabled citizens of PTA countries to travel within the region without having to use foreign *currency*. (I used this facility myself when I lived in Zimbabwe).²³²

The western system is not only in dire economic crisis, but also political, crisis.

Political crisis of the western system

There used to be a group called G7 (consisting of the USA, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, and Canada) formed with the ostensible purpose of stabilising the global system. At one point it invited Russia to join it, making it G8. But this did not work out. In March 2014, the G7 declared that a meaningful discussion was currently not possible with Russia in the context of the G8. It held its 42nd G7 summit in Japan in May 2016. But in fact G20 is virtually dead.

232 For more details, see my paper: 'First Steps to creating the "Nilo Currency for Africa" presented at the Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, Senegal in June 2009'. In the paper I put forward a 10-point strategic program of action starting with the UAPTA as a beginner to then proceed to create 'the Nilo' which would be a continental currency managed by an institution of the African Union. <http://yashtandon.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/First-Steps-to-Creating-the-Nilocurrency-for-Africa.pdf>

G7 is now replaced by G20 – a concoction of the West in recognition of the fact that it must adjust itself to a new reality – that of Russia and the emerging countries of the South, especially the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). Germany held the presidency for 2017. On 12-13 June 2017, the German government organised a high-level conference in the historic city of Berlin where Africa was fragmented in 1885. The ostensible objective was to support private investment, sustainable infrastructure, and employment in African countries, as well as contribute to the AU Agenda 2063 – called the 'Compact with Africa'. In fact, its real purpose was to recover the economic and political ground that Europe and America have lost in Africa.²³³

China's challenge to the west

China is working on what it calls the '*I Tai I Lu*' project ('One Belt, One Road' project, a resurrection of the ancient Silk Road). It is a daring and ambitious project with two roads or routes; the landbased 'New Silk Road' and the 'Maritime Silk Road'. The former begins in Xi'an in central China, and then Central Asia to northern Iran before swinging west through Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. Istanbul is the gateway to Western Europe up to Germany. From Duisburg in Germany, it swings north to Rotterdam in the Netherlands, and then south to Venice – where it meets up with the equally ambitious Maritime Silk Road. The Maritime Silk Road will begin in Quanzhou in China heading south to Malaysia, the Malacca Strait, then west to India, Sri Lanka, then across the Indian Ocean to Kenya. From Nairobi, it goes north around the Horn of Africa, through the Red Sea into the Mediterranean, before meeting the land-based Silk Road in Venice.

233 For more details, see my paper: 'First Steps to creating the "Nilo Currency for Africa" presented at the Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, Senegal in June 2009'. In the paper I put forward a 10-point strategic program of action starting with the UAPTA as a beginner to then proceed to create 'the Nilo' which would be a continental currency managed by an institution of the African Union. <http://yashtandon.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/First-Steps-to-Creating-the-Nilocurrency-for-Africa.pdf>

This is only one aspect of the rise of China. China has deepened its relations with the countries of the South, and has presented a formidable counter to the

Western model. China has adopted capitalism, but has adapted it to its own needs and circumstances learning from over 3,000 years of history and the Maoist revolution. China has advised African countries to choose their own path to development. China now favours a free movement of goods and capital, but is very protective of its own industries and technology (in which it is fast catching up with the West), and careful about free movement of services. China talks about ‘economic globalisation’, not ‘neo-liberal globalisation’. At the 2017 Davos conference, President Xi Jinping delivered a well thought-through, clever speech, basically saying that China is not ready to take up world leadership, but it may be forced to do so because it was clear that the United States and Europe do not have the material and moral capacity to lead any more.²³⁴

The end of History and Africa’s future

In his *End of History and the Last Man* (1992), Francis Fukuyama celebrated the victory of western liberal democracy as ‘the final form’ of human governance, and therefore ‘the end of humanity’s ideological evolution.’²³⁵ His Eurocentric view that ‘The EU’s attempt to transcend sovereignty and traditional power politics by establishing a transnational rule of law is much more in line with a ‘post-historical’ world’²³⁶ has proven wrong. Europe is not only following ‘traditional power politics’ but is also about to fragment, post-Brexit. Europe is no model for the future. Contrary to what most people think (or believe), the so-called Western or capitalist civilization is not everlasting. In fact, what is coming to an end – not immediately but in the foreseeable future – is this civilization’s callous exploitation of African labour from the time of the slave trade to today. Neo-colonialism is alive today, but not for long.

²³⁴ For President Xi’s speech to Davos in full see: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/full-text-of-xi-jinping-keynote-at-the-world-economic-forum>

²³⁵ Fukuyama, Francis (1992). *The End of History and the Last Man*. Free Press

²³⁶ Fukuyama, Francis, ‘The history at the end of history’, *The Guardian*, 3 April, 2007

Taking stock

So let us take stock where we from Africa fit into this emerging reality against the background of a collapsing empire and an emergent new world with all its perils and promises. The past is not dead ground, and to traverse it is not a sterile exercise. The challenges lie here and now. For Africa, the new

geopolitics opens up opportunities to counter the hegemonic empire. I must add, however, that it is still early days to predict how these new dynamics will shape Uganda's future. Much depends on how the Ugandan elite are linked with the West and with China and Russia and how they use the contradictions between themselves to leverage Uganda's interests.

Can the Prince of '*Sowing the Mustard Seed*' rise up to the challenge? Museveni the person as a leader

If I am a bit personal here, it is for a reason. Generally, I do not believe in the 19th century Thomas Carlyle's famous theory called

'The Great Man theory' of history. It holds that history moves because of 'great men' who possess personal charisma, intelligence, wisdom, and political skill. I've known Yoweri Museveni for nearly four decades, and I believe that he has these qualities. And I am not the only one. However, I think that real greatness lies in providing a visionary leadership to the masses of the common people who are the real makers of history.

I had read *Sowing the Mustard Seed* when it first came out in 1997. Whilst writing this book, I read it again – more than once – and in chapter 8 above I have quoted from the book at some length. I have also interacted with him on several occasions; the last one was during the July-August 2016 Kyankwanzi retreat of the new cabinet sworn in after the January 2016 elections. I had addressed the meeting on August 2 - the last day - which ended with a discussion on whether or not Uganda should sign the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union, which I strongly opposed.

I have come to the conclusion that Museveni still retains the qualities of charisma and political skills, but the 'Prince' of yonder years has changed from an 'idealist' to a 'realist'. Earlier I had quoted James Nkuubi on his assessment of the NRM.

The level of repression – the military lockdown; attacks on innocent bystanders caught up in legitimate protests, and even the physical assaults against the Media – indicate that the regime was determined to leave no stone unturned in order to retain power. It has left the realm of idealism and embraced political realism and resorted to Machiavellian tactics and strategies.

I would not go so far as to describe Museveni as the ‘Prince of Machiavelli’ who rules by creating fear among the people – though he does possess some of those qualities – because I am persuaded (or I would like to believe) that he is still an idealist. He wants to see a humane, democratic, Uganda. And that is why earlier I had asked the question: ‘What has gone wrong? Is it the person or the system? Is it up to him, or is it now beyond his grasp? Can Museveni return to being the original prince of *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, or has the system become so embedded in the political culture of the regime – and the dynamics of global politics – that there is no turning back? Is there any hope for the army to return to the principles set out by Museveni during the guerrilla war?’

NRM’s Manifesto: 2016 - 2021

I quote some key passages from NRM’s fifth Manifesto to the nation that President Museveni presented on the eve of the 2016 presidential elections: The objective is to make Uganda a middle-income country

The 1996 Manifesto had ‘*Tackling the Tasks Ahead*’ as the theme, the one of 2001 was ‘*Consolidating the achievements*’, the 2006 had ‘*Prosperity for All*’, while the 2011 Manifesto had ‘*Prosperity for All: Better Service Delivery and Job-Creation*’. In the 2016 Manifesto, the central theme and message is ‘*Taking Uganda to Modernity through Job-creation and Inclusive Development*’. This is what President Museveni said: ‘I have great pleasure to now present the 2016 NRM Manifesto, whose aspirations are to take Uganda to a competitive middle-income country from a predominantly low-income society.’

The NRM, the 2016 Manifesto says, can provide vision and leadership.

Uganda today has a more robust foundation than ever before. Backward leadership that lacks vision and ideology is now a thing of the past.

It went on to say that the NRM is the principal guarantor of vision 2040.

We consider NRM to be the trustee and principal guarantor of vision 2040. We want to make Uganda Africa’s gateway. Our manifesto sets out priority areas of focus, which include Strengthening Security, Good Governance and Democracy, Consolidating Growth, Employment and Macro-economic

stability; Agriculture, Industry, Tourism, Human Capital Development; Health, Infrastructure Development for Competitiveness, Trade, Sustainable harnessing of Natural Resources, Public and Private Sector Institutional Development, and International and Regional Cooperation.

Some highlights from the Alternative 2040 Vision

My honest view is that this, like all previous manifestos, is simply an electoral campaigning strategy, and has neither leadership nor vision. Here are my reasons:

1. Our analysis presented in Part Two of the book – *The Current Realities* – tells a sad story (a very depressing story) of the Ugandan ‘wretched of the earth’ (to use a phrase coined by Frantz Fanon in his 1961 book of the same title). Nothing has changed in the lives of the common people of Uganda.
2. NRM’s Ten point Program (1981 to 1986) was far more progressive than the 2016-21 Manifesto.
3. The 2040 vision was engineered (I use this word deliberately) by the neoliberal ideologists of the IMF and the World Bank. It does not take much to conclude that it is absolutely impossible to attain a competitive middle-income country status under this program.
4. The economy, in some ways, is worse than it was in the 1970s. Uganda is deindustrialised and now also deagriculturised, and has become heavily dependent on the so-called ‘development aid’ and trying to achieve export-competitiveness.
5. The common people are rendered powerless. There can be no democratic dispensation as long as the empire dictates the terms of Uganda’s integration into a globalised economy.

Some highlights from the Alternative 2040 Vision we propose.

1. Drastically cut down on military expenditure, and spend money on the provision of social services to the common people - such as food and water, housing, education, health and sanitation. Prioritise education to enable future generations to live a life of dignity.
2. Resist imperialism through nonviolent activist means. Violence only adds another pretext for the oppressors to increase its own violence at the cost of

the ordinary people.

3. Work out a strategic five-year plan to decouple Uganda from the exploitative and oppressive system of neoliberal capitalist predation.
4. Resolve secondary contradictions among the people and unite the people by the model set by, among others, I K Musazi.
5. Address the unresolved National Question and questions of social injustice by working towards two principal ideologies: nationalism and socialism, following John Kakonge and Dani Wadada Nabudere. Those efforts failed for although the material conditions are ripe for revolution in Uganda, the people's consciousness is still lagging behind.
6. Address the land and the agrarian question as of the highest priority. Prioritise public expenditure on infrastructural projects (such as roads and energy) in order to facilitate industrialisation and integrate industry and agriculture. Government policy has placed agriculture above the lives of peasants. Effectively, it is 'Kulima Kwanza' not, as it should be, 'Mkulima Kwanza'.
7. Encourage the working classes to organise their own trade unions and co-operatives independent of the state.
8. On the domain of international trade, and Uganda's membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the WTO is in effect an instrument of the big capitalist players (the US, Europe and Japan), and through them, their agricultural mega-corporations. The third world generally has had a raw deal under WTO's rules of competition in an open 'free trade' market on agriculture, and among those who suffer most are small peasant producers, especially women. The current Uganda representative who negotiates on the agriculture (as on all issues) has been taking a lead on this issue, backed by many countries from the Third World. However, it would appear that the Government has a closer ear to the IMF than to its own representative at the WTO.
9. Nationalise the Central Bank to make it accountable to the Parliament and not to the IMF, and create a national-regionalcontinental currency that is

independent of the US dollar or any other external currency systems.

10. Develop a taxation system that aims towards national financial self-reliance. Uganda creates enough wealth to enable this to happen.

11. Address the ecological question. Be aware of falling into the trap of ‘Green Capitalism’. Nature is not there to earn profit for the corporations. Protect nature and draw from it what is needed to satisfy society’s needs.

QUESTIONS

Can the Prince of *Sowing the Mustard Seed* rise up to the challenges Uganda faces today?

EPILOGUE

Nothing stays the same. Everything is in constant flux. Since the original manuscript was completed in mid-2018, things have changed in Uganda and its environment. These are significant enough to justify this Epilogue. However, there are only two very important developments on which I focus here.

1. Resistance against the regime and the rise of the Bobi Wine forces

2. The appearance of two books on Uganda:

Apollo N Makubuya (2018), *Protection, Patronage, or Plunder? Imperial Machinations* and (B) *Uganda’s Struggle for Independence*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Frederick Juuko and Sam Tindifa (2018), *A People’s Dialogue: Political Settlements in Uganda and The Quest for a National Conference*, Kampala, Fountain Publishers.

The rise of Robert Kyagulanyi (Bobi Wine), in my view, is the most exciting change in the political landscape of Uganda. To this we will come later.

I will start with the books first.

Apollo N Makubuya, *Protection, Patronage, or Plunder?* I have made a detailed review of Makubuya's book.²³⁷ Here is a summary of my review. As the title suggests, Makubuya is stepping on one of the most complex and sensitive matters in the history of Uganda – the question of, as he puts it, (B)Uganda. With eloquence, passion, and astute scholarship, he makes a formidable case for treating the 'Buganda Question' not as a cultural but as a political issue.

237 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201812070460.html>

I agree with a lot of what Makubuya says, I agree with him that the British have used ethnicity as a means to divide and rule their vast empire, and of course Uganda is no exception. Above all, we agree that Uganda is still a neo-colonial state. Here is what Makubuya says: '... it is hoped that through this work, Africans in general and Ugandans in particular will come to understand more about the powerful forces of colonialism and neocolonialism.'²³⁸ And here our agreements end.

I make a distinction between the 'Buganda Question' and the 'National Question'. What Makubuya calls the Buganda Question is part of what I call the National Question. His use of the term 'neocolonialism' to describe present-day Uganda is accurate. It follows that neither Uganda nor Buganda are fully independent – they are 'neocolonies' still largely controlled by the Empire. *In other words, the 'Buganda Question' boils down, politically, to the 'National Question'*. The Baganda are going nowhere without making a common cause with the rest of Uganda to fight against imperialism and neo-colonialism.

However, Makubuya got distracted by secondary ethnic contradictions. The result is that he missed the importance of the strategic unity of all the peoples of Uganda (no matter what their secondary contradictions) to join forces against the principal enemy – namely the globalised Capitalist-Imperialist forces.

I cite some lessons from (B)Uganda's history. Before the colonisation of (B)Uganda by Britain, King Kabarega of Bunyoro and King Muwanga of Buganda were enemies and they fought battles. But when the British came they put aside their differences and joined forces until they were both exiled to the

Seychelles. The legacy left by Kabarega and Muwanga was later taken up by our nationalist leaders such as I K Musazi, Semakula Mulumba, John Kakonge, and Dani Wadada Nabudere all of whom put aside their ethnic and regional differences to fight against their principal enemy – the British.²³⁹ 238

Makubuya, p 18

239 See p 9 in the main text

We turn now to the second book.

Jjuuko and Tindifa, A People's Dialogue: Political Settlements in Uganda and The Quest for a National Conference.

This book proposes a 'National Conference' to resolve differences amongst Ugandans, addressing what I call the 'National Question'. [Henceforth, I shall refer to this report either as 'Quest for a National Conference Report' (QNCR) or 'Juuko-Tindifa Report'].

National Conference, National Dialogue and Political Settlements

The authors start with a '*Problem Statement*', namely, 'Uganda as a state is an artificial creation carved out of communities, which were states, nationalities or tribal societies. This artificial creation without linguistic or cultural attributes is not organic and has suppressed various identities of the people'. *The Problem Statement is also a challenge* – how to build a nation of Uganda whilst providing each of its diverse 'identities' a stake in the nation. After over 56 years of its existence as a sovereign state, this challenge still remains.

The book also clearly sets out its *objective*: 'To explore views on the necessity and desirability of a national dialogue in Uganda and the practical steps of achieving it.'

In order to 'explore views', the authors, in addition to a literature review, employ a 'qualitative' approach and carry out a fieldwork survey, and interview a cross-section of the people of Uganda from different perspectives – religious, secular, regional, gender – and arrive at the conclusion that the people want a National Dialogue and a Conference. The authors explain the difference between the two. This is very important.

A national dialogue and conference as forms of political settlements are two different concepts. Much as they both focus on the future, a national

*conference is a subset of the other. A national conference may be a one-time activity for resolving conflicts, while a dialogue assumes continuity in preventing or resolving them as they emerge, breaking political controversies, and mitigating challenges of the past, present and future.*²⁴⁰

This is clear. While the conference is a one-time event; the dialogue is a continuous process. As an example, the book cites the 1979 Moshi Conference which gave birth to the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF).

In the above quote the authors have introduced a third concept – that of ‘*Political Settlements*’, and this, too, is very important. What are these? These are processes of dialogue to bring about ‘*a common understanding or agreement on the balance and distribution of power, resources and wealth at all levels*’.²⁴¹

Let us now get down to some concrete issues.

Some concrete issues against a broad geopolitical context Juuko and Tindifa express mainly the views of the people they have interviewed and from fieldwork survey, but they also express what they have learnt from literature survey, and make their own assessment.

The authors put their fingers on what I regard as a most profound statement:

*... market fundamentalism of the Washington Consensus presents an existential threat to the Ugandan state itself and opens up all issues on the future of Uganda.*²⁴²

What can be more challenging than something that poses an existential threat to the Ugandan state itself?

This leads them to the conclusion that the national conference in Uganda today has to be examined in this specific historical conjuncture – the post-Cold War era of globalisation.

240 QNCR, p 12

241 Ibid, p 12

242 Ibid, p 118

This is what Juuko and Tindifa have to say on this ‘historical conjuncture’:

This (post-Cold War era of globalisation) manifests in neoliberalism, that is to say structural adjustment programmes; privatisation; the deprivation of social services and the unraveling of the post-colonial state, which increasingly becomes dysfunctional; institutional decay and the failing state; and, at another level, ‘the fight against terror’.

Respondents pointed to the Uganda crisis as part of the global crisis in the economic, social and political spheres. It was, however, indicated that Museveni does not seem to recognise this crisis because it has not yet manifested in outright violence, certainly not military violence.²⁴³

It was pointed out that ‘ although the Ugandan state appears to be strong, it is at the same time highly dysfunctional. There is very little room for compromise ...’ This calls for a national dialogue. The report says that there are people, however, who argue that there is no need for dialogue. Among their reasons are:

a) There is a democratic framework in Uganda. But this cannot work perfectly. Any shortcomings are not fundamental and will be corrected as democracy develops – which cannot happen overnight.

b) Elections are an important process in resolving disagreements.

c) Parliament is a forum in which discussion and resolution of issues can occur.

243 Ibid, p 119

f) The people generally have no capacity to engage meaningfully in national dialogue; they are ignorant and backward.²⁴⁴

The survey report says that most people they interviewed do not share this view.

The overwhelming majority of respondents do not share these views on the institutions and processes. They do not share the view that democracy is effectively practiced in Uganda. They believe that the system is fundamentally flawed and a deep crisis exists: the various institutions, such

*as parliament and the courts, have lost both their integrity and independence; such processes as elections and constitutional reviews have been appropriated and hijacked for undemocratic objectives; and the people have the potential to conduct and participate in national dialogue.*²⁴⁵

There appears to be a broad consensus that the present system is ‘fundamentally flawed’ and that although President Museveni has been in power for three decades, democracy is not effectively practiced.

Against the background of this broad global geo-political context, the respondents listed some specific issues on the processes, issues and principles:

*Apart from identifying specific issues that ought to be the subject of national dialogue, respondents insisted on two broad principles. One was that there ought to be no no-go areas and nothing should be swept under the carpet. The second, which is related to the first, is that the range of issues clearly indicates that the national dialogue cannot be confined to power-sharing or to constitutional issues only.*²⁴⁶

244 Ibid, p 122

245 Ibid

246 Ibid, p 130

Other more specific governance issues include: militarism; the presidency; devolution; empowerment and funding of political parties; the Public Order Management Act; a code of conduct for political parties; the failure to distinguish between the state and government; the separation of the ruling party from the state and the impartiality of state agencies in practice; corruption in public institutions; citizenship, including dual citizenship.

There are also issues such as culture; the role of the state; the unwarranted constitutional amendment of Article 244 of the Constitution, placing ownership of minerals with the government instead of with the citizens; the natural environment; the role of foreign capital, and its its compounded and generational effect on invaluable natural resources and land grabbing.

There is then the bigger issue that goes beyond Uganda, and that is the question of the East African Federation. Here they quote the late Dani Nabudere:

*.... 'Irrevocably' to dissolve existing colonial borders and constitute one single federated state with inviolable East African borders... Thus with the surrender of their sovereignty to the state, the communities will have the right to regroup across former colonial boundaries and determine whether they want to constitute cultural-linguistic states of their own which can enable them to enjoy self-determination and autonomy within their own states as members of the federal state, where they will all be citizens.*²⁴⁷

Principles, structures and sequential stages of the Conference and the Dialogue

The most important part – the real meat – of the Juuko-Tindifa report is summarized as follows.²⁴⁸

As observed above, the national dialogue is a process, not an event. It is not an easy process. The objective, at the end, is to attain a national consensus on the nation's future. It is far more complex than, for example, the current tortuous British debate on Brexit. Hence, the people of Uganda have to work especially hard to attain something that has evaded them for over half a century.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p 145

²⁴⁸ Ibid, pp 144-163

So first, let us look at the principles. I summarise these briefly:

1. The process should be inclusive. 'Every aspect of society, whether class, nationality, religion, gender, all interests, economic or otherwise, and all political stripes ought to be represented'.²⁴⁹
2. The agenda must be negotiated between all stake-holders – policy makers as well as those who are affected by these policies.
3. The national dialogue, since it is a process, must not be hurried. ['The Moshi Conference was clearly hurried and this was because of the urgency on the part of Tanzania for a cover for its war.'²⁵⁰]

4. The role of the facilitator/mediator should be to facilitate the debate, not to micro-manage the process.
5. Ugandans should finance the proceedings.
6. The outcome must be credible. A successful dialogue depends on its credibility.

Coming now to the structure of the dialogue, I quote from the study to score the importance of getting the 'structure' right.²⁵¹

'Dialogue should be in stages, starting from the grassroots to enable people's participation. This involves the stage of the people organising themselves around their interests, whether in the form of clans, nationalities, production, economic organisation, religious bodies, trade unions, businesses, different professional bodies, organised groups, associations, geographical administrative units, etc.

249 Ibid, p 144

250 Ibid, p 151

251 Ibid, p 161

'Secondly, these organised groups should engage in dialogue within themselves and horizontally with other interests/groups. This should feed vertically into the national process of dialogue both in terms of ideas and participation. It is on this basis that a national conference, including its agenda and mechanisms, should then be organised by a national ad hoc committee.'

(Page 161)

And finally, the stages: The dialogue, the report says, should be in stages, starting from the grassroots to enable people's participation. 1. First stage: the organisation of various interests and groups (described above) into conscious agents.

2. Second stage: coordinating and networking various interests both horizontally and vertically into a national process.

The report talks later about a third stage – that of implementation, but to this we shall come later.

This summarises the essence of the Juuko-Tindifa report.

The Report commended

Let me end this part by saying that Juuko and Tindifa and the agency that

commissioned the survey - *Kituo Cha Katiba* - and its Executive Director, Edith Kibalama, should be commended on completing what I would regard as the essential process of consultation of this long and difficult journey. Very few countries in Africa have gone through such an exercise. In Kenya, for example, the people were actively engaged in the formulation of the 2010 national Constitution. This was the closest they came to a political debate. But some important questions could not be asked because of the terms of reference of the Constitution Commission. For example, the very important issue of who owns Kenya was not part of the debate.²⁵²

The Juuko-Tindifa report is the best we have to work with at the moment. And I am especially keen that the younger generation, and the multitude of refugees who now make up a good number of people living within Uganda's borders take this report as their starting point for action.

252 See my 'Reflections on Kenya: Whose capital, Whose State', <https://www.pambazuka.org/democracy-governance/reflections-kenya-whose-capital-whosestate>

We come now to the most demanding part – the implementation of the report, as well as facing other challenges facing the nation. We shall first deal with these 'other challenges' and link these with the issue of implementation.

Resistance against the system and the rise of the Bobi Wine forces

The system is meeting with considerable resistance from the people, especially from the youth. We cannot deal with this matter adequately in an Epilogue. So I will focus on just a couple of issues.

Fragmentation of the country and a compromised Parliament I will first narrate my own experience. I have travelled extensively in the country, seeing things for myself and talking with the people. One matter that concerned a wide cross section of the people was (and still is) the 'decentralisation' of the country. In 2005, Uganda had 77 districts. These were sub-divided into 127; each district was further divided into counties and municipalities; and each county further divided into sub-counties.

In general, I support decentralisation mainly because I believe that the administrative decisions that affect the people at the grassroots level should be made at a level closest to the people. Also, the Uganda Government's decision to decentralise made sense – the rationale was to prevent resources

from being distributed primarily to towns which might not necessarily trickle down to lower levels.

But good intentions do not necessarily lead to good practice. The people I talked with complained that the trickle down did not take place. The District Councils had no resources. Most districts were impoverished. Indeed, the effect of decentralisation was quite the opposite of what might have been its stated objective. The resources were instead diverted to a massively bloated parliament with 426 MPs.²⁵³

Each MP takes Shs 15 million (US \$6,100) per month as basic salary. In addition there are all kinds of perks and allowances:

Subsistence allowance Shs. 4.5 m

Constituency allowance 3.8m

Extra constituency mileage 2.5m

Town running 1.0 m

Mobilisation allowance 5.4m

Gratuity 3.5 m

Not satisfied, the MPs keep on demanding more and more money.

The people vote the MPs who, once they enter the parliament, are compromised with money largess. The Uganda Parliament is a rubber stamp for the Government. Elections have really no value. Nonetheless, people stand in long queues waiting from dusk to dawn to vote hoping to change things. Alas! The history of the Uganda does not give any reason for hope for democracy in Uganda.

Marginalisation of workers and peasants since independence The body of my book deals extensively with people's resistance during various periods of their exploitation and oppression – during the period of colonisation, the colonial period, and the post-colonial period. I maintain that the 'post'-colonial is, in reality, 'neo'-colonial, and I have explained in great detail as to why Uganda is still under the domination of the Empire. Uganda has won its political independence, but over five decades down the road, it is still not independent in the economic domain.

It is against this background that I analysed the period under the UNLF (April 1979 to April 1980) when an audacious (I use this ²⁵³ The following figures are from: <https://answersafrica.com/latest-salaries-topugandan-politicians-revealed.html>

word deliberately) attempt was made to unite national forces against Imperialism. However, the task of rehabilitating the ruined economy with 'development aid' from mainly Britain, and the comprador forces within the country, were too strong to dislodge. Instead it was the UNLF government that was dislodged in 1979.

I also analysed the period under Museveni 'the idealist prince', and later Museveni 'the Prince of Machiavelli', and asked the question: What has gone wrong? Is it the person or the system? I observed that, on balance, it is the system and Museveni is a product of the system.

Continuing resistance by the peasants and workers

This is also treated extensively in the main text. The peasants had resisted the imposition of the colonial rule and fought against the appropriation of their lands. They formed cooperatives to handle production and marketing of so-called 'cash crops' like cotton and coffee. The workers too resisted but were forced to sell their labour by poll tax, among other coercive measures. In 1946, the peasants and workers united under the anti-colonial Bataka Party. They were also in the forefront of the independence struggle.

Then came the Lancaster House negotiations for independence. The negotiations were conducted mainly by the petty bourgeoisie fighting amongst themselves to take over the neocolonial-state. Over the years the workers and peasants were marginalised, and their conditions of life deteriorated. Today the unions are under the control of petty bourgeois leadership and the state.

I spent my childhood in Moroto, Karamoja, and it saddened me to learn that on 22 November 2018, at the Moroto district council session, an MP was assaulted. The attacker, Abura, complained that the electorate demands were not met, especially on land issues. Speaking from the Moroto Central Police Station cells, he accused the lawmakers of not honouring the promises MPs make to the electorate. It is the same story from Karimojong mine workers. Michael Lotita, 18, said it took him and a team of three others, working from early morning to late evening (may be for 10 hours daily) five days to fill a

huge truck with stones.²⁵⁴ They were each paid shs 7,000 per day – that is, \$ 1.87. That is about 20 US cents per hour. They have to do backbreaking toil for five hours to earn one dollar.

The Karamoja situation might be one of the worst, but in general this is true for the whole country. The voices of the workers and peasants, heard loud and clear during the phases of colonisation and the struggle for independence, are now drowned by the collective power of finance capital whose industrial and financial corporations rule the country through their local agents.

Resistance by opposition political parties

The Uganda Electoral Commission lists 29 registered political parties on its website.²⁵⁵ Some of the smaller parties such as, for example, the *People's Progressive Party* led by the veteran politician Jaberu Bidandi Ssali, and the *Uganda Socialist Green Party* led by Patricia Masembe Katasi cannot be ignored or slighted. They are the voices of significant political and social forces. However, a large part of the political discourse is conducted by the following three:

- The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC),
- The Democratic Party (DP), and
- The Uganda People's Congress (UPC).

In the main body of the book, I narrate the parts the above three parties played. And to bring the story up-to-date, I add the following:

The FDC is divided, one might even say, fragmented. Following the challenge to the leadership by Mugisha Muntu, there was a huge exodus of some of the leading personalities to the side of Muntu. The DP too is divided. On 12 January 2019 its president, Norbert Mao, threatened to expel errant DP members. He also said that the Luos of Uganda want to secede from Uganda and

²⁵⁴ See: *New Vision*, 30 August, 2018

²⁵⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_political_parties_in_Uganda

join their ethnic brothers in South Sudan. As for the UPC, it has a history of splittism going back to the 1964 Gulu Party Congress, which we have already

covered in the main text. Once a governing party, the UPC is now the smallest of the three and has practically no clout.

The rise of the Bobi Wine prodigy

In the midst of this chaotic scene emerges a new force. A former Kampala ghetto kid, born in 1982, emerges from the shadows with his music and wins elections in Kyaddondo East in Buganda as a Member of Parliament. MP Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, popularly known by Bobi Wine, goes on to sponsor candidates in other parts of Uganda who defeat their rivals from not only the FDC but also Museveni's NRM.

What is so attractive about Bobi Wine? One factor is that he appeals to the youth. Over 60 per cent of Ugandans are under the age of 30. He is an emblematic figure for the youth. Secondly, and this is even more important, his music and lyrics have potent and insightful political messages. Lyrical music is a powerful medium to mobilise people.

As the ancient Chinese philosopher, Confucius, said, the mind is roused by poetry, made steadfast by propriety, and perfected by music.²⁵⁶

I can speak about the power of poetry from personal experience: in the 1970s right through 1990s, when I was part of the underground movement fighting the dictatorships – first of Idi Amin, then of Obote and then Museveni – our fighters used lyrical songs to mobilise the combatants and the people – just as, ironically, Museveni too used during his guerrilla war against Obote.

Bobi Wine's song – *Ghetto* – was released in 2005 (then he was 23) when President Museveni was preparing for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (Chogm) – clearing away schools, streets and other buildings to 'beautify' Kampala and Entebbe, and providing cheap loans to city hotels to upgrade their standards. The song – *Ghetto* – denounced this carnage and corruption. It emboldened the youth across the country to begin to challenge the President and his corrupt Party and bureaucracy. In 2010 when fires were devastating schools and markets, Bobi Wine released *Ebibuuzo* taking the metaphor of the fire to equate it with the fire of inflation and high cost of living. The video featured pictures of the burnt Buddo dormitory, various riots, and malnourished children. Then in 2011 *Obululu* was released just before the 2011 elections. The message was politically astute, for he

called on Ugandans to stay united and not be divided by different political parties. *Time Bomb*, released in 2014, was targeted at corrupt officials, nepotism, unemployment and high costs of living. The song opens with:

256 Blyth, R H, 1981 *Haiku*, Tokyo, The Hokuseido Press, Vol.1, p 72

'Freedom comes to those who fight, not those who cry.'

It was not surprising, therefore, that the state security forces caught up with this young man singing fire and fury and arousing the youth. The drama began not in his constituency but in Arua in the north. On 8 June, 2018, MP Ibrahim Abiriga (NRM) was shot and killed near his home in Kawanda. His place was taken over by Kassiano Wadri (FDC) in August. During the by-election campaigns Museveni's lead car was damaged. Both Wadri and Bobi Wine were arrested, accused of treason, and they were allegedly tortured, but later granted bail. Bobi Wine flew to the United States for treatment and to recover from his torture. On 20 September, he returned. In the meantime, General David Muhoozi, head of Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF), had set up an inquiry into battering of journalists and civilians during what the media dubbed protests by the people as 'Bobi Wine riots' in Kampala. This was contested by Professor Fred Ssempebwa who argued that 'Civilians should be tried in proper civil courts'.²⁵⁷ In the wake of the hurricane of these events, a whirlwind of 'People Power' slogan gained momentum throughout the country and beyond.

257 https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1485973/lawyers-amendmentupdf-act

Bobi Wine continues to be a force to reckon, particularly as he captures the sentiments of the people.

On how to move forward

The main text of this book, *Common People's Uganda*, has two closing chapters: Chapter 11: 'Rebooting the Revolution in Uganda', and Chapter 12: 'Some Concluding Thoughts'. The chapters raise two main issues: the first is the bigger issue of goals of the revolution taking a long term perspective; and the second on the strategy and tactics of the revolution.

The book ends with the question: 'Can the Prince of Sowing the Mustard Seed rise up to the challenges Uganda faces today?' Needless to say, it is a rhetorical question. The preceding analysis has shown how President

Museveni has departed from his earlier vision to a more ‘realistic’ adjustment to the neo-colonial reality of Uganda. He is part of the oppressive system. Above all, the ‘2040 Vision’ of the NRM, I assess, is a product of this reality. I quote the relevant point again in order to provide a perspective for this Epilogue.

*The 2040 vision was engineered (I use this word deliberately) by the neoliberal ideologists of the IMF and the World Bank. It does not take much to conclude that it is absolutely impossible to attain a competitive middle-income country status under this program.*²⁵⁸

Uganda still faces the same reality. The institutions of the Empire – the IMF and the World Bank – dictate the terms of engagement with them, and thus effectively control the political economy of the nation.

258 See p 198

Hence this question: Is there anything we have analysed in this Epilogue that suggests that, may be, we are on the threshold of a genuine revolution? May be, there is light at the end of this tunnel? May be, the younger generation (the generation of Bobi Wine) is finally able to challenge the hegemony of the Empire?

May be ... because I have no answers to these questions. So in the following pages I examine how the proposal of holding a ‘National Conference’ put forward in the Juuko-Tindifa report (QNCR) might be taken a step further beyond where they stopped. The report ‘may not be perfect’, I argued above, ‘but it is the best we have at the moment. There is no need, in my view, for starting at point zero again’.

We come now to the most demanding part of the process - the implementation of the report, as well as facing other challenges facing the nation – such as those raised in the QNCR as well as, for example, by me during my travels across the country, and by Apollo Makubuya in his book.

What follows are my thoughts on how the process of implementation of the report might take some initial steps - based on my own experience and the guidelines set out in the Juuko-Tindifa Report.

Setting up a Steering Committee and agenda of the National Conference

A document does not implement itself. It has to be driven by a group of motivated people who understand its objectives and principles. Here I draw from the experience of the group that put together the Moshi Conference in 1979 which gave birth to the UNLF.²⁵⁹ Because of its continuing relevance, it is important to go back to those pages. I summarise that experience. Soon after Amin's invasion of Tanzania, a group of Ugandans in Dar es Salaam led by Nabudere formed the *Ad Hoc Committee for the Promotion of Unity among Ugandans* based on the principle of inclusion. The Ad Hoc Committee argued

259 See pp 36-45

against Obote, who wanted only the UPC to lead the process, and also against the Changombe Group (led by Mamdani) who argued that the process should exclude the 'reactionaries' - those who supported the Kabaka and the 'petty and commercial bourgeoisie'.

There was another group in Nairobi, the *Nairobi Discussion Group*, chaired by Tarsis Kabwegyere – who initiated the process by calling a meeting in Nairobi where I represented the *Ad Hoc Committee*. Kabwegyere and I were able to sway the meeting to our side. We argued that irrespective of our ideologies, we must bring together all Ugandan patriotic movements, including the 'monarchists'.²⁶⁰

This principle of inclusivity is echoed by the Juuko-Tindifa Report: 'Every aspect of society, whether class, nationality, religion, gender, all interests, economic or otherwise, and all political stripes ought to be represented.'²⁶¹ In the spirit of inclusivity then, Uganda will have to step out of its comfort zone and engage with the youth, the women, the voices who are disregarded or excluded, and listen carefully for the gems of innovation and solidarity for the way forward.

The first step, then, is the formation of a Steering Committee that would apply the principle of inclusion in initiating the Conference and setting its agenda. The question is: how is this Committee formed? Who elects or nominates its members? My advice is: Do not try to answer these questions, for you will be trapped in a vicious circle – who elects the group of people that then elects the Steering Committee? I would suggest that at this stage the Committee does

not have to represent any political party or social group. It has to be 'sufficiently like-minded' to share the broad objectives and the basic principles set out in the QNCR, which I have summarised above in six principles.²⁶²

I suggest that the Steering Committee could comprise of Edith Kibalama (*Kituo Cha Katiba's* Executive Director), Makubuya, Juuko and Tindifa who would then bring into the Committee four more distinguished Ugandans known for their integrity and patriotism (I believe that any group bigger than eight becomes a 'crowd'). The QNCR has already carried out a literature review, and a fieldwork survey interviewing a cross section of from all perspectives – religious, secular, regional, gender, etc.

260 Note that in Bobi Wine's song *Obululu* he had called on Ugandans to stay united and not be divided by different political parties. See page 17 above

261 p 144 of the Report

262 See p 7 above

The Committee should set out the agenda, the dates and the venue of the Conference, and nominate a facilitator whose role should be to facilitate the debate, not to micro-manage the process, in order that the final outcome is credible. As the QNCR says a successful dialogue depends on its credibility. And this depends on whether the dialogue responds to the concerns of the people.

The overwhelming majority of respondents believe that the system is 'fundamentally flawed' and in a deep crisis. The various institutions, such as the parliament and the courts, have lost both their integrity and independence. Such processes as elections and constitutional reviews have been appropriated and hijacked for undemocratic objectives. They pointed that, 'although the Ugandan state appears to be strong, it is at the same time highly dysfunctional. There is very little room for compromise.' Also raised were specific governance issues - militarism; the presidency; devolution; empowerment and funding of political parties; and so on.

This is the challenge for the Conference and for the nation to address. The challenge is also an opportunity.

QUESTIONS

1. Makubuya argues in his book *Protection, Patronage, or Plunder?* that the 'Buganda Question' is not a cultural but a political issue. If you were the Katikkiro of Buganda, what advice would you give to Kabaka Muwenda Mutebi II on how to move forward on this matter?
2. In their Report: *A People's Dialogue: Political Settlements in Uganda and The Quest for a National Conference (QFNC)*, Juuko and Tindifa argue that '... market fundamentalism of the Washington Consensus presents an existential threat to the Ugandan state itself'. Do you agree? Why? If not, why not?
3. The QFNC draws attention to two contending views on whether or not a Dialogue and a 'National Conference' are warranted in the contemporary situation Uganda. One view is that these are not necessary for, among other reasons, the 'Parliament is a forum in which discussion and resolution of issues can occur'. What is your view on this?
4. Would you agree that the post-2005 decentralisation of governance has weakened rather than strengthened grass-roots democracy in Uganda?
5. The Members of Parliament (MPs) deserve the financial benefits they get; they do an enormous amount of work for their constituents and to keep the country together. Discuss.
6. What are your views on the Bobi Wine phenomenon? Is his impact likely to be short-lived or lasting?
7. Bobby Wine's *Time Bomb*, opens with: '*Freedom comes to those who fight, not those who cry.*' Discuss.
8. If you were approached to sit on the Steering Committee to implement the QNCR's proposal to organise a conference what would be your priorities to guide the Committee to a positive outcome for Uganda's future?

APPENDIX 1



STATE HOUSE
ENTEBBE
UGANDA

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

1st October, 1969.

Dr. Y. Tandon,
Department of Political Science,
Makerere University College,
KAMPALA.

Dear Dr. Tandon,

Herewith the second draft. The document is not going to be lengthy. Indeed, apart from a few considerations and re-editing of the attached, plus a decision on whether or not to include a schedule of programmes, perhaps only five more pages need to be included.

I send you the attached -

(1) for criticism of the format and the content;

and

(2) to seek suggestions both on specific paragraphs and substantial matters which could improve upon the document and indicate in no uncertain terms the direction and the nature of this move to the Left.

It is now proposed that the document be submitted to the U.P.C. National Council on Saturday. I regret that you have not got much time for the above, but would value whatever is possible within the time available. I will be discussing the whole document tomorrow evening with officials of the Party.

This document is being drafted under a shadow: the shadow of the Arusha Declaration. You will observe that Socialism is very prominent in the Arusha Declaration. It is considered within the U.P.C. that allegations and accusations could be made that we are not original and are merely adopting the Arusha Declaration by changing the words. For this reason a view has been expressed to the effect that we should define the direction and the content of the move to the Left without too much use of the word "Socialism" or, if possible, without even mentioning it, and leave it to the readers to determine the kind of political ideology contained in the strategy of the move to the Left. It is, however, agreed that at the back of the mind the moving spirit should be the basic principles of Socialism, but that in the practical aspect those principles should be tempered with the realities of Uganda.

Yours sincerely,

Milton Obote
PRESIDENT

Encl:

APPENDIX 2

Selected Reading List

For this book, I have found the following most valuable:

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3. Kirunda-Kivenjinja, A M (1993). *Uganda: The Crisis of Confidence*, Progressive Publishing House, Kampala.
4. Makubuya, Apollo N (2018), *Protection, Patronage, or Plunder? Imperial Machinations and (B)uganda's Struggle for Independence*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
5. Mukherjee, Ramkrishna, (1956, 1985), *Uganda: An Historical Accident? Class, Nation, State Formation*. USA: Africa World Press.
6. Museveni, Yoweri Kaguta, (1997, 2007). *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, Oxford: McMillan Education.
7. Mutibwa, Phares, (1992), *Uganda since Independence, A Story of Unfulfilled Hopes*, Africa World Press.
8. Nabudere, D W (1980), *Imperialism and Revolution in Uganda*, Onyx Press.
9. Nabudere, D W (1990), *The Rise and Fall of Money Capital*, (1980), London: Africa in Transition.
10. Oloka-Onyango (2016). *When Courts Do Politics*, Cornell University.
11. Rugumayo, Edward (forthcoming), *Why do fireflies glow? Part Two: Fighting Dictators (1967-80)*.
12. Suruma, Ezra Sabiti (2014), *Advancing the Ugandan Economy: A personal Account*, Washington, Brookings Institute.

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2. Kasfir, Nelson (2004) 'Uganda', in Sarah Repucci and Christopher Walker, eds. (2004), *Countries at the Crossroads: A Survey of Democratic Governance*, New York: Freedom House.
3. Mamdani. Mahmood 1976 *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
4. Mwakikagile, Godfrey (2009), *Uganda: The Land and Its People*, USA: New Africa Press
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